

**THEORY BOOKLET**

NAME:.....

**YEAR 12  
ADVANCED  
ENGLISH**

**MODULE A: METROPOLIS / NINETEEN  
EIGHTY-FOUR**

**LESSON 3: CHARACTER COMPARISON**

**1300 008 008**  
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## 1. CHARACTER COMPARISON IN METROPOLIS AND NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR

In this lesson, we will focus on our comparative study of character through different theoretical approaches as a means of expanding our contextual knowledge and providing grounds for analysing the different perspectives offered in a pair of texts. This is in keeping with the requirements of Module A:

...students compare the content and perspectives in a pair of texts in order to develop their understanding of the effects of context, purpose and audience on the shaping of meaning. Through exploring and comparing perspectives offered by a pair of texts, students examine the ways in which particular social, cultural and historical contexts can influence the composer's choice of language forms and features and the ideas, values and attitudes conveyed in each text.

In many respects, Freder and Winston stand in for the experience of the audience. The audience discovers the dark heart of Metropolis with Freder. The audience becomes an ally of Winston as he struggles against an oppressive regime. A comparison of the protagonists provides grounds for a deeper understanding of the intertextual perspectives at play. This builds on your appreciation of the overlap in the character arc of each protagonist.

### CLASS DISCUSSION:

What are the major connections between Freder and Winston?

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## 2. FREDER AND WINSTON THROUGH THE LENS OF JUNG

Consider the following scholarly article:

**Ben Morgan, 2000. 'The Archetypal Version- Sentimentality and Self-Control in the Reception of the Film' in Minden, M., Bachmann, H. (eds) *Fritz Lang's Metropolis: Cinematic Visions of Technology and Fear*, pp 294-5**

The entrance of Maria starts Freder's quest, making him investigate a world he has not previously taken notice of. The topography of this quest (his journey downwards) is psychological. Just as Jung, in the famous dream which he took to mark his discovery of the collective unconscious, explored the different levels of a house penetrating to ever older records of human civilisation, so Freder's freshly awakened longing takes him down into the machine room, where he observes the regimentation and inhumanity of his father's system, and then subsequently down into the catacombs.

What Freder observes in the machine room are psychological structures (this is the way to read the otherwise senseless and technically inaccurate images of the labour process at the M-machine.) the structure might at some point have had their origins in actual practices of work (the sort of basic habits of rational organisation that Weber describes as the building blocks of the Protestant Entrepreneurial mentality: submitting to regular working hours, separating the work place from the home, and business accounts from domestic accounts). But by the time they have been engrained for three hundred years they have lost the goal that originally gave them meaning. The work routines are metaphors for psychological structures, the figurative representation of a rationalisation that has become an end in itself.

Morgan's interpretation of this part of the film is based on the psychoanalyst Carl Gustav Jung's concept of the 'collective unconscious'. Consider the following video of an introduction to the concept. While you are watching, use the space provided to formulate some ideas about the concept.



**Carl Jung 1968 The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, p 43:**

My thesis then, is as follows: in addition to our immediate consciousness, which is of a thoroughly personal nature and which we believe to be the only empirical psyche (even if we tack on the personal unconscious as an appendix), there exists a second psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals. This collective unconscious does not develop individually but is inherited. It consists of pre-existent forms, the archetypes, which can only become conscious secondarily and which give definite form to certain psychic contents.

“Archetypes” are central to Jung’s thoughts regarding the concept of the collective unconscious. Consider the explanation that follows:

Archetypes constitute the structure of the collective unconscious - they are psychic innate dispositions to experience and represent basic human behaviour and situations. Thus mother-child relationship is governed by the mother archetype. Father-child - by the father archetype. Birth, death, power and failure are controlled by archetypes. The religious and mystique experiences are also governed by archetypes.

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Archetypes manifest themselves through archetypal images (in all the cultures and religious doctrines), in dreams and visions. Therefore a great deal of Jungian interest in psyche focuses on dreams and symbols interpretation in order to discover the compensation induced by archetypes as marks of psyche transformation.

The collective unconscious is an universal datum, that is, every human being is endowed with this psychic archetype-layer since his/her birth. One can not acquire this strata by education or other conscious effort because it is innate.

We may also describe it as a universal library of human knowledge, or the sage in man, the very transcendental wisdom that guides mankind.

Source: [http://www.carl-jung.net/collective\\_unconscious.html](http://www.carl-jung.net/collective_unconscious.html)

The concept of the collective unconscious can be applied to both texts and therefore can help you read meaning into each, as well as suggest relationships between the film and the novel.





### 3. O'BRIEN, ROTWANG AND THE QUESTION OF HUMANITY



One of the most intriguing characters in *Nineteen Eight-Four* is O'Brien, a colleague who Winston mistakes for a sympathiser to the resistance. He is an important plot device, but his motives and personal history are largely unexplored in the novel.

Consider the following scholarly assessment of O'Brien.

**John O. Lyons 1961. 'George Orwell's Opaque Glass in 1984' *Wisconsin Studies in Contemporary Literature* 2.3, p 45-6:**

There remains a nagging impression that *1984* is not only an uncomfortable work but also an unsatisfactory one. What Orwell does not adequately do with his symbol is to show that the conditioners, such as O'Brien, have sold their souls in order to be on the other side of the lens so that they can see through it and past the dark opaque surface on the reverse side of the half-blind Winston Smith. In the most astute review of *1984* Philip Rahv points out that it is the conditioners, not the conditioned, who are the really interesting figures. To anticipate, as O'Brien does, a subject's every thought is a hellish power. O'Brien sees through the world so easily and clearly that he ceases to be human. What we should want to know is how this inhumanity is arrived at and how it is lived with, but Orwell keeps Smith – and the reader – hedged by distorting surfaces.

I have suggested Swift as the source of Orwell's device. He might also have read C.S Lewis' description of the damnation of the political conditioners in 'The Abolition of Man':

"The whole point of seeing through something is to see something through it. It is good that the window should be transparent because the street or garden beyond it is opaque. How if you saw through the garden too? It is no use trying to 'see through' first principles. If you see through everything, then everything is transparent. But a wholly transparent world is an invisible world. To 'see through' all things is the same as not to see."



## ❑ O'Brien: Tormentor, Protector, Inquisitor, Friend

O'Brien's humanity is called into question as he interrogates Winston in the final part of novel.

### Nineteen Eighty-Four, Part 3 Chapter 2 - Extract

He was starting up from the plank bed in the half-certainty that he had heard O'Brien's voice. All through his interrogation, although he had never seen him, he had had the feeling that O'Brien was at his elbow, just out of sight. It was O'Brien who was directing everything. It was he who set the guards on to Winston and who prevented them from killing him. It was he who decided when Winston should scream with pain, when he should have a respite, when he should be fed, when he should sleep, when the drugs should be pumped into his arm. It was he who asked the questions and suggested the answers. He was the tormentor, he was the protector, he was the inquisitor, he was the friend. And once - Winston could not remember whether it was in drugged sleep, or in normal sleep, or even in a moment of wakefulness - a voice murmured in his ear: 'Don't worry, Winston; you are in my keeping. For seven years I have watched over you. Now the turning-point has come. I shall save you, I shall make you perfect.' He was not sure whether it was O'Brien's voice; but it was the same voice that had said to him, 'We shall meet in the place where there is no darkness,' in that other dream, seven years ago.

He did not remember any ending to his interrogation. There was a period of blackness and then the cell, or room, in which he now was had gradually materialised round him. He was almost flat on his back, and unable to move. His body was held down at every essential point. Even the back of his head was gripped in some manner. O'Brien was looking down at him gravely and rather sadly. His face, seen from below, looked coarse and worn, with pouches under the eyes and tired lines from nose to chin. He was older than Winston had thought him; he was perhaps forty-eight or fifty. Under his hand there was a dial with a lever on top and figures running round the face.

'I told you,' said O'Brien, 'that if we met again it would be here.'

'Yes,' said Winston.

Without any warning except a slight movement of O'Brien's hand, a wave of pain flooded his body. It was a frightening pain, because he could not see what was happening, and he had the feeling that some mortal injury was being done to him. He did not know whether the thing was really happening, or whether the effect was electrically produced; but his body was

being wrenched out of shape, the joints were being slowly torn apart. Although the pain had brought the sweat out on his forehead, the worst of all was the fear that his backbone was about to snap. He set his teeth and breathed hard through his nose, trying to keep silent as long as possible.

'You are afraid,' said O'Brien, watching his face, 'that in another moment something is going to break. Your especial fear is that it will be your backbone. You have a vivid mental picture of the vertebrae snapping apart and the spinal fluid dripping out of them. That is what you are thinking, is it not, Winston?'

Winston did not answer. O'Brien drew back the lever on the dial. The wave of pain receded almost as quickly as it had come.

'That was forty,' said O'Brien. 'You can see that the numbers on this dial run up to a hundred. Will you please remember, throughout our conversation, that I have it in my power to inflict pain on you at any moment and to whatever degree I choose? If you tell me any lies, or attempt to prevaricate in any way, or even fall below your usual level of intelligence, you will cry out with pain, instantly. Do you understand that?'

'Yes,' said Winston.

O'Brien's manner became less severe. He resettled his spectacles thoughtfully, and took a pace or two up and down. When he spoke his voice was gentle and patient. He had the air of a doctor, a teacher, even a priest, anxious to explain and persuade rather than to punish.

'I am taking trouble with you, Winston,' he said, 'because you are worth trouble. You know perfectly well what is the matter with you. You have known it for years, though you have fought against the knowledge. You are mentally deranged. You suffer from a defective memory. You are unable to remember real events and you persuade yourself that you remember other events which never happened. Fortunately it is curable. You have never cured yourself of it, because you did not choose to. There was a small effort of the will that you were not ready to make. Even now, I am well aware, you are clinging to your disease under the impression that it is a virtue. Now we will take an example. At this moment, which power is Oceania at war with?'



## □ Rotwang: Engineer, Rival, Henchman

While O'Brien's humanity is open to question, Rotwang represents the overarching thematic concern of the ethical implications of scientific progress in *Metropolis*. Rotwang could be considered O'Brien's equivalent in *Metropolis* insofar as he assists Fredersen, not only in designing a robot worker for him, but also revealing the workers' plot to him, and leading him to the catacombs. In these respects, he helps Fredersen maintain order in the city. While O'Brien's relationship to the head of Oceania's regime is unexplored, von Harbou and Lang provide us with a history of the relationship between Rotwang and Fredersen. In distinction from O'Brien, Rotwang's character is situated in an intersection between political rival and henchman; Rotwang seizes the opportunity presented by Freder and Maria's relationship to deprive Fredersen of his son.

Rotwang's character *qua* engineer bears interesting connections to Lewis' fears in the *Abolition of Man* (see the Independent Learning Module at the end of this lesson), as well as Orwell's characterisation of O'Brien in terms of the sophisticated torture technology he uses on Winston. His exuberant approach to engineering the perfect man who will never tire or make an error echoes the ideal of physical perfection which drove European eugenics in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

### Note to Students: Eugenics

Eugenics (Greek εὐγενής *eugenes* "well-born" from εὖ "good, well" and γένος "race") is the belief and practice of improving the genetic quality of the human population. Eugenics advocates the improvement of human genetic traits through the promotion of higher reproduction of people with desired traits (positive eugenics), and reduced reproduction of people with less-desired or undesired traits (negative eugenics).

Another pertinent nineteenth century influence is German Romanticism, which adopted the principles of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, namely, of individual liberty, and the placement of supreme value in an emotional engagement with the world, rather than the scientifically rational one. Two of the most prominent figures of German Romanticism were the composer Richard Wagner and the novelist and playwright Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Goethe's play, *Faust* (1806) centres on a scholar who sells his soul to the devil in exchange for knowledge. Consider the following scene:

**MEDIA VIEWING:** *Metropolis* - 'Hel and the Maschinenmensch' 39:00 – 44:15





## 4. ESSAY WORKSHOP: A CONVINCING INTRODUCTION



### □ The Introduction

The introduction is the roadmap of your essay. It shows the reader how you will respond to the question— that is, what is the position you have taken on the question, and what the thematic framework within which you will argue your position is. Your thesis should be a combination of these three aspects:

#### 1. YOUR POSITION ON THE QUESTION

Your position on the question is the central part of your thesis, and broadly outlines the degree to which you agree with the claim posed in the question.

#### 2. THE THEMATIC FRAMEWORK

The thematic framework provides both you and the marker with a set of conceptual parameters within which to consider concepts that arise from the question.

#### 3. A STATEMENT ABOUT THE RUBRIC

You also need to make a statement about the rubric, and expand on some of the concepts specific to Module A. It is best to leave your introduction until after you have completed an essay plan of topic sentences. That way you will end up with a clear summary of the key areas of discussion and eliminate the risk of introducing a topic of discussion which you are unable to explore substantially later in your essay. In other words, use the planning time to work out where you can take certain ideas before embedding them in the introduction.

Let's work towards building a convincing introduction through an example essay question:

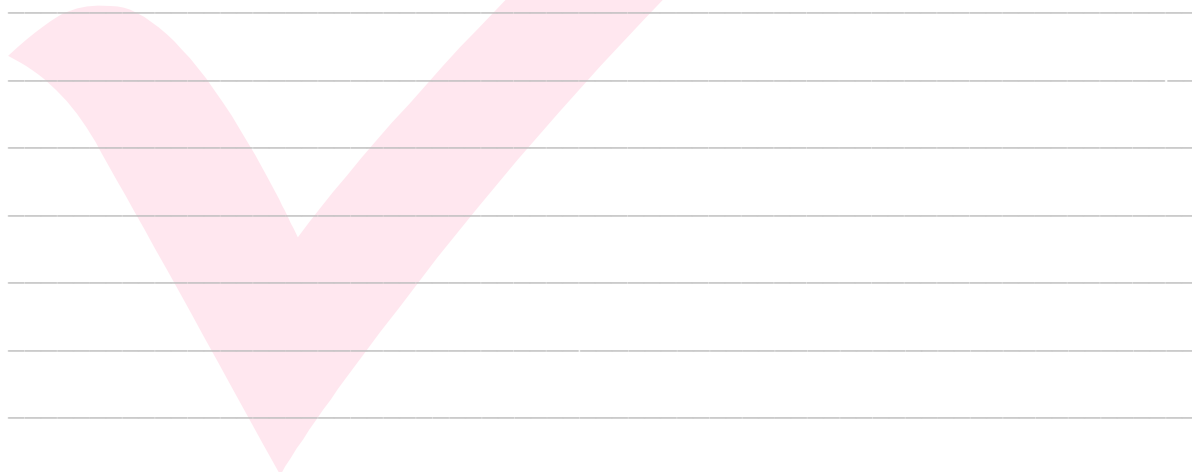
### SAMPLE ESSAY QUESTION

To what extent does Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* mirror the concerns in Lang's *Metropolis* about the impact of technological modernisation on human relationships?

#### 1. YOUR POSITION ON THE QUESTION

A question which begins with 'to what extent' will usually allow you some room to argue against the suggestion that has been made. So for instance, you may argue that "while technological modernisation does feature in Orwell's novel, it is arguably not an integral concern". If you take such a position, your thesis statement should acknowledge this as well as outline the thematic concerns which you perceive to be more central to the novel. Later in the essay, you can account for how contextual issues have led to differences in thematic focus.

Construct a statement about the degree to which Orwell's novel reflects *Metropolis'* concerns about technology.



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## 5. THE ABOLITION OF MAN

C.S Lewis was an Irish-born British novelist and scholar, probably best known for his *The Chronicles of Narnia*. In 1943 he published *The Abolition of Man* as a treatise on why secondary education should be provided within a moral framework. Lewis argued that there was a set of moral principles on which most people would base their judgments. This doctrine Lewis called the *Tao*, 'the belief that certain attitudes are really true, and others really false, to the kind of thing the universe really is and the kind of things we are.' Lewis uses the Chinese term *Tao* to emphasise the notion that there is a *universality* to basic principles of morality, that people around the world hold the same principles. There is, Lewis believed, a natural law that governs our relations to each other.

The metaphor 'men without chests' embodies a key concept in the book, the need to teach individuals from an early age about the right *sentiments*. British education, wrote Lewis, placed too much emphasis on the intellect, and failed to sufficiently cultivate sentiment and the concern for the welfare of others. The rise of 'men without chests' is most clearly seen in the discipline of science, where the attitude of knowledge for knowledge's sake is taken towards development, and where human life and nature are treated as curious objects rather than living things.

Lewis argues that the failure to sufficiently cultivate sentiment and the concern for the welfare of others leads to the rise of 'men without chests'. These 'men without chests' care more for material gain and the acquisition of knowledge than for emotional engagement with others. In Lewis' words "[i]t is not excess of thought but defect of fertile and generous emotion that marks them out. Their heads are no bigger than the ordinary: it is the atrophy of the chest beneath that makes them seem so".

### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. To what extent do you think Lewis' 'men without chests' has influenced Orwell's construction of O'Brien? Use specific textual references to support your answer.

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We have considered the likeness of O'Brien to Lewis' metaphor, but one of the challenges in the world of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is the changing perspectives, the inability to hold on to a concrete version of reality. Consider the extract from the novel below:

### **Nineteen Eighty-Four, Part 3 Chapter 3 - Extract**

'Do you believe in God, Winston?'

'No.'

'Then what is it, this principle that will defeat us?'

'I don't know. The spirit of Man.'

'And do you consider yourself a man?'

'Yes.'

'If you are a man, Winston, you are the last man. Your kind is extinct; we are the inheritors. Do you understand that you are *alone*? You are outside history, you are non-existent.' His

manner changed and he said more harshly: 'And you consider yourself morally superior to us, with our lies and our cruelty?'

'Yes, I consider myself superior.'

O'Brien did not speak. Two other voices were speaking. After a moment Winston recognized one of them as his own. It was a sound-track of the conversation he had had with O'Brien, on the night when he had enrolled himself in the Brotherhood. He heard himself promising to lie, to steal, to forge, to murder, to encourage drug-taking and prostitution, to disseminate venereal diseases, to throw vitriol in a child's face. O'Brien made a small impatient gesture, as though to say that the demonstration was hardly worth making. Then he turned a switch and the voices stopped.

'Get up from that bed,' he said.

The bonds had loosened themselves. Winston lowered himself to the floor and stood up unsteadily.

'You are the last man,' said O'Brien. 'You are the guardian of the human spirit. You shall see yourself as you are. Take off your clothes.'

Winston undid the bit of string that held his overalls together. The zip fastener had long since been wrenched out of them. He could not remember whether at any time since his arrest he had taken off all his clothes at one time. Beneath the overalls his body was looped with filthy yellowish rags, just recognizable as the remnants of underclothes. As he slid them to the ground he saw that there was a three-sided mirror at the far end of the room. He approached it, then stopped short. An involuntary cry had broken out of him.

'Go on,' said O'Brien. 'Stand between the wings of the mirror. You shall see the side view as well.'

He had stopped because he was frightened. A bowed, grey-coloured, skeleton-like thing was coming towards him. Its actual appearance was frightening, and not merely the fact that he knew it to be himself. He moved closer to the glass. The creature's face seemed to be protruded, because of its bent carriage. A forlorn, jailbird's face with a nobby forehead running back into a bald scalp, a crooked nose, and battered-looking cheekbones above which his eyes were fierce and watchful.

The cheeks were seamed, the mouth had a drawn-in look. Certainly it was his own face, but it seemed to him that it had changed more than he had changed inside. The emotions it









