More than Expected

When governments legislates Freedom Acts, are they actually for the freedom of citizens or for governments to spy on people? This hidden agenda is demonstrated in the novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by George Orwell, the essay "Why Read 1984" by Roy Ogren and the article "Americans Are Now Living in a Society That Rivals Orwell's 1984"by Paul Joseph Watson and Alex Jones. The authors demonstrate that propaganda and technology are government tools to influence a citizen's thoughts. Many aspects of Orwell's dystopian visions in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are occurring today, but on a grand scale. Both essay and article illustrate elements of Orwell's dark vision in present day America by describing its hidden use of technology.

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* Orwell foresees a world filled with propaganda and where one's thoughts are always influenced and altered to follow the view of the party. There are the constant reminders of "WAR IS PEACE, FREEDOM IS SLAVERY, IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH" , slogans on every telescreen in Oceania, which bombard people with information that would "enlighten [ones] mind, to stir [ones] emotion" and to "mold [ones] belief" (Orwell 130, Ogren 6). Even though the world today is almost seventy years in the future, Orwell's vision is unfolding silently in the life of every living human being in the Twenty-First Century. These slogans of propaganda described in Orwell's novel are boldly shown in present day, but are often being overlooked as necessary for national security by citizens living in America. While getting weekly grocery at a local Wal-Mart, one might get bombarded with party slogans such as "Janet Napolitano's "See Something, Say Something"" from one of the hundreds of in store televisions, which encourage people to spy on others and inform authorities; even actions such as "paying with cash" are suspicious (Watson and Jones 10). Although these slogans might not mean much to the average American, educated or critical thinkers might realize that Orwell's novel did not have the sole purpose of entertaining, but also as a message of warning.

While in Orwell's time, the television was only a piece of primitive technology, it still had enough of the capabilities that the government needed, such as to "receive and transmit" signals back and forth (Orwell 5). Although in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* citizens only had one television in their home, the idea of not having several televisions, smartphone and computers in a Twenty-First Century home is unusual, and in this age of information and technology "we are more vulnerable to propaganda" than the citizens of Oceania (Ogren 6). Although many people believe their phones are safe from displaying messages like the ones in *Nineteen Eighty-Four,* they are horribly mistaken, for a new American alert system called the "FEMA Emergency Alert System" will have the ability to "hijack all conventional broadcast communications, and mandatory government messages will appear" on any device (Watson and Jones 12). This kind of power and capability to brainwash citizens is horribly terrifying; just imagine all the cellular devices, computers and television in someone's home

displaying “See Something, Say Something” all day and night for years on end (Watson and Jones 11). This was Orwell’s greatest fear, the fear of technology becoming an essential part of daily life, and later would help governments influence people’s thoughts in hidden ways, as Watson and Jones suggest of “[re-educating Americans] into compliance”(Watson and Jones 12).

Many of Orwell’s dark visions are becoming or are already true in present day society, but some government actions that are happening now are more atrocious than the actions that Big Brother has ever done. Although using propaganda might seem dangerous and extremely effective, it can be prevented if one does not take in information blindly and accept everything that a government claims. It might seem that technology was invented to help the average person with daily life, it can contain more hidden, sinister and military features than one might realize.

Work Cited

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