

METROPOLIS 2001

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[1] There is an old theory that one should never produce remakes or sequels of seminal masterworks. *Metropolis 2001* is neither a remake nor a sequel of Fritz Lang's 1927 gem. Instead, like the original, it explores the junction of the heart and mind. It uses the futuristic landscape to examine the fabric that binds together both society and civilization. *Metropolis 2001* is an examination of the durability of justice and the rule of law. [2] As the movie begins, we find ourselves back in the futuristic Metropolis. We learn that the peace forged between the heart and mind by Freder, the son of the ruler of Metropolis, was fractured by a World War. After this time, the fragile peace between the ruler and his subjects, between the workers and the capitalists, has been maintained by the Robot Maria. Under her leadership, Metropolis has risen to become the mightiest nation on earth. While others stumbled, Maria, with her promise of wealth to all, has tacked a steady course based on justice and the rule of law established by Freder and Maria in the original Metropolis. Several large buildings were erected in Metropolis to sing her praises, including two large identical temples to her glory. She has slowly assumed most of the governmental functions for the citizens of Metropolis, including its welfare system, its health-care system and, soon, its retirement system. She is worshipped as a god. [3] Maria has established the current ruler of Metropolis, although he was not the choice of a large majority of the citizens of Metropolis. He was seen as the most faithful to her military/industrial might. However, his allegiance to the rule of law is questionable, as seen both in his promotion of legal lynchings in his home state, and in the coercive way in which he rose to power as the ruler of Metropolis. [4] Maria has built Metropolis into what many have concluded to be an impenetrable fortress. This fortress is shattered, and the lives of all of the citizens of Metropolis are changed, when the two temples to Maria are destroyed by a terrorist attack. This attack, by an unknown force, for reasons unknown, has shaken the faith of all of the citizens of Metropolis. [5] Much like the original, when the Robot Maria incited the workers to react to their oppression by destroying their homes, the citizens of Metropolis are confronted with how to react to the attack. The Right Reverend and the Religious Zealot have both proclaimed that the attack is a judgment by god visited on the citizens of Metropolis. The leader of Metropolis has proclaimed a global military dictatorship, with the terms of surrender presented to every country on the globe in the words "you are either with us, or you are with the enemy." Others give the attack economic significance, as a strike by the poor against the wealthy rulers of Metropolis. Once again, Maria and the leader of Metropolis are stoking the passions of the heart that have welled up inside the citizens of Metropolis. The leader of Metropolis wants to reject the concepts of justice and the rule of law and strike out in anger against an imagined enemy. Still, the mind softly whispers: "this is a crime against humanity, not an act of war-like aggression. The rule of law requires police, arrests, justice and a trial." [6] Will we find a mediator between the heart and mind? When the Right Reverend and the Religious Zealot are calling for a holy war? When the leader of Metropolis is calling for a global military dictatorship and a global war? When Maria, wounded but unbowed, is looking to expand her might through her theology of globalization? [7] We see a letter posted on the door of a small church in the middle of Metropolis. The letter says: Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper. [8] The prayer for both peace and prosperity may be the mediation between the heart and mind that the citizens of all the world need to avoid the coming disaster. For if we seek not to understand why, if justice is discarded in the name of revenge, and if the rule of law is disposed of and replaced by the military rule of will, what man can stand? Where does the rule of will end? [9] Like Fritz Lang's masterpiece, the answer lies in the mediation between the heart and mind. The answer lies between a desire for justice and an understanding of the consequences of revenge.