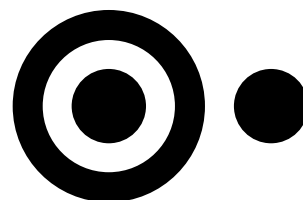


# Every Body in its Place

The reproduction of inequality by way of education in *Metropolis* and *Snowpiercer*

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## **Abstract**

With increasing inequality in the world, having knowledge about the apparatuses maintaining unequal social structures is important. Utopian and dystopian science fiction films are a good source for analysis of social structures, due to their inherent interest in social critique and the role of semiotics in the spreading of ideology. This essay examines how ideology is presented and represented in the science fiction films *Metropolis* and *Snowpiercer*. Within a Marxist theoretical framework, the essay analyses the presence and actions of ideological state apparatuses in the films, with a secondary focus on how the ideology on display is presented to the viewer. The analysis of the films shows that several different ideological state apparatuses, such as school and politics, are represented in the films. The apparatuses are also shown to use a variety of pedagogic actions for teaching the dominant ideology of the respective film's ruling class to the citizens of the films, such as lecturing, singing and communicating through clothing and architecture. The analysis also shows that while two different political ideologies are represented in the films, corporatism in *Metropolis* and neoliberalism in *Snowpiercer*, both ideologies serve the same purpose of maintaining the capitalist order of the films' societies: the division of labour. The essay argues that the findings of the analysis motivate a Marxist approach to teaching, in order to actively work against inequality and provide all students with a well-rounded education, no matter what social class they belong to.

**Keywords:** Ideology, ideological state apparatuses, pedagogic action, pedagogic authority, science fiction, corporatism, neoliberalism

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## 1. Introduction

Inequality is on the rise. Since the 1980s in the US, the poorest sections of the population have seen no economic growth, while the rich have kept getting richer (Roser and Ortiz-Ospina). While the free market of the global neoliberal capitalist system in and of itself requires inequality to function (it is based on competition over and the unequal distribution of resources), it may be argued that the system is not what produces and reproduces inequality, but rather the Ideology that sustains it. Ideology is a complicated concept, but for the purpose of this essay it will be referred to in two distinct ways: as Ideology in its structural, Marxist sense, and as ideology, in relation to the specific political ideologies referred to in the essay. Structural Ideology can be understood as whichever ideology the bourgeoisie uses as a tool to maintain the capitalist social order, while ideology refers to a specific sociopolitical ideology, in this essay specifically corporatism and neoliberalism.

The dominant ideology of the system is something that we are exposed to every day, through laws, entertainment, religion, school, architecture, etcetera. It is therefore important to examine how it is presented and represented, and how ideology is used as a tool to create inequality within a social system. It is even more important to teach students how to identify the ideology constantly taught to them, in order for them to be able to make informed decisions. A useful tool for examining how ideology functions is by analysing how it is presented and represented in fiction, and especially in utopian and dystopian science fiction films. It is useful firstly since utopian and dystopian fiction has an intrinsic purpose to comment on society (Suvin, *Metamorphoses* 6), and secondly since watching films allows for the analysis of visual semiotic signs, and visual signs are an important part of the spreading of ideology (Van Leeuwen and Kress 14).

The focus of this essay is to analyse the representation and function of ideology in the science fiction films *Metropolis* and *Snowpiercer*. In the films, ideological state apparatuses such as church and school, work to produce and reproduce the dominant bourgeois Ideology, capitalism, by inculcating into the workers the idea of a natural and technical division of labour and resources. While *Metropolis* promotes the division of labour *Snowpiercer* rejects it, instead suggesting that there is possibility outside the capitalist system. Furthermore, the essay aims to investigate the specific ideologies on display in *Metropolis* and *Snowpiercer*, corporatism and neoliberalism, how these ideologies are embedded within the films'

narratives and compare them with each other, as well as look beyond the narrative to see how the ideologies on display are presented to the viewer.

*Metropolis* is a 1927 German science fiction film directed by Fritz Lang. The story takes place in the titular future city of Metropolis, vertically built in several layers, where the capitalists live up top in the sky and the workers live in darkness in the worker-city underground. The film's protagonist Freder is the son of Joh Fredersen, master of Metropolis, and the film follows him as he gets to know the plight of the workers. While exploring the worker-city, Freder meets Maria, the leader of the workers, who prophesizes the arrival of a mediator who will bring unity between the capitalists and the workers. Orchestrated by the evil scientist Rotwang, the workers are led into a false rebellion by a robot posing as Maria, the robotrix. In the end, Rotwang is killed and Freder fulfils his role as a mediator between the capitalists and the workers.

*Snowpiercer* is a 2013 South-Korean/Czech science fiction film, directed by Bong Joon-Ho. The story takes place on the titular Snowpiercer, a train in the near future, eternally riding across a supposedly uninhabitable earth, frozen over due to a failed attempt to chemically stop global warming. On the train, the workers, referred to as the tail-sectioners, are forced to live in squalor in the back of the train while the capitalist first-class passengers live in luxury in the front. Under orders of Gilliam, the leader of the workers, the film's protagonist Curtis leads the workers to rebellion, with the purpose of getting to the engine of the train and thus taking control of the Snowpiercer. During the rebellion, most of the tail-sectioners die on their way through the different train-cars, but Curtis, along with two others, makes it to the engine-room where he meets Wilford, creator and master of the train. Wilford reveals that the rebellion was orchestrated by him, with the purpose of culling the tail-section population and thus maintaining the "balance" of resources on the train. The remaining tail-sectioners blow up the train, after which the only two survivors venture out into the frozen land. The film ends with the two survivors noticing a live polar bear, proof that life is possible outside the train.

The theoretical framework used for the analysis is a combination of Marxist and Marxist-influenced theories, central of which is Althusser's notion of the ideological state apparatus. Althusser describes how ideological state apparatuses such as the school, politics and organized religion, make up part of the state and work to inculcate into the population the dominant ideology (78). In Marxism, the specific type of ideology is of little importance; what matters is that ideology is an apparatus in the service of the state and the market, with the purpose of maintaining the social and economic order. This essay will show that while the

films show two distinct ideologies within their narratives, namely, corporatism in *Metropolis* and neoliberalism in *Snowpiercer*, they both have the same function and purpose, as bourgeois Ideology.

The second important part of this essay's theoretical framework is Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction. It describes how social inequality is produced and reproduced, and of interest for this essay are his views on how the dominant ideology is reproduced through education. Of specific relevance for the analysis is his concept of "pedagogic action". Bourdieu does not define the concept further than that "pedagogic action [...] is, objectively, symbolic violence insofar as it is the imposition of a cultural arbitrary by an arbitrary power" (Bourdieu and Passeron 5), but for the purpose of this essay, pedagogic action refers to any communication with the aim to teach the dominant ideology of the state. Thus, Bourdieu's concepts are used to give further insight into how Althusser's ideological state apparatuses function, which is why the theories are used in conjunction with one another. Finally, both the dialogue and visuals of the films are analysed, which is why semiotics is part of both the analysis and theory of the essay. Visual semiotics is interested in how images and visual signs communicate a message, and of interest for this essay is how images work to teach the dominant ideology not only within the narratives of the films, but also to the viewers. While both films have been examined from the perspective of Marxism by critics, how the capitalist system and class divisions are portrayed in the films, the role of education in the perpetuation of capitalist ideology within the narratives has not been sufficiently explored, which is outlined in the literature review section. By textual and semiotic analysis of key scenes in the films, I aim to show that education is central to the perpetuation of the Ideology and social structure of each film. Finally, the essay presents pedagogical implications of the analysis, and argues for its value as a source for reflection on the role of the teacher in reproducing inequality in society, as well as for the value of utopian and dystopian science fiction for teaching students critical literacy and awareness of how ideological state apparatuses work to affect them.

## **2. Background**

In this section the genre of science fiction and its utopian and dystopian subgenres are defined. The major socio-political contexts informing the films are also introduced; *Metropolis* is largely influenced by and advocates 1920s (proto-fascist) corporatism, while *Snowpiercer* was made in the context of 21<sup>st</sup> century neoliberalism, which, this essay argues,

it comments on. Lastly, previous scholarly works on the films are presented, with the aim to further define the purpose of this essay by contrasting it with what has been previously written about *Metropolis* and *Snowpiercer*.

## 2.1 Science fiction

Science fiction is a genre of fiction with many conflicting definitions. Darko Suvin defines it as requiring “*the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition*” (*Metamorphoses* 7). Estrangement is “a point of view or look implying a new set of norms”, while cognition refers to a reflection on reality (*Metamorphoses* 10). Science fiction is thus a genre that encourages the reader/viewer to think about and question the world, by introducing elements from outside of the author’s reality into a familiar context; the reader/viewer of science fiction is put in the position of a “Man of our times”, who faces the unknown of the novel (Suvin, “The State of” 36). Relevant for this essay is what Suvin calls extrapolative science fiction, which proposes a utopian or anti-utopian future based on temporal extrapolation, to estimate the future based on historical data; it is a comment on the author’s/director’s society, what Suvin calls the “zero world” to differentiate it from the world of fiction (*Metamorphoses* 27). Both *Metropolis* and *Snowpiercer* fall into the category of extrapolative science fiction since their respective directors draw direct comparisons to aspects of their own society: work within the modern city in *Metropolis* and global warming and competition labour market in *Snowpiercer*.

Utopian science fiction describes a community “where sociopolitical institutions, norms, and individual relationships are organized according to a more perfect principle than in the author’s community, this construction being based on estrangement arising out of an alternative historical hypothesis” (*Metamorphoses* 49). The important thing to note about utopian science fiction is that it is bound to the context of the author’s community. The author/director identifies an issue with society, which they then describe a hypothetical solution to. Utopian science fiction is thus based on the “zero world” and transcends it in its future vision (*Metamorphoses* 61). Since the concepts of utopia and dystopia are fundamentally tied to the visions of, in the case of *Metropolis* and *Snowpiercer*, the director, the films’ genres bring insight into the filmmaker’s ideology, which is important to take into account when analysing the ideologies on display in the films.

Dystopian science fiction can broadly be considered anti-utopian; as a genre, dystopian fiction works on the same principles as utopian, simply inverted. Whereas utopian fiction serves as a point of reflection on the author’s society, urging the reader to think beyond

its normative reality, dystopian fiction serves as a “prophetic vehicle, the canary in a cage” that aims to warn the reader of a specific, catastrophic outcome to current (in the author/director’s eyes) dangerous socio-political tendencies (Moylan and Baccolini 1). The genres of utopian and dystopian science fiction provide important context to why inequality is presented and represented as it is within the films, which is explored in the analysis.

## **2.2 Socio-political context**

Corporatism can for the context of the period surrounding the release of *Metropolis* be described as a proposed socio-economic organization of society, particularly of capital and labour, where class harmony is the goal. There is a discrepancy between corporatist ideology and the practical historical application of corporatism, most famously seen in fascist Italy. In ideal-typical terms, corporatism is intended to give mutual rights and obligations to all functional groups and classes, including representation in national-level decision-making, as long as all social groups do their duty to maintain the social hierarchy and discipline (Panitch 61). The role of the state in this ideal view of corporatism is to lead and maintain the corporatist order, and to thus uphold social harmony (Panitch 61). In practice, no such corporatist system has worked, and as in the case of fascist Italy, the corporatist social hierarchy had to be upheld through state repression and force against the working class (Panitch, “Recent Theorizations” 160). What is worth pointing out about corporatism is that it does not function as a complete system in its own right, but is applied onto pre-existing economic systems, most prominently capitalism. While the proposed ideal-version of corporatism contains an economic system, it is purely hypothetical, and in praxis the principles of corporatist policy work as “empty vessels into which this, that or another formula for investment and production may be poured” (“Recent Theorizations” 163).

An important context for the development of 1920s corporatism is the emergence of the modern city during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In his seminal essay “The Metropolis and Mental Life”, Georg Simmel argues that the modern city, as it is organized around production for the market, produces the stratification necessary for corporatism; the modern city is supplied by production for the market, hence the producers, the workers, and the consumers, the capitalists, are separated from each other and they do not know one another (12). In *Metropolis*, the capitalists live up top of the city and are physically separated from the workers who live below, and the only contact between them is through Grot, foreman of the workers.



Simmel goes on to argue that the social (and physical) stratification of the modern city inhibits the development of qualities like delicacy, idealism and spirituality, while also limiting the possibility for free activity, for the reason that in order to maintain the city's hierarchical structure, it "cannot give room to freedom and the peculiarities of inner and external development of the individual", lest they would come to the realization that the order is arbitrary and can be resisted (15). The result of the repression intrinsic to the stratification in both corporatism and the modern city, according to Simmel, is a discrepancy between the intellectual and spiritual development of the modern workers. The division of labour in corporatist society leads to the worker becoming "a single cog as over against the vast overwhelming organization of things and forces which gradually take out of his hands everything connected with progress, spirituality and value" (Simmel 18).

Like *Metropolis* was created in a corporatist context, *Snowpiercer* was conceived in a neoliberal one; this essay argues that the film comments on and critiques neoliberalism. Neoliberalism is a theory of political and economic practices, as well as a historical reality, with many different iterations; it is based on the idea that competition, and specifically competition between enterprises and workers within a free market is the key to human well-being (Harvey 2). The role of the state in neoliberalism is to maintain an appropriate framework to support, by force if necessary, the free market by way of for example military or legal systems (Harvey 2). The state is also responsible for maintaining the competition within the market, since competition is not the result of the "'natural play' of appetites", but instead an orchestrated "formal play"; the state intervenes in both economic and non-economic aspects of society to ensure that citizens are forced to compete within the market, whether they want to or not (Lazzarato 117). What is important for the neoliberal state is to make sure that, while it creates economic disparity between classes, it also neutralizes revolutionary tendencies, ensuring that the workers will not rise up against the capitalists (Lazzarato 120). The main tool for preventing revolution at the disposal of neoliberal states is to incite individuals into becoming entrepreneurs of themselves<sup>1</sup>, in direct competition with all other workers for the limited jobs and resources available. Limited resources leads to competition, which leads to inequality between those in control of the resources and those without, which Marxism argues to be orchestrated for the benefit of the economic elite (Harvey 17). Neoliberalism can thus be interpreted either as "a utopian project to realize a

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<sup>1</sup> "Entrepreneur of the self" is a term coined by Michel Foucault in his seminal text *The Birth of Biopolitics*. In conjunction with the term *homo oeconomicus* the economic man, Foucault uses it to describe how the individual within neoliberalism is their own capital, producer, and source of earnings. It is the investment in human capital, in the "entrepreneur of the self", which is the primary source of economic growth within neoliberal states. See Foucault chapter 9 for further reading.

theoretical design for the reorganization of international capitalism or as a political project to re-establish the conditions for capital accumulation and to restore the power of economic elites” (Harvey 17).

While corporatism and neoliberalism are two different and distinct ideologies and practices, from a Marxist perspective they can be understood as to have the same basic function: to divide labour between capitalists and workers, for the benefit of the capitalists. The shared function of corporatism is neoliberalism is exemplified during the analysis of *Metropolis* and *Snowpiercer*, where both ideologies serve as a tool to maintain the capitalist order in the narratives.

### **2.3 Literature review**

There have been several works written on both *Metropolis* and *Snowpiercer*, many of them from a Marxist perspective. During this section, previous research about the films are presented with the purpose to, through contrast with this essay, show the research gap this essay intends to fill.

Deidre Byrne has studied how space in *Metropolis* works as an analogy for class and religion. Through semiotic analysis within a Marxist framework, Byrne concludes that the titular city in *Metropolis* works as an analogy for heaven and hell, where the fiery machinery below is contrasted with spaciousness and airiness above (4). Byrne connects the religious symbols to how class and gender is represented in the film, concluding that “the film’s gender and class ideology is remarkably conservative” (1). Byrne’s views of *Metropolis* are not contested by this essay, but her analysis of the underlying mechanisms that fuel the film’s conservative ideology is lacking, which this essay intends to examine further.

Lane Roth has proposed a semiotic analysis of *Metropolis*, focusing on how lighting codes relate to character and theme. Roth argues that the theme of *Metropolis* is “the ascendancy of artifact over nature subjugating man instead of liberating him” and that light is used to further the theme by showcasing character values; light is used to give the character Maria the appearance of having a halo, an image of Christianity, while her mechanical counterpart the robotrix is not (344). The evil scientist Rotwang, who Roth argues symbolises man’s attempt to foolishly conquer nature, is darkly lit throughout the film, in stark contrast to Maria (345). While this essay agrees that lighting codes relate to character and theme, it is also interested in how visual semiotic signs such as light are used to communicate the ideology of the filmmakers as well as the ideology of the ruling class within the film’s narrative.

Gabriela Stoicea has examined how gender relegated to work is portrayed in *Metropolis*. Analysing, by way of Marxist theory, sequences in the film where women are present, Stoicea concludes that by relegating women to household work in *Metropolis*, Fritz Lang helps to reproduce stereotypical capitalist gender roles (38). This essay intends to complement Stoicea's analysis of capitalist gender roles by showcasing how the roles of worker and capitalist are reproduced through teaching within the narrative.

In "Not all are Aboard: Decolonizing Exodus in Bong Joon-Ho's *Snowpiercer*", Fred Lee and Steven Manicasteri interpret *Snowpiercer* as an allegory for the limits of technocratic environmentalism. By comparing and contrasting the film to other depictions of ecological crises, Lee and Manicasteri argue that the film represents the issue in a radically different way, and suggest that the solution lies in a different global order, akin to deep ecology (224). Lee and Manicasteri also analyse the film from a postcolonial perspective. They interpret the film as a decolonial<sup>2</sup> call to action, with the message that "[world] domination is neocolonial, but that the best response to it is exodus" (Lee and Manicasteri 214). Kim Seong-Hoon has examined allegory in *Snowpiercer*, comparing the film's narrative to the Israelites' escape from Egypt in the Bible (704). Seong-Hoon goes on to compare the film with Oriental circulatory philosophy, arguing that while the film's structure is strictly rooted in a western context, the film showcases several philosophical inspirations from different religions and myths, as well as direct allegories (708). Seong-Hoon, like Lee and Manicasteri, concludes that *Snowpiercer* can be interpreted as decolonial, encouraging a shift away from Eurocentrism (709). This essay agrees with Lee and Manicasteri and Seong-Hoon in that *Snowpiercer* is a decolonial film, but is interested in examining how neoliberalism is reproduced within the film and subsequently exited, rather than exodus from neocolonialism or eurocentrism.

### 3. Theory

In this section the theoretical framework used in the analysis of *Metropolis* and *Snowpiercer* is presented. The framework primarily consists of Marxist and Marxist influenced theory, with a focus on Althusserian Marxist theory and Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction. As a secondary theoretical framework, mainly used in the analysis of the imagery in the films, is visual semantics.

Central to Marxism and related theories are the concepts of the *state* and the *mode of production*. According to Louis Althusser, the state is seen as a repressive machine that

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<sup>2</sup> Decoloniality is both a thought model and a practice, which focuses on confronting colonialism and the epistemic assumptions within the western world. See Mignolo and Walsh chapter five for further reading.

through the use or threat of violence “enables the dominant classes [...] to ensure their domination over the working class in order to subject it to the process of extorting surplus value (that is, to capitalist exploitation)” (70). According to Marxism, society is constituted by two levels: the base and the superstructure. The base is made up of the productive forces and the relations of production, while the superstructure in turn is made up of two levels: the political-legal level and the ideological level, such as religion and morality (Althusser 53). The superstructure rests on the base and requires it to remain upright; the metaphor shows how the bourgeois state cannot function without repressing and exploiting the proletarian workers (Althusser 53). In praxis, the goal of Marxism is to seize the state power, and initially replace the bourgeois state apparatus with a proletarian one, eventually destroying capitalism and the state altogether (Althusser 74).

The Marxist view of the mode of production can simply be described as “a way or manner (a mode) of producing [...] [t]he material goods indispensable to the material existence of the men, women and children living in a given social formation” (Althusser 22). In *Metropolis*, the workers manage the machines that keep the city alive and enables the capitalists lifestyle, while the tailsectioners in *Snowpiercer* are forced to provide the first class passengers with their services, ranging from factory-work to playing musical instruments. The state in both films represses the workers, forcing them to work not for themselves, but for the capitalists.

### **3.1 Ideological state apparatuses**

In addition to the repressive state apparatuses, consisting of for example the army, prisons and the police, the state is made up of ideological state apparatuses, such as school and organized religion. They are defined systems, with corresponding practices; ideological state apparatuses work to promote and support the dominant state Ideology (Althusser 77). The important distinction between repressive state apparatuses and ideological ones is that ideological state apparatuses do not use physical violence, they instead function on Ideology; they inculcate into the citizens the norms and values of the state. While physical violence plays a part in maintaining the unequal, capitalist social orders within *Metropolis* and *Snowpiercer*, it is the pedagogic actions of the ideological state apparatuses, their teachings, that reproduce the ideology necessary for inequality.

### 3.2 Bourdieu's theory of the pedagogical act

In *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron describes all pedagogic action to be “symbolic violence”, since, it is “the imposition of a cultural arbitrary by an arbitrary power”; the dominant culture is not dominant by nature, and thus what is taught by the dominant power is not natural, but instead arbitrary (5). The very fact that culture is arbitrary, (it does not exist naturally but is constantly produced and reproduced socially) is what requires the dominant Ideology of a state to be taught rather than organically inferred by people; if it would not be continually reproduced by the ideological state apparatuses, it would cease to exist. Bourdieu argues that pedagogic action, and the inculcation of a cultural arbitrary into the citizens through symbolic violence, is the basis for the arbitrary power possessed by the dominant class, since the dominant class would not be in power if the dominant Ideology (stating that social inequality is natural) was not reproduced through education (Bourdieu and Passeron 6). Necessary for the inculcation of the dominant Ideology through a pedagogic action is the recognition of pedagogic authority in the action. Pedagogic authority, according to Bourdieu, is the “power to exert symbolic violence which manifests itself in the form of a right to impose legitimately”; pedagogic authority is what conceals the arbitrariness of the arbitrary power (Bourdieu and Passeron 13).

While the dominant Ideology (the cultural arbitrary) is reproduced through symbolic violence in all manner of social contexts, such as through visual signs like clothing and architecture as well as through apparatuses like the media, institutionalised educational systems play a particular part in the social reproduction. Educational systems, like capitalism at large, have to produce and reproduce their conditions of production; school has the function of both inculcating and reproducing a cultural arbitrary, contributing to maintaining the capitalist class hierarchy (Bourdieu and Passeron 54). As the analysis of *Metropolis* and *Snowpiercer* intends to show, school, political figures and spiritual leaders in the films' narratives impose symbolic violence upon the workers in the films. While the pedagogic actions differ, from lecturing to teaching through visual semiotic signs such as architecture and clothing, what is taught is the bourgeoisie ideology necessary for maintaining the capitalist social structure.

### 3.3 Semiotics

Semiotics is, as Saussure defined it, a “science that studies the life of signs within society” (Van Leeuwen and Kress 3). According to Van Leeuwen and Kress, semiotic signs are any actions or artefacts used for communication, whether physiological or technological (3). Signs

are conjunctions of signifiers, forms, and signifieds, meanings; a person making a sign wants to express a meaning, which is the signified, and chooses the most suitable form for conveying that meaning, the signifier (Van Leeuwen and Kress 7). For this essay, visual semiotics is of interest, which only differs from semiotics as a whole in that it specifically is interested in visual signs. Important to note is that signs are not universal, but arise from the social, psychological and cultural context of the person making the sign (Van Leeuwen and Kress 7). Communication requires that senders make their messages maximally understandable for the receiver, and since communication is a social action and takes place in social structures, power differences affect communication. People not familiar with a language system or culture are more limited when it comes to sign-making than people who possess mastery of them. People in power thus have the possibility to choose how understandable they want their message to be, using semiotic resources to force other participants into greater efforts of interpretation (Van Leeuwen and Kress 13). In *Metropolis* and *Snowpiercer*, the ideological state apparatuses thus hold the power to shape the narratives of their respective society, withholding information from the workers that could lead to them rebelling against the capitalists, while instead teaching them the dominant norms and ideology necessary to maintain the capitalist social structure.

#### **4. Analysis and discussion**

##### **4.1 Visual semiotic representation of inequality**

In both *Metropolis* and *Snowpiercer*, class inequality is depicted and inculcated through the use of several different visual semiotic resources, such as lighting, costuming, body language and set design/architecture. As the workers are walking home from their shift in *Metropolis*, they are all dirty, wearing gray jumpsuits, heads hanging down with caps covering their hair (Lang 5:24-6:42). In *Snowpiercer*, the tail-sectioners are all dirty, wearing threadbare gray and brown clothing, with sores and scabs on their faces (Bong Joon-Ho 05:05-05:30). The costuming and design of the workers and tail-sectioners are contrasted with that of the city leaders and the first-class passengers; the capitalists in *Metropolis* are all clean, pale, dressed in fancy suits with fancy haircuts (Lang 1:30:30-1:30:45), while the first class passengers in *Snowpiercer* wear colourful and varied dresses and hairdos (Joon-Ho 1:16:10-1:16:23). Likewise, the available spaces differ greatly between the proletariat and bourgeoisie in the films. The worker-city of *Metropolis* lies deep underground, devoid of light and consisting of gray, monotone brutalist architecture, while the capitalists live at the top of *Metropolis*, in

sunlight, airiness and varied art deco architecture (Lang 6:45-6:50; 18:17-19:02). In *Snowpiercer*, the tail-sectioners live at the back of the train in rundown, overcrowded train-cars, filled with identical rickety bunk beds, devoid of windows, variation and decoration (Joon-Ho 06:30-08:40). In contrast, the first class passengers live in cars of varied design, including clubs, schools and parlours, with plenty of light, decorations and colours.

The bourgeoisie of the respective films are the makers of the proletariat's clothing and architecture, and thus control what they are supposed to signify: that the proletariat belong in the bottom of the city/at the back of the train. The bourgeoisie can thus be seen as sign-makers with "a meaning, the signified, which they wish to express" (Van Leeuwen and Kress 8). In the case of the films, visual semiotic signs are used as a pedagogic action for inculcating values, Ideology, into the proletariat, but also to physically deprive them of space of movement, of varied visual and auditory stimuli, as well as, and most importantly, of light. By surrounding the proletariat with limited, monotone signs and physical space, the workers are, at least aimed to be, reduced to a single function, not reflecting on life and their situation, but simply accepting it; they are made unaware of the possibilities of a different existence and become, as Simmel puts it, "a single cog" in the capitalist machinery (18). Visual semiotic signs are thus a tool for both the repressive and the ideological state apparatuses, breaking the body and conditioning the mind at the same time (Althusser 24). Since the workers and tail-sectioners are surrounded by the signs of their lower status at all times, the mediation of their domination by the bourgeoisie is constant, and the visual semiotic signs are the tools with which the domination is normalised; "the inculcation by the dominated Pas [pedagogic actions] of knowledges or styles whose value on the economic or symbolic market is deemed by the dominant PA" (Bourdieu 7).

The visual semiotic signs in the film do not simply work within the narrative, as repression of the characters in the film, but also as communication with the viewer. The filmmakers construct signs with the purpose of communicating with the viewer, so not only is their sign-making determined by their own cultural and semiotic knowledge, it is also determined by how they perceive that the audience can interpret the signs (Van Leeuwen and Kress 13). One tool at the filmmakers' disposal for communicating with the viewer is genre conventions, which is characteristics that recur in films of a genre. In dystopian science fiction, one such convention is that stark contrast between the appearances of characters from different social classes is used to signify the repressive nature of the film's society. For example, the contrast between the hair of the tail-sectioners and first class passengers in the parlour-sequence in *Snowpiercer* (Joon-Ho 1:16:08-1:16:32) bears a striking resemblance to

the contrast between the hair of the citizens of District 1 and 12 in *The Hunger Games* (Ross 29:48-30:07). In *The Hunger Games*, the citizens of District 12 are miners, forced to labour in poverty for the benefit of District 1 where all the capitalists live. Aside from their difference in clothing, the primary visual trait that differentiates the characters from the different districts is their hair: the citizens of District 12 have plain, naturally coloured hair, while the citizens of District 1 have boldly coloured hair in advanced, often unpractical coiffures. The social structure in *The Hunger Games* is strikingly similar to that of both *Metropolis* and *Snowpiercer*, due to the shared, very particular genre of utopian/dystopian science fiction. Thus, signs common to a genre add the collective traits of a genre to the signified. The contrast of hairstyle between characters in *Snowpiercer* has a double function: firstly, within the narrative, constructed by the first class passengers of the film to signal the lower status of the tail-sectioners, and secondly, as a genre convention with the purpose of communicating the inequality on display within the film to the viewer, which it then uses as a point of critique: “The dystopian imagination has served as a prophetic vehicle, the canary in a cage, for writers with an ethical and political concern for warning us of terrible sociopolitical tendencies” (Moylan and Baccolini 1). Signs in the films thus have the double function of teaching the proletarian characters their worth and function, and teaching the viewers about the ideology of the filmmaker and the collective world view needed for the viewer to interpret the signs in the first place.

Non-diegetic visual semiotic signs are also used to motivate the inequality inherent in corporatism to the viewer, as they are used to signify the differences between the workers and the capitalists in *Metropolis*. Maria tells the story of the tower of Babel to the workers, and the scene shifts to show her story. The imagery is non-diegetic, meaning that it does not appear within the fictional universe of the film, and is instead only directed towards the viewer rather than to the characters within the narrative. In the scene accompanying Maria’s story, “the brain” who designed the tower of Babel is depicted as white, blonde, clean and dressed in luxurious fabrics (Lang 52:52-53:30), which is in stark contrast to the wage workers building the tower who are shown as dirty with shaven heads, clad in nothing but loincloths (Lang 54:30-55:10). “The brain” is also filmed from either below or straight ahead, indicating power and familiarity while the workers, with exception for the scene where they rebel, are filmed from above, which indicates lack of power (Van Leeuwen and Kress 187). Non-diegetic imagery is thus used to propose to the viewer that capitalists possess positive traits while workers possess negative traits; they are inherently different from one another and



should thus be divided; the division of labour is motivated since the capitalists are shown to belong “above” the workers.

#### **4.2 Ideological state apparatuses and their actions**

While there are clear depictions of violence by way of repressive state apparatuses in both *Metropolis* and *Snowpiercer*, the primary way in which the social order of the films is maintained is by ideological state apparatuses, educating and inculcating into the proletariat the dominant bourgeois Ideology of the division of labour. In *Metropolis* Maria lectures to the workers about what needs to change in the city, while simultaneously arguing for a continued social structure based on class division. “HEAD and HANDS need a mediator. THE MEDIATOR BETWEEN HEAD AND HANDS MUST BE THE HEART” (Lang 55:40-55-51). By referring to the workers as hands and the capitalists as heads, Maria enforces and legitimizes the view of the groups as separated not by class, but by suitability for different tasks; hands can do menial work while the head oversees and controls the hands. Even though the role of a mediator is to undo division, head and hands will always be divided due to their biological differences. Thus, Maria can be understood as a cog in the political ideological state apparatuses, working to uphold the state Ideology with one purpose: “to guarantee the conditions for the exploitation of the exploited classes by the dominant classes” (Althusser 93). Stating that the workers require mediation with the capitalists, that the only thing needed to improve their lives is the arrival of the heart, does not alter the conditions of the means of production in *Metropolis*. On the contrary, it legitimizes the current division of labour, since a mediator between the groups would not be necessary if the groups themselves were not necessary. The ideological state apparatuses uphold the arbitrary culture, the bourgeois Ideology, by masking the social division of labour as technical; people are assigned their work because are physically suited for it, not because they belong to a certain social class (Althusser 35).

In *Snowpiercer*, Minister Mason, second in command on the train, works similarly to Maria as a part of the political ideological state apparatuses. During the carrying out of a physical punishment of a tail-sectioner, Mason lectures to the tail-sectioners about the necessity of the current capitalist social order:

This is so disappointing. [...] Passengers, this is not a shoe. This is disorder. This is size 10 chaos. This, see this, this is death. In this locomotive we call home, there is one thing that between our warm hearts and the bitter cold. Clothing, shields, no:

order. Order is the barrier that holds back the frozen death. We must all of us on this train of life remain in our allotted station. We must each of us occupy our preordained particular position. Would you wear a shoe on your head? Of course you wouldn't wear a shoe on your head. A shoe doesn't belong on your head. A shoe belongs on your foot. A hat belongs on your head. I am a hat, you are a shoe. I belong on the head, you belong on the foot. Yes, so it is. (Joon-Ho 16:30-18:05)

The position of the tail-sectioners is not only necessary for the train to survive, it is natural: "allotted" and "preordained". The bourgeoisie, whether in the *Snowpiercer* or in the *Metropolis*, cannot survive if not for the subjugation and subordination of the workers, since the superstructure (the repressive and ideological state apparatuses) rests on top of the base (the unity of productive forces and the relations of production) and would collapse if the base were to rise up (Althusser 53). In other words, the division of labour and resources prescribed by Maria and Mason are natural to them, within the narrative scopes of the films, since they both live in capitalist societies, and they themselves are indoctrinated in the bourgeois Ideology, the capitalist worldview.

A central and unifying aspect of how Ideology is reproduced through education in *Metropolis* and *Snowpiercer* is the use of symbolism and metaphor. Metaphors are used to mask the culturally arbitrary ideological teachings imposed on the proletariat in each of the films as natural, giving the pedagogic actions further pedagogic authority. In *Metropolis*, as previously stated, during her lecture in the catacombs Maria likens the workers in *Metropolis* to hands and the masters to heads, parts of the body with clear and distinct functions specific to the body part. The metaphor is repeated throughout the film, for example when Freder speaks to Joh Fredersen: "Your magnificent city, Father – and you the brain of this city – [...] and where are the people, father, whose hands built your city---?" (Lang 23:58-24:36). As the brain controls the body, the hands, the unequal division of both labour and socio-economic resources is signalled as not only natural but also necessary, since the brain cannot do what the hands can and vice versa. In *Snowpiercer*, the same lesson of natural and beneficial inequality is taught by likening the tail-sectioners to shoes and the first class passengers to hats, neither of which fits or can perform its function properly when in the wrong place. "A shoe belongs on your foot. A hat belongs on your head" (Joon-Ho 16:30-18:05). Even though benefits of the technical division of labour taught by Mason, Maria and their respective ideological state apparatuses is arbitrary, the addition of Mason and Maria's metaphors helps

to pass them off as natural and logical, which reinforces the arbitrary power of the states (Bourdieu 13).

While religion is one of the major ideological state apparatus, its presence as an apparatus is somewhat limited within *Metropolis* and *Snowpiercer*. However, religion functions as a tool within both the political and school apparatuses in the films for giving their pedagogic actions further pedagogic authority. When Maria lectures to the workers, she begins by telling the story of the tower of Babel, which works as an allegory for the conflict between the workers and masters in *Metropolis*. More so, the allegory connects Maria's words and teachings to those of the Bible:

'Come, let us build us a tower whose top may reach unto the stars!' [...] '... But the minds that had conceived the Tower of Babel could not build it. The task was too great. So they hired hands for wages.' 'But the hands that built the Tower of Babel knew nothing of the dream of the brain that had conceived it. [...] 'People spoke the same language, but could not understand each other...' (Lang 52:45-55:35)

While the story of Babel told in the film does not match the actual biblical story, within the narrative it still functions as a holy text, and the divine (Christian) word adds divine weight to Maria's lecture. The fact that the story of the tower of Babel, within the film, also shows that miscommunication between workers and leaders (capitalists) has been a factor for thousands of years makes questioning the social order in *Metropolis* that much harder; it is difficult to question a social division that has been norm since the time of Babel.

In *Snowpiercer*, Minister Mason also utilizes religion in her speech to the tail-sectioners in order to give her speech further pedagogic authority:

In the beginning, order was prescribed by your ticket: first class, economy, and freeloaders like you. Eternal order is prescribed by the sacred engine. All things flow from the sacred engine. All things in their place. All passengers in their section. All water flowing, all heat rising, pays homage to the sacred engine. In its own particular preordained position. So it is. Now, as in the beginning, I belong to the front, you belong to the tail. When the foot seizes the place of the head, a sacred line is crossed. Know your place! Keep your place! Be a shoe! (Joon-Ho 16:30-19:05)

The speech contains several words with religious connotations: “eternal order”, “sacred engine” and “sacred line”. Like Maria does with her use of the allegory of the tower of Babel, Mason, through her choice of words, claims that her words carry religious weight, which in turn also provides her teachings with further pedagogic authority. Her phrasing also shares similarities with the book of genesis: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (*New International Version*, Gen. 1.1-2); by using religious signs in her speech, Mason communicates clearly that the dominant Ideology is divine. In communication with the viewer, both films signal that religion is an important part of the respective world. Minister Mason is after all a minister, which signifies both the head of a governmental department (the political apparatus) and a member of the clergy (the religious apparatus) (Cambridge Dictionary, “Minister”). In *Metropolis*, the final joining of hands of Freder, Joh Fredersen and Grot the foreman takes place on the steps of a church, whereby social harmony through the division of labour comes literally under the aegis of the religious ideological state apparatus. In summary, religion fills a similar role to metaphors and allegory, in that it works as a tool to provide further pedagogic authority to the teachings of the ideological state apparatuses.

Aside from the political state apparatuses featured in the films, *Snowpiercer* also contains the depiction of a school. Althusser describes the school as the most important ideological state apparatus for reproducing the dominant Ideology, by teaching it to the children. The schoolchildren of *Snowpiercer*, shown to be circa age 8, are taught the dominant ideology by way of political propaganda, song, and religious parable. When Curtis and the other tail-sectioners reach the school-car, they are met by happy, clean and well-dressed children, indifferent to the plights of the proletariat. A young girl in the class stands up and cheerily proclaims: “I heard all tail-sectioners were lazy dogs who slept all day in their own shit” (Joon-Ho 1:08:16-1:08:21). The girls comment indicates that, while not necessarily part of the pedagogic actions taken by the teacher, the students are taught negative stereotypes about the tail-sectioners, which furthers the view of them as distinct from and worse than the first class passengers. The distinction between the tail-sectioners and the first class passengers, between the proletariat and bourgeoisie, is important for the division of labour to be accepted, and can be considered as part of what Althusser calls the “rules of respect for the social and technical division of labour, [...] the rules of the order established by class domination” (50).

The teacher further teaches the rules of capitalism to the schoolchildren through the pedagogic action of song, and utilizes religion as well as child-appropriate language to strengthen its message. The teacher sings: “What happens if the engine stops, we all freeze

and die! But will it stop oh will it stop? No no! Can you tell us why? The engine is eternal yes. The engine is forever yes. Rumble rumble, rattle rattle. Can you tell us why? Wilford!” (Joon-Ho 1:10:07-1:10:30) The rules of the capitalist order are likened to rules of survival in the song; if the order of the train is not maintained, everyone on-board will die. However, the message is not presented in quite as harsh a tone, as the addition of “rumble rumble, rattle rattle” gives the song a playful tone, appropriate for engaging young children. As previously stated, referring to the engine as “eternal” signifies a holiness to the song’s message, which is further emphasized by the teacher when she, prior to beginning to sing, asks the schoolchildren “[w]hat did the prophetic mister Wilson invent to protect the chosen from that calamity?” (Joon-Ho 1:09:50-1:09:59) Not only is Wilson likened to a prophet, an explicitly religious figure, but his followers are designated as “the chosen”, which brings to mind how the Israelites are referred to by God in Deuteronomy 14-2: “Out of all the peoples on the face of the earth, the LORD has *chosen* you to be his treasured possession” (Deut. 14-2; emphasis added). The school in *Snowpiercer* is shown to utilize many of the same tools as the other ideological state apparatuses in the film for teaching the dominant Ideology, simply in a manner more adapted to the young age of schoolchildren.

But the lessons taught by Mason and the school-teacher are rejected by Curtis and the other tail-sectioners, culminating in them violently rebelling and assaulting the front of the train. In contrast, the workers in *Metropolis* blindly accept the bourgeois Ideology, the division of labour. The social order of *Metropolis* is presented as set in stone, based on the thousands of years since the tower of Babel, and is only challenged when an outside force, the evil doctor Rotwang, tricks the workers. In *Snowpiercer*, the social order of the train is given a specific age: the 17 years since the train began its journey. Many of the tail-sectioners lived in the pre-freeze world before boarding the train, and thus can compare the division of labour on the train with how society was organized before. They recognise the division of labour for what it is: social rather than technical. In Bourdieu’s terms, the contrast between how the pedagogic actions are received in *Metropolis* and *Snowpiercer* can be understood to be due to the “symbolic strength of a pedagogic agency [being] defined by its weight in the structure of the power relations and symbolic relations [...] between the agencies exerting an action of symbolic violence” (Bourdieu and Passeron 7). The symbolic strength of the lessons taught by ideological state apparatuses is stronger in *Metropolis* than in *Snowpiercer* due to the social structure not bearing as much weight on the train, and thus is susceptible to revolution.

However, unbeknownst to Curtis and the other tail-sectioners in *Snowpiercer*, their leader Gilliam is working with Wilford, master of the train. In the guise of a proletarian

revolution, Gilliam actually perpetuates the neoliberal ideology by sending his fellow tail-sectioners to their death, in forced competition over the train's resources. Only after his fellow tail-sectioners are killed, Curtis learns the truth from Wilford:

We don't have time for true natural selection. We would all be hideously overcrowded and starved waiting for that. The next best solution is to have individual units kill off other individual units. That wasn't what Gilliam and I had in our plan. [...] The front and the tail's supposed to work together. [...] Our original agreement was for the insurgency to end at the Yekaterina tunnel, and all the survivors would go back to the tail section to enjoy much more space. (Joon-Ho 1:39:10-1:40:30)

By teaching the tail-sectioners that they should rebel, Wilford maintains the competition necessary for the neoliberal society to function; a practical example of the neoliberal utopia, where competition leads to a stable system in which competition separates the well fed from the dead, and all who compete can attain happiness. However, since the competition does not take place on a level playing field (the tail-sectioners are planned not to make it further than the Yekaterina tunnel), and Wilford both makes the rules of the competition and plans the moves of the first class passengers and the tail-sectioners, it is not really a competition at all; it is a planned distribution of resources. This is a clear example of the specific ideology of the bourgeoisie on the train being that of neoliberalism; the emphasis falls on controlled competition, what Lazzarato calls "formal play", with the purpose of giving more power and surplus value to the first class citizens of the *Snowpiercer* (117). Competition, by definition, creates inequality, since in order for the bourgeoisie to have a lot the proletariat has to have less. While the bourgeoisie does not require a sharpening of their appetites, since their appetites have already been proven by virtue of being bourgeoisie, the proletariat of the train needs to be goaded to act on their hunger, to rebel, by their lack of resources and the apparent discrepancy between their resources and those of the bourgeoisie visiting them, as shown in e.g. minister Mason's clothing. "[A]ppetites and instincts are not given: only inequality has the capacity to sharpen appetites, instincts and minds, driving individuals to rivalries" (Lazzarato 117).

### **4.3 The films' ideological theses**

Much like the neoliberal ideology of the *Snowpiercer* becomes apparent at the end of the film, the bourgeois ideology in *Metropolis* becomes more explicit at its end as well; it shows itself

to be corporatist in nature. After Freder, Maria and Joh Fredersen have watched doctor Rotwang fall to his death and the workers, led by Grot the foreman, have destroyed the robotrix, they all gather in front of the church, where Maria once again argues for a need of a mediator between the classes: “Head and hands want to join together, but they don’t have the heart to do it... Oh mediator, show them the way to each other...” (Lang 2:25:42-2:25:52). Freder joins hands with Grot and Joh Fredersen, fulfilling Maria’s prophecy of the arrival of a mediator. “THE MEDIATOR BETWEEN HEAD AND HANDS MUST BE THE HEART! THE END” (Lang 2:26:35-2:26:45). In her final proclamation, Maria ushers in the age of the corporatist utopia. As a cog in the ideological state apparatus, her words and presence echo the sentiments of the corporatist state, since it is under her aegis that the classes unite: still unequal, in organic unit; social harmony is achieved (Panitch 61). Due to the ending of *Metropolis*, the film can be understood as a work of utopian science fiction film, disguised as dystopian science fiction. While the city of Metropolis is initially depicted as a place of great suffering for the workers, in the end the organizational system of the city does not change, only the citizens’ attitude towards the system does. Hence, the organization of Metropolis is in line with corporatist ideology through the entire film, or as Suvin puts it, a society “organized according to a more perfect principle” for 1920s corporatists: a utopia (*Metamorphoses* 49). Understanding *Metropolis* as a work of utopian science fiction, one of the intrinsic purposes of the film is to encourage the viewer to reflect on their society, while suggesting and arguing for an explicit alternative; the film suggests change by way of estrangement (*Metamorphoses* 6). Thus, the film itself becomes a tool in the service of the proto-fascist corporatist ideological state apparatuses emerging in 1920s Europe when the film was released, working to inculcate into the viewer the dominant ideology, specifically the notion of the technical division of labour.

In *Snowpiercer*, when Wilford reveals that the rebellion was orchestrated and he offers Curtis the job as master of the train, Curtis opens a floor panel in the locomotive where he finds a small child which has taken the place of a piece of machinery which has gone extinct. Wilford’s comment on the discovery showcases the filmmakers’ view of neoliberalism as a machine that reduces individuals to body parts, to human capital. “Thank goodness the tail-section manufactures a steady supply of kids so we can keep going manually” (Joon-Ho 1:51:22-1:51:30). The tail-sectioners are literally only needed for their bodies, which they are forced to give up. The view is exemplified and elaborated on in an earlier scene of the film where a soldier asks a violinist to come and work in the front section:

“Leave your belongings; we just need your hands.”

The violinist responds, “Not both?”

“Yes, both hands!”

“My wife Doris plays beautifully, better than me.”

“They just need one person” (Joon-Ho 05:40-05:55).

Not only is it made clear that it is only the hands of the violinist or his wife that are needed, the need for competition within neoliberalism is also clearly shown as they are both placed in a position of direct competition with each other over the position of violinist. While the husband initially refuses to take the job unless his wife also can go, he is forced to take the job when the soldier beats his wife and drags him off. Competition is not natural within the neoliberal society; it is produced and reproduced by the state. Through the application of force by the repressive state apparatuses, such as the above mentioned soldier, and through the inculcation of the dominant Ideology by the ideological state apparatuses, the tail-sectioners are forced to be entrepreneurs of themselves, with their bodies as capital (Harvey 17).

*Snowpiercer* ends with the surviving tail-sectioners blowing up the train, with only two survivors who exit into the frozen wasteland. However, when they exit the *Snowpiercer* they come upon a live polar bear (Joon-Ho 1:58:39-2:00:38), indicating that life is not as impossible outside of the train as taught by the ideological state apparatuses. Thus, the ending of *Snowpiercer* can be interpreted as the film’s ideological thesis: there is an alternative to neoliberal capitalism, and it is to be found in exodus. The proletarian passengers of the *Snowpiercer* are literally only needed for their bodies, whether it is the hands of the violinist, or the small frames of the children who replace the faltering pieces of the eternal engine. Neoliberalism is presented as in service of the bourgeoisie, and further than that, it is presented as willing to do whatever the neoliberal state deems necessary to achieve the neoliberal utopia, even when that is stealing children. As Harvey states, “The theoretical utopianism of neoliberal argument has [...] primarily worked as a system of justification and legitimation for whatever needed to be done to achieve this goal” (14). Since inequality is inherent to the neoliberal society, inequality cannot be combated from within the system; the social order of the *Snowpiercer* is presented as utopian for the first class passengers, but as



dystopian for the tail-sectioners; In the words of Suvin: “one man’s perfection is another man’s (or class’s) terror” (*Metamorphoses* 61). The neoliberal state is what is holding the proletariat of the train captive, and thus it is only through exodus, through “mass defection from the state”, that their dystopia truly can be escaped and an alternative to neoliberalism can be founded (Virno 205). In the comparison between *Metropolis* and *Snowpiercer*, a lesson can thus be discerned: change will not come by remaining within the system, only by exiting it.

## 5. Pedagogic implications

The results of this analysis have a number of pedagogic implications. Firstly, while the films are aesthetic products created for entertainment and economic rather than explicitly created with a political purpose in mind, they can still function as a point of inspiration and source for reflection about the role teachers and teaching has in reproducing division of labour. The results of the analysis can thus work as a motivation for implementing a Marxist perspective in education, with the purpose of helping students become “complete” individuals (balanced in terms of productive capacity, both physical and mental) rather than unilateral (singular in focus and skill, as only a worker) (Ferreira Jr. and Bittar 15). The goal of creating complete individuals can only be achieved within an educational system that allows for a well-rounded education, where all students are taught to develop skills and talents harmoniously (Ferreira Jr. and Bittar 15). In *Metropolis* and *Snowpiercer*, education, both formal and informal, is shown to create distinctly unilateral individuals, either meant for menial or intellectual labour. Thus, the analysis of the films suggest that if a complete individual is to be created, pedagogic actions adapted to facilitate that creation are needed, actions that do not exist within *Metropolis* and *Snowpiercer*.

Through the division of school into vocational training and study preparation programs, students are at an early stage divided and put on an educational path that largely determines the social class the student will remain in for the rest of their life. That is not to say that a differentiation between vocational training and study preparation program has the sole purpose of creating division of labour, but like in *Metropolis* and *Snowpiercer*, it is a tool for the state for maintaining the social order; the school ideological state apparatus spreading the dominant Ideology. Through the bourgeois Ideology imposed onto working class children at a very early age, working class children that do not get the necessary support to develop skills aside from know-how related to working-class jobs are likely to remain part of the

working class, whether they like to or not. As suggested by Willis in his seminal work *Learning to labour*:

Too often occupational and educational talents are thought of as on a shallowing line of shrinking capacity with working class people at its lower reaches unquestioningly taking on the worst jobs thinking somehow, ‘I accept that I’m so stupid that it’s fair and proper that I should spend the rest of my life screwing nuts onto wheels in a car factory’. (1)

Teachers must actively reflect on their teachings in order to ensure that they do not worsen or further cement the class division in society by inculcating into working-class students the idea that they belong to a class and are supposed to remain within it. Willis goes on to suggest that when school fails, or worse, does not want, to help students transcend their preconceived notions of being predestined to a working class life, their class identity is strengthened and influenced by what they conceive of as “the only truly worldwide source: the working class world of work” (39). As seen in *Metropolis*, workers identify themselves as such since no one encourages them to think otherwise, even though the capitalists are a clear proof that there are other “options”. While the tail-sectioners in *Snowpiercer* believe that they reject their destiny as workers, due to not being taught how the social system of the train actually works, they play out their predestined roles as competitors over the limited resources of the train. By using the films’ depictions of how Ideology is used as a tool for teaching workers to remain as such, educators can examine their own teaching practices and material, with the purpose of ensuring that working class kids are not relegated to working class jobs. The most important way that teachers can do so is by making sure that they do not treat students differently based on their prejudice about their social class; growing up to get a working class job is not inherently negative, but being relegated to it because your teacher did not provide you with the same opportunities to develop a varied skill-set as upper class students is.

Secondly, the analysis of the films can work as a proof of concept for teaching students about ideologies and social reproduction through the analysis of fiction. Dystopian science fiction films are especially useful for teaching critical literacy to students, since the genre brings issues of social oppression and ideological inculcation to the forefront. As Suvin puts it:

[Science fiction] is an educational literature, hopefully less deadening than most compulsory education in our split national and class societies, but irreversibly shaped by the pathos of preaching the good word of human curiosity, fear, and hope. [...] Even more importantly, it demands from the author and reader, teacher and critic, not merely specialized, but quantified positivistic knowledge (*scientia*) but a social imagination whose quality of wisdom (*sapientia*) testifies to the maturity of his critical and creative thought. (*Metamorphoses* 36)

With the guidance of a teacher willing and able to guide students to consume media critically and to bring them insight into the ideological apparatuses around them that pull them into the ideological fold of the capitalist state; science fiction can be a useful tool for bringing that insight.

## 6. Conclusion

In this essay, the genres of the films, dystopian and utopian science fiction, have been shown to be a factor in both encouraging and critiquing the ideologies on display in the films, with the purpose to, in the case of *Metropolis*, spread 1920s corporatist ideology and praxis, while *Snowpiercer* critiques and encourages an alternative to neo-liberalism. The perpetuation of the dominant Ideology in the films has been shown to largely be through the pedagogic actions of different ideological state apparatuses. The dominant Ideology is inculcated into the proletariat of the films in a number of ways. Firstly, through visual semiotics such as milieu, clothing and access to light, direct preaching of the Ideology, supported by religious and naturalistic claims. Secondly through deception where the proletariat are led to believe that they act in defiance of the bourgeoisie while they in fact act in accordance with their Ideology. The analysis of the films has several pedagogical implications. Firstly, it motivates a Marxist approach to teaching, which if implemented, can combat the growing socio-economic divide in the world. By being aware of the role of pedagogy in furthering the dominant Ideology, teachers can work as a counter-weight to repressive tendencies rather than as a tool for repression; school is an ideological state apparatus, but teachers do not have to be cogs within it. The function of teaching within the films serves as a cautionary tale for how the teacher can be utilized by the state for creating inequality, which can be prevented by teachers being aware of what they are teaching and why, and by students being aware of and taught to question the symbolic violence inflicted onto them. Secondly, the theoretical

framework used for this analysis is useful for teaching critical literacy to students by analysing science fiction; Dystopian and utopian science fiction are inherently focused on social critique (even though what is critiqued in *Metropolis* is resistance against corporatism), which makes it an appropriate material for teaching students about how ideologies are used as a tool for repression.

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