

# *Divided Together*

## Short Synopsis

*Divided Together* is dystopian political satire set in an alternate United Kingdom that echoes the current post truth era. The film follows the leader of the ideologically ambiguous Progress Party as they prepare for the launch of a new set of policies dubbed 'The New Way.' The film follows The Leader as he move between various simulated environments and goes behind the spectacle of politics. This absurd narrative exists in a decontextualized world, in attempt to subvert universal power structures.

## Writer/Director Statement

Through its depiction of the inner workings of The Progress Party *Divided Together* attempts to illuminate the absurdities of the media/political arena, a matrix where mundane, clichéd platitudes are repeated ad nauseam, ostensibly profound, provocative, even radical, and yet lacking in any real substance or even specificity. The main protagonist is The Leader a young, handsome, well-groomed individual who occasionally reveals himself to psychologically doubt his place within these environments.

The film would be shot in black and white, thus decontextualizing the party further and allowing them to remain ambiguous. Lacking colour, the Progress Party are separated from connection to any particular real life political party, and in doing so become indistinguishable from most. Despite being in shot black and white the film will look contemporary, almost futuristic, a form of visual dichotomy.

All the characters in the film lack names, and have mere titles. They never leave windowless artificially lit rooms yet their symbol is that of a suns rays projecting natural light. Each scene looks at central elements of politics, technology and media. The film does not seek to put any one ideology on trial, but rather to reflect the disingenuous and ultimately ideologically bankrupt spectacle that marks the current state of politics.

Key inspirations for the film include: Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange*, Terry Gilliam's *Brazil*, Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *World On A*

*Wire* and Jean Luc Godard's *Alphaville*. These films all subtly utilise science fiction narratives, aesthetics and reflect alternative European political environments.

### Co-Writer Statement

I recently graduated from The University of Glasgow studying English Literature and specialising in creative writing. My early influences in literature were the classic dystopian writers such as Zamyatin, Huxley and Orwell, more recently the more surreal or absurd dystopians like Philip K Dick or Frederick Pohl.

My own work has touched upon the banal elements of utopia or dystopia. Often we are presented with societies which tell of dramatic all pervasive surveillance states or universal sedation. Often, the action will revolve around the main character either breaking out of said system or alternately being utterly crushed by it. So alienated are the protagonists, nothing is said of the countless fictive souls who remain locked in the machine as it cranks away, producing families and living lives in the fashion considered normal for the context. The drama therefore in these settings is often located around what is sensational within the confines of the text, rather than what is commonplace.

What we tend to find in real life dystopias are rigid hierarchies, which produce, suppressed, stilted, claustrophobic populations locked into a set of processes and values they are unable to change. The true horror of the dystopia is how these values are assumed and replicated, how the inauthentic mass consciousness is maintained.

In the current epoch, we receive our consciousness through a wide net of media, each facet attempting to convince us of its own narrative, each calling the other a liar, fake news, each attempting to tell us what we want to hear, while also, telling us what it is that we want to hear, each acting under the cover of artistic or ironic license and vague or euphemistic language. True intent therefore is deliberately, systematically obscured, so that what we receive is an entirely fictional spectacle.

In his essay 'Politics and the English Language' Orwell writes, 'In our time, political speech and writing are largely the defence of the indefensible...but only by arguments which are too brutal for most people to face, and which do not square with the professed aims of the political parties. Thus political language has to consist largely of euphemism.'

With this quote in mind, the dystopia presented in *Divided Together* is one in which there is no clear position, no clear aims, no clear ethos. It is unclear if the party came into power through elections or through a dynasty of through a coup, it is unclear if they are popular or unpopular. We move through four scenes, each a carefully choreographed affair, each ostensibly a meeting to disseminate information, many words are spoken, often grandiose words, and yet nothing is said. All that is solid melts into air. There is no resolution, no character development, no grand rebellion, in an automaton fashion the characters carry out their part, grinning for the cameras. The film seeks to show this act, and the creation, replication and simulation of this act.

### Story Outline

The film opens with the Progress Party's political logo, from this The Leader addresses The Cabinet and each future scene is mapped out, as he articulates the plan for the day. The Cabinet consists of 20 well-dressed individuals who sit in a large well-lit conference room around a table and stare silently and attentively at The Leader as he speaks. None of The Cabinet speaks, as they are ultimately ambiguous impersonal characters.

Scene 2 takes place in a large hall and involves The Leader meeting and thanking The Grassroots Activists who support and campaign for the party. A tracking shot moves through the crowds of people and intersect their conversations. This event proves to be orchestrated essentially for photo opportunities. The scene ends with The Leader alone, trying on a mask of himself.

Scene 3 takes place within a news studio. Shot in one take the scene shows the leader first having an awkward interaction with a make-up artist, followed by him switching character to address a recently invaded foreign country.

Scene 4 takes places within an empty concert hall. The Leader practices his generic, ambiguous speech 'The New Way'. Members of The Cabinet sit silently in the background. The film ends with the generic but well delivered hyperbole being applauded by members of The Cabinet.

