PASSAGE 1

Movie of Metropolis



Movie of Metropolis

…being the science-fiction film that is steadily becoming a fact

A

When German director Fritz Lang visited the United States in 1924, his first glimpse of the country was a night-time view of the New York skyline from the deck of an ocean liner. This, he later recalled, was the direct inspiration for what is still probably the most innovative and influential science-fiction film ever made – Metropolis.

B

Metropolis is a bleak vision of the early twenty-first century that is at once both chilling and exhilarating. This spectacular city of the future is a technological marvel

LIVEWORKSHEETS

of high-rise buildings connected by elevated railways and airships. It's also a world of extreme inequality and social division. The workers live below ground and exist as machines working in an endless routine of mind-numbing 10-hour shifts while the city's elite lead lives of luxury high above. Presiding over them all is the Master of Metropolis, John Fredersen, whose sole satisfaction seems to lie in the exercise of power.

C

Lang's graphic depiction of the future is conceived in almost totally abstract terms. The function of the individual machines is never defined. Instead, this mass of dials, levers and gauges symbolically stands for all machines and all industry, with the workers as slave-live extensions of the equipment they have to operate. Lang emphasizes this idea in the famous shift-change sequence at the start of the movie when the workers walk in zombie-like geometric ranks, all dressed in the same dark overalls and all exhibiting the same bowed head and dead-eyed stare. An extraordinary fantasy sequence sees one machine transformed into a huge open-jawed statue which then literally swallows them up.

D

On one level the machines and the exploited workers simply provide the wealth and services which allow the elite to live their lives of leisure, but on a more profound level, the purpose of all this demented industry is to serve itself. Power, control and the continuance of the system from one 10-hour shift to the next is all that counts. The city consumes people and their labour and in the process becomes a perverse parody of a living being.

E

It is enlightening, I think, to relate the film to the modern global economy in which multinational corporations now routinely close their factories in one continent so that they can take advantage of cheap labour in another. Like the industry in Metropolis, these corporations' goals of increased efficiency and profits have little to do with the welfare of the majority of their employees or that of the population at large. Instead, their aims are to sustain the momentum of their own growth and to increase the monetary rewards to a tiny elite – their executives and shareholders. Fredersen himself is the essence of the big company boss: Rupert Murdoch would probably feel perfectly at home in his huge skyscraper office with its panoramic view of the city below. And it is important that there is never any mention of government in Metropolis – the whole concept is by implication obsolete. The only people who have power are the supreme industrialist, Fredersen, and his magician/scientist cohort Rotwang.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

F

So far so good: when the images are allowed to speak for themselves the film is impeccable both in its symbolism and in its cynicism. The problem with Metropolis is its sentimental story-line, which sees Freder, Fredersen's son, instantly falling in love with the visionary Maria. Maria leads an underground pseudo-religious movement and preaches that the workers should not rebel but should await the arrival of a 'Mediator' between the 'Head' (capital) and the 'Hands' (labour). That mediator is the 'Heart' – love, as embodied, finally, by Freder's love of Maria and his father's love of him.

G

Lang wrote the screenplay in collaboration with his then-wife Thea von Harbou. In 1933 he fled from the Nazis (and continued a very successful career in Hollywood). She stayed in Germany and continued to make films under the Hitler regime. There is a constant tension within the film between the too-tidy platitudes of von Harbou's script and the uncompromisingly caustic vigour of Lang's imagery.

H

To my mind, both in *Metropolis* and in the real world, it's not so much that the 'Head' and 'Hands' require a 'Heart' to mediate between them but that the 'Hands' need to develop their own 'Head', their own political consciousness, and act accordingly – through the ballot box, through buying power and through a sceptical resistance to the materialistic fantasies of the Fredersens.

I

All the same, *Metropolis* is probably more accurate now as a representation of industrial and social relations than it has been at any time since its original release. And Fredersen is certainly still the most potent movie symbol of the handful of elusive corporate figureheads who increasingly treat the world as a Metropolis-like global village.

Questions 1-6

Complete the summary below.

Using **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the Reading Passage for each answer.

*Write your answers in boxes **5-10** on your answer sheet.*

The director depicts a world of inequality and **(1)**..... . In the future, the mindless masses of workers living underground are treated as

LIVEWORKSHEETS

(2)..... . And the master of them is **(3)**..... , who is in charge of the whole city. The writer claims that the director, Fritz Lang, presents the movie in an **(4)**..... term, where the **(5)**..... of the individual machines is not defined. Besides the writer compares the film to the modern global economy in which multinational corporations concern more about the growing **(6)**..... and money.

PASSAGE 2

Can Scientists tell us: What happiness is?

A

Economists accept that if people describe themselves as happy, then they are happy. However, psychologists differentiate between levels of happiness. The most immediate type involves a feeling; pleasure or joy. But sometimes happiness is a judgment that life is satisfying, and does not imply an emotional state. Esteemed psychologist Martin Seligman has spearheaded an effort to study the science of happiness. The bad news is that we're not wired to be happy. The good news is that we can do something about it. Since its origins in a Leipzig laboratory 130 years ago, psychology has had little to say about goodness and contentment. Mostly psychologists have concerned themselves with weakness and misery. There are libraries full of theories about why we get sad, worried, and angry. It hasn't been respectable science to study what happens when lives go well. Positive experiences, such as joy, kindness, altruism and heroism, have mainly been ignored. For every 100 psychology papers dealing with anxiety or depression, only one concerns a positive trait.

B

A few pioneers in experimental psychology bucked the trend. Professor Alice Isen of Cornell University and colleagues have demonstrated how positive emotions make people think faster and more creatively. Showing how easy it is to give people an intellectual boost, Isen divided doctors making a tricky diagnosis into three groups: one received candy, one read humanistic statements about medicine, one was a control group. The doctors who had candy displayed the most creative thinking and worked more efficiently. Inspired by Isen and others, Seligman got stuck in. He raised millions of dollars of research money and funded 50 research groups involving 150 scientists across the world. Four positive psychology centres opened, decorated in cheerful colours and furnished with sofas and baby-sitters. There were get-togethers on Mexican beaches where psychologists would snorkel and eat fajitas, then form

LIVEWORKSHEETS

"pods" to discuss subjects such as wonder and awe. A thousand therapists were coached in the new science.

C

But critics are demanding answers to big questions. What is the point of defining levels of haziness and classifying the virtues? Aren't these concepts vague and impossible to pin down? Can you justify spending funds to research positive states when there are problems such as famine, flood and epidemic depression to be solved? Seligman knows his work can be belittled alongside trite notions such as "the power of positive thinking". His plan to stop the new science floating "on the waves of self-improvement fashion" is to make sure it is anchored to positive philosophy above, and to positive biology below.

D

And this takes us back to our evolutionary past Homo sapiens evolved during the Pleistocene era (1.8 m to 10,000 years ago), a time of hardship and turmoil. It was the Ice Age, and our ancestors endured long freezes as glaciers formed, then ferocious floods as the ice masses melted. We shared the planet with terrifying creatures such as mammoths, elephant-sized ground sloths and sabre-toothed cats. But by the end of the Pleistocene, all these animals were extinct. Humans, on the other hand, had evolved large brains and used their intelligence to make fire and sophisticated tools, to develop talk and social rituals. Survival in a time of adversity forged our brains into a persistent mould. Professor Seligman says: "Because our brain evolved during a time of ice, flood and famine, we have a catastrophic brain. The way the brain works is looking for what's wrong. The problem is, that worked in the Pleistocene era. It favoured you, but it doesn't work in the modem world".

E

Although most people rate themselves as happy, there is a wealth of evidence to show that negative thinking is deeply ingrained in the human psyche. Experiments show that we remember failures more vividly than success. We dwell on what went badly, not what went well. Of the six universal emotions, four anger, fear, disgust and sadness are negative and only one, joy, is positive. (The sixth, surprise, is neutral). According to the psychologist Daniel Nettle, author of Happiness, and one of the Royal Institution lectures, the negative emotion each tells us "something bad has happened" and suggest a different course of action.

F

What is it about the structure of the brain that underlies our bias towards negative thinking? And is there a biology of joy? At Iowa University, neuroscientist studied

LIVEWORKSHEETS

what happens when people are shown pleasant and unpleasant pictures. When subjects see landscapes or dolphins playing, part of the frontal lobe of the brain becomes active. But when they are shown unpleasant images a bird covered in oil, or a dead soldier with part of his face missing the response comes from more primitive parts of the brain. The ability to feel negative emotions derives from an ancient danger-recognition system formed early in the brain's evolution. The pre-frontal cortex, which registers happiness, is the part used for higher thinking, an area that evolved later in human history.

G

Our difficulty, according to Daniel Nettle, is that the brain systems for liking and wanting are separate. Wanting involves two ancient regions the amygdala and the nucleus accumbens that communicate using the chemical dopamine to form the brain's reward system. They are involved in anticipating the pleasure of eating and in addiction to drugs. A rat will press a bar repeatedly , ignoring sexually available partners, to receive electrical stimulation of the "wanting" parts of the brain. But having received brain stimulation, the rat eats more but shows no sign of enjoying the food it craved. In humans, a drug like nicotine produces much craving but little pleasure.

H

In essence, what the biology lesson tells us is that negative emotions are fundamental to the human condition and it's no wonder they are difficult to eradicate. At the same time, by a trick of nature, our brains are designed to crave but never really achieve lasting happiness.

Questions 7-11

Complete the following summary of the paragraphs of Reading Passage

Using **NO MORE THAN FOUR WORDS** from the Reading Passage for each answer.

*Write your answers in boxes **7-11** on your answer sheet.*

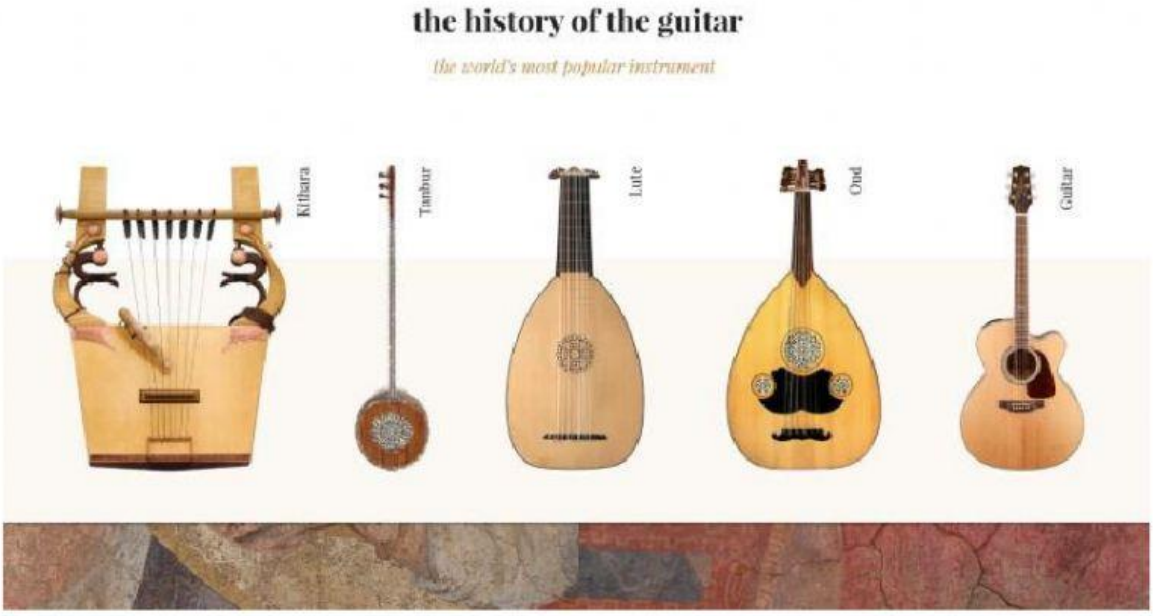
LIVEWORKSHEETS

A few pioneers in experimental psychology study what happens when lives go well. Professor Alice divided doctors, making a tricky experiment, into three groups: besides the one control group, the other two either are asked to read humanistic statements about drugs or received **(7).....** The latter displayed the most creative thinking and worked more efficiently. Since critics are questioning the significance of the **(8).....** for both levels of happiness and classification for the virtues. Professor Seligman countered in an evolutional theory: survival in a time of adversity forged our brains into the way of thinking for what's wrong because we have a **(9).....** .

There is bountiful of evidence to show that negative thinking is deeply built in the human psyche. Later, at Iowa University, neuroscientists studied the active parts in brains to contrast when people are shown pleasant and unpleasant pictures. When positive images like **(10).....** are shown, part of the frontal lobe of the brain becomes active. But when they are shown unpleasant image, the response comes from **(11).....**

PASSAGE 3

The history of the guitar



The word 'guitar' was brought into English as an adaptation of the Spanish word 'guitarra', which was, in turn, derived from the Greek 'kithara'. Tracing the roots of the word further back into linguistic history, it seems to have been a combination of the Indo-European stem 'guit-', meaning music, and the root '-tar', meaning chord or

LIVEWORKSHEETS

string. The root '-tar' is actually common to a number of languages, and can also be found in the word 'sitar', also a stringed musical instrument. Although the spelling and pronunciation differ between languages, these key elements have been present in most words for 'guitar' throughout history.

While the guitar may have gained most of its popularity as a musical instrument during the modern era, guitar-like instruments have been in existence in numerous cultures throughout the world for more than 5,000 years. The earliest instruments that the modern eye and ear would recognise as a 'normal' acoustic guitar date from about 500 years ago. Prior to this time, stringed instruments were in use throughout the world, but these early instruments are known primarily from visual depictions, not from the continued existence of music written for them. The majority of these depictions show simple stringed instruments, often lacking some of the parts that define a modern guitar. A number of these instruments have more in common with the lute than the guitar.

There is some uncertainty about the exact date of the earliest six-string guitar. The oldest one still in existence, which was made by Gaetano Vinaccia, is dated 1779. However, the authenticity of six-string guitars alleged to have been made prior to 1790 is often suspect, as many fakes have been discovered dating to this era. The early nineteenth century is generally accepted as the time period during which six-string guitars began taking on their modern shape and dimensions. Thus for nearly two hundred years, luthiers, or guitar makers, have been producing versions of the modern acoustic guitar.

The first electric guitar was not developed until the early twentieth century. George Beauchamp received the first patent for an electric guitar in 1936, and Beauchamp went on to co-found Rickenbacker, originally known as the Electro String Instrument Company. Although Rickenbacker began producing electric guitars in the late 1930s, this brand received most of its fame in the 1960s, when John Lennon used a Rickenbacker guitar for the Beatles' debut performance on the Ed Sullivan show in 1964. George Harrison later bought a Rickenbacker guitar of his own, and the company later gave him one of their earliest 12-string electric guitars. Paul McCartney also used a Rickenbacker bass guitar for recording. The Beatles continued to use Rickenbacker guitars throughout their career, and made the instruments highly popular among other musicians of the era.

The Fender Musical Instruments Company and the Gibson Guitar Corporation were two other early electric guitar pioneers, both developing models in the early 1950s. Fender began with the Telecaster in 1950 and 1951, and the Fender Stratocaster debuted in 1954. Gibson began selling the Gibson Les Paul, based partially on assistance from jazz musician and guitar innovator Les Paul, in 1952. The majority of

LIVEWORKSHEETS

present day solid-body electric guitars are still based largely on these three early electric guitar designs.

Throughout the history of the guitar, an enormous number of individuals have made their mark on the way in which the instrument was built, played and perceived. Though some of these individuals are particularly well known, like the Beatles or Les Paul, the majority of these people are virtually invisible to most modern guitar fans. By looking at the entire history of the guitar, rather than just recent developments, largely confined to electric guitars, it is possible to see more of the contributions of earlier generations.

Questions 12-18

Choose **NO *MORE THAN THREE WORDS*** from the passage for each answer.

12 Despite differences in ....., 'guit-' and '

13 Instruments that we would call acoustic guitars have been made and played for approximately .....

14.No one knows the ..... when the first six-string guitar was made.

15.The ..... of acoustic guitars have not changed much in 200 years.

16. A..... for an electric guitar was issued in the mid-1930s.

17 .Les Paul, the well-known ..... guitarist, was involved in the development of the electric guitar.

18. Most ..... of the guitar know little about its rich history.

LIVEWORKSHEETS