Representation Of Human Experiences In Minority Report And In 1984

How do both Minority Report and 1984 represent human experiences?

It is how we respond to our experiences which defines our identity.

The tensions of individualism within a society that is fractured by the pursuit of progress can be seen in Steven Spielberg's film Minority Report which exhibits {{{{}}}. Similarly, George Orwell's dystopic novel 1984 warns against totalitarian oppression in the form of The Party, thus reflecting Orwell's contextual concerns regarding both fascism and communism in post-World War 2 Europe. Ultimately, both texts reflect their respective contextual anxieties and project them onto a catatonic world space, in order to make a cautionary statement.

The film Minority Report describes a society in the year 2054 where crime is virtually eliminated from Washington D.C due to an elite law enforcing squad called "Precrime". This group uses three specially gifted humans called Pre-Cogs that acquire psychic powers that allow them to see into the future and predict crimes before they occur. The protagonist John Anderton is the head of Precrime and although believing in the system, the Pre-Cogs predict that he will commit a murder himself against someone whom he doesn't know within the next 36 hours. He sets off to find out the 'minority report' which is the prediction of the female Pre-Cog that can sometimes tell a different story and prove him innocent.

The central theme of the film revolves around the concept of free will vs determinism. This brings about the notion of whether the future is set of whether free will can alter the future. The Pre-Cogs in the film allow Anderton to know his future and his ultimate fate. This brings about the idea of whether his knowledge of his future may have actually caused him to commit the crime in the first place. This plays a huge role in the concept of human experiences as deciding that one's future is set in stone and cannot be changed alters the way in which a person lives their life.

The determinist approach proposes that all behaviour has a cause and can be predicted and states that free will is an illusion and all our behavior is controlled by external forces by which we have no control.

Comparatively, Orwell's 1984 serves as a critique of the dehumanisation of society, as totalitarian structures attempt to eradicate rebellion, and ultimately, the human condition. Just like in Minority Report, technologies are used in a way to monitor and detect any unorthodox behaviour. Winston's diary entries "DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER" serve as physical catalysts of "thoughtcrime… which does not entail death, thoughtcrime IS death." This tangible display of rebellion is further accentuated through the relationship between Winston and Julia which is instigated by a mutual "fear and hatred of the Party". Winston Smith serves as the archetype of the human condition, reinforcing the hopelessness of established communist dictatorships. Orwell's 1984 presents the societal division as a means for maintaining the prominence of an

oppressive regime. Winston’s mistrust of those around him is immediately apparent from the outset of the novel and highlights his own sense of isolation in rebellion, rendering him powerless against The Party. Within Winston’s world space, all “comrades” are called to be utterly loyal to The Party as “amateur spies”. Consequently, all “comrades” live constantly with uncertainty regarding the political allegiances of those around them. This is most aptly portrayed through the relationship between Mrs. Parsons and her children, who leads “a life of terror” as her son and daughter “would be watching her day and night for symptoms of unorthodoxy”.

Furthermore, Orwell represents this notion within Winston’s job, highlighting his own delusion regarding his resistance to the Party. Whilst being subject to the propaganda and censorship of the Party he is similarly a propagandist and a censor, taking pride in the subtly of his work and citing it as “the greatest pleasure in life”. Winston is literally used as a tool by the Party to maintain totalitarian control.

Orwell’s 1984 exposes the oppression of humanity, entrapped by the societal confines implemented by totalitarian regimes. From its outset, the text establishes the omnipotence of “Big Brother”, a “black mustachio’d face on every corner… with eyes that seemed to follow,” his absolute power reinforced through “telescreens… [which] receive and transmit simultaneously to the Thought Police.”

The overpowering technological advances within both of the texts impact the human experience and plays a major role in defining their identities. The power that the technology like the Pre-Cogs and {{{}} have leads to the notion that power is inextricably linked to corruption is a central theme to both Minority Report and 1984. In Minority report technological advances such as retina scanners, insect robots, gesture recognition and perosnalised advertising are used in a way to enforce power but revealed in way that suggests to the citizens of the society in which they live that the state of the human condition had improved since the technologies have been introduced. A Precrime service announcer proudly announces that “within three months of the precrime program, the homicidal rates in the districts of Columbia have reduced 90%”. This validation given to the system by itself convinces that the complete invasion of privacy attributed to the technologies developed by the Precime unit is justified.

The experiences brought on by the significant advances in technology defines Andertons identity as how he has responded to them allows for judgements to be made. This is evident as it is revealed in the film that his interest in Precrime stems from his tragic past where his son disappeared at the local swimming pool when he was six years old. This ends up being the reason why he ends up wanting to kill the person he has been accused of eventually shooting as he believes he is the reason is son was abducted.

The dominance of technology within 1984 can be seen as The ending of “private life” due to the constant potential for surveillance results in continuous interiorised self-censorship. This notion is fully portrayed inside Winston’s home; as the home, traditionally a place of personal sanctity contributes to the ‘digital enclosure’ of Orwell’s world space resulting in Winston’s constant self-censorship, living “in the assumption that every sound was overheard … every movement scrutinised.”

Winston Smith is symptomatic of the inherent resilience of the human condition. Similarly, 1984 presents a cautionary statement against totalitarian oppression achieved through omnipresent surveillance and technology. Oceania is essentially a static society that tests the theoretical

limits of totalitarianism through its aimless pursuit of power. Orwell implements Winston Smith as an embodiment of the defiant individual living in what is a highly panoptic society. A comparative examination of Steven Spielberg's film Minority Report and George Orwell's dystopic novel 1984 highlights contextual concern regarding totalitarian oppression through government. Subsequently, each text is a product of its time, that makes a cautionary statement in order to not only influence their own world space and context but the agenda of future societies.