When I began the process of crafting my narrative I found it hard to think of a societal issue that I was sufficiently worried by to justify writing about; luckily the recent federal election brought to my mind the issue of social stagnation, which is essentially the reason for the government of my dystopia.

Particularly in the last 50-100 or so years, society has come to heavily rely on technology such as radio, film, television, and the internet. These media sources, while excellent at disseminating information, are very poor at promoting free-thinking individuals who have the ability to challenge the societal norms; instead, they encourage people to rely on those with the loudest voice (generally the press and associated media) to form their social opinions for them. This has led to what is an almost permeable social stagnation and lack of prominent intellectuals, philosophers, and statesmen among the population. We see examples of this in Australian politics today; the ALP and L/NP are incredibly similar on matters of policy, the main difference being due to their non-swinging voters (for the most part because of stereotypical views of the two parties).

This means that most of the forward movement in society is the product of scientific, medicinal, and engineering advances - where will we be when this stops, when we reach a distance too great to span, or are merely innately unable to collectively accomplish anything more? My dystopia is based around the idea that the governing body of a society where this occurs would need to simultaneously manufacture the consent of the populace and enter controlled societal regression, the “treadmill” which allows society to march forwards through rediscovery of ideas and technologies. Obviously, performing this with any idea would require the general population to forget that the idea pre-existed, so on a large scale it would require years of planning and enormous resources, something not explored in my dystopia.

What is explored is the fact that manufacture of consent is difficult enough at the best of times; in a society like the one in my dystopia there would be cracks that some individuals slip through. The protagonist of the narrative, Löew, is one such person. A working class man, he is set aside from the rest of the populace by his desire for a better life and his realisation that their current one is not ideal. I chose a working class man as my protagonist because often people see the average man, the masses, as a hope for change, when it is be just as easy (or even easier) to exploit them, making them the heroes of the government or ideal and a weapon against the intellectuals or better educated who have the potential to mount organised resistance. In the end, it would be impossible to overthrow a regime so entrenched as that of 1984 or my dystopia, something I tried to reflect. I also wanted to show my dystopia through the ‘eyes’ of an average man; being able to have a glimpse into what it was for Claus was an added bonus of the two characters I chose to utilise.

I chose a narrative style of writing to enable me to explore the setting and world in greater depth, as a poem is a fairly personal but restrictive style and I wanted to explore my world objectively.

I wrote my narrative in the 3rd person for several reasons: It allowed me to deal with multiple characters more easily, it allowed me to show the setting in an objective light, and it meant I didn’t have to deal with the psychological ramifications of my created world on my protagonist. I found that 3rd person enabled me to look objectively at my characters, as if I had been in 1st person I would have had to deal with the limitations of perspective, and would lose the general mood and tone generated by my objective view of the setting. For example, at the very end of the narrative, there is markedly little mention of Löew’s thoughts on the matter - like the rest of the narrative - just a general feeling of betrayal, but I am able to expand on the theme of darkness and the continual use of rain as a metaphor, something that would be marred by subjectivity if I did it in first person.

*Löew was barely conscious of himself leaving the house, his mind elsewhere occupied as he strode into the rain. Around him he could see nothing but darkness, and after a time, he stopped.*

When writing my narrative I made an effort to never give a good description of anything, to ensure that the setting, while dark, was also very vague and shadowy, adding to the collective mood and tone. I also made an effort to get inside the head of my protagonist, even though it was in third person, which helped to develop a feeling of wrongness or aberrance, as well as the theme of control that often accompanies dystopian works. I made continual use of the weather to reflect the world (constant rain etc.) and repeated the word or theme of ‘darkness’ throughout the narrative, again trying to develop the tone or mood I was going for.

If I had to rewrite my narrative I would only change the way I dealt with the protagonist, Löew, in terms of writing. He was meant to be written as a working-class man who was just more introspective than most, but I think he came off as too smart for his station in terms of vocabulary and time spent in intelligent thought in the narrative. This was also slightly enhanced by the use of third person – even though I wasn’t entirely inside his head, some of the more ‘sophisticated’ descriptions of the world by the narrator ‘seemed’ to come from Löew, making him seem more intelligent.

To conclude, I am quite pleased with my narrative, its world, characters, the ideas that it espouses, and its own elements of dystopia, which I think I incorporated well.