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| Metropolis (1927) |
| **[Enter any *variant forms* of your headword – OPTIONAL]** |
| *Metropolis* is a black-and-white silent German film directed by Expressionist filmmaker Fritz Lang and co-written with his then wife, Thea von Harbou. Set in the year 2026 in an urban dystopia where the rich inhabit towering skyscrapers while faceless workers live and toil among subterranean machines that keep the city running, it helped to further establish the science fiction genre within cinema. The film notably took a contradictory stance towards industrial modernity: while its narrative conveyed Expressionist fears of technology by focusing on the machine rhythms and dehumanizing conditions of the modern factory system, it visually celebrated the Machine Age through Art Deco styling, particularly evident in the design of the Maschinenmensch (trans: machine-human), and the utilization of new cinematographic techniques like the Schüfftan process, by which mirrors were used to project actors onto miniature futuristic sets. *Metropolis* received mixed reviews at its 1927 Berlin premiere. While some praised its technical achievements, others critiqued its thematic contradictions, religious iconography, simplistic social message, and epic length. It was severely edited, and the original cut was lost for over eighty years until the 2008 discovery of a print in the archives of a film museum in Buenos Aires. Twenty-seven lost minutes were recovered and, after a lengthy restoration process, the most complete version of the film was released in 2010. |
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