What Is Our Future Coming To?

What is in store for the future of America? Some of the smartest minds have come up with ideas of what might happen, but in truth, no one really knows what will occur. It may be a mystery of what is to come, but from our actions today, we can predict what will happen tomorrow. George Orwell and Aldous Huxley are two individuals who have thought of what our future will become and put their ideas down in books. While Orwell thought of a society controlled by fear, Huxley imagined a society controlled by pleasure. Out of both opinions, it is easy for me to see that our society is in risk of a dystopia controlled by fear like Orwell foresaw, a place where we are constantly watched and inflicted with pain, a place where what we hate will ruin us.

Imagine a place where every little step you make and take is watched. The smallest wrong move could get you into trouble, and there would have been nothing you could do. When Orwell wrote *1984*, he created a figure that people feared, yet also looked up to. All around, there are posters that say “BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU” (Orwell 2). Nothing would go wrong if people were in fear of getting caught. No one would step out of line. The fear of getting punished is higher than the will to disobey.

It isn’t just some fancy new concept that every move will be watched. It is not something that we won’t have to worry about until the future. Our lives are being watched right now in this
present time. After the horrific attack on September 11, 2001, it seemed that our privacy would become null and void. In many cases “police in many cities are trying to add thousands more cameras to their network” (Johnson). On every street corner there would be a camera where some official would be watching us, sound familiar? Then “officials are seeking real-time access to thousands more in school, transit facilities and private businesses” (Johnson). Not only do they want to watch us on the street but now also in our schools and at work. It would seem that they want to keep tabs on us wherever we go. They say all these precautions are to stop crime, but no one has even researched to see if it is effective. This is just one step our country is taking to look more and more like the society Orwell foresaw.

Thought, an idea or the main thing you are thinking, can’t be controlled right? If you said no to the previous question then I’m sorry but you are wrong. In the new dystopia run by fear nothing was safe from being controlled, not even your own thoughts. Throughout the novel, Winston decided to keep a journal of all his thoughts on the Party or Big Brother, even though he knew this could get him killed.

“The thought police would get him all the same. He had committed- would have committed, even if he had never set pen to paper- the essential crime that contained all others in itself. Thoughtcrime, they called it. Thoughtcrime was not a thing that could be concealed forever. You might dodge successfully for a while, but sooner or later they were bound to get you” (Orwell 19).

Winston was committing the ultimate crime by just thinking. He knew he couldn’t escape the Thought police forever, because he knew that eventually everyone gets caught. Although he knew this, he continued with his thoughts, because as long as he could put two plus two to make four, he had achieved some sort of freedom (Orwell 81).
The idea that nothing is safe, not even a person’s inner most thoughts, is scary. Our country was founded on the ideas of people who had a dream, a dream for a new tomorrow. Without that ability to think for ourselves, we would probably still be under the King’s ruling. The really scary thing is that in today’s society we are slowly losing this ability. It may not have reached the maximum of controlling our thoughts, but slowly our civil rights are being taken away from us. “Civil liberties, including Habeas Corpus and protection from warrantless wiretapping, have been taken away” (Hedges). Our privacy is non-existent as the government collects our e-mail and phone records and pats us down in airports invading our personal space. Right now America is “the most monitored and spied-on citizenry in human history” (Hedges). What next will the government come with concerning our “safety?” Any further and our own thoughts will be gone.

Each day in Orwell’s future society there would be a “Two-Minute Hate” program. The Party would show a picture of their enemy Emmanuel Goldstein. Anything treacherous or acts of sabotage where considered to be his fault. “The horrible thing about the Two Minutes Hate was not that one was obliged to act a part, but that it was impossible to avoid joining in. Within thirty seconds any pretence was always unnecessary” (Orwell 14). The government was controlling everyone to hate this one man and no one could do anything but feel hate towards this man that not even exist. The people wanted to kill and to torture, and by having these feelings, these thoughts, they were losing their freedom and being controlled just one more way.

The face of Emmanuel Goldstein has a similar face in today’s American society. Our government today may not have a Two-Minute Hate program, but when our government showed what Osama bin Laden had been doing, he became the face of our enemy. We angered all of our hate to this one person. The government spread stories of if we didn’t get intervention from the
government then bin Laden would strike and kill us all. They used our fear from 9/11 to enact laws that may have never otherwise been enacted. We were scared and channeling all our hate into one person helped to ease our grief, but was it the right choice.

There is a room in *1984* that is able to threaten the hearts of every man alive, Room 101. What happens behind that closed door is too dark to talk about. One man is heard screaming, “I’ve got a wife and three children. The biggest of them isn’t six years old. You can take the whole lot of them and cut their throats in front of my eyes, and I’ll stand by and watch it. But not Room 101” (236). This man would rather see his family killed then to go to Room 101. The Party’s form of torture is able to break bonds between a family, and break a person’s individual thought and have them geared to one thing in particular, Big Brother. Even Winston wasn’t able to keep his love for Julia intact. When faced with his worst fear he was heard screaming, “Do it to Julia! Not me! Julia! I don’t care what you do to her” (286). Going up against our fears can change a person. Winston loved Julia, and the Party couldn’t have that happening, so the tortured him, broke him, and he became the type of person they wanted in their world. “He loved Big Brother” (298).

It is sad to say that even torture is in today’s world. I am even more disappointed to say that America takes part in such actions. Our illustrious President just signed a bill that would keep Guantanamo Bay up and running. It is not just a place where one’s body is harmed, but also where one person can break another’s soul. What gives us the right to do this to another human being? It goes against the rights that every American holds. In one case “the psychological torture of Pvt. Bradley Manning- who has now been imprisoned for seven months without being convicted of any crime- mirrors the breaking of the dissident Winston Smith at the end of *1984*” (Hedges). We know we have gone too far when anything comes close to what
happened to Winston. He was left utterly broken, and now the same fate is going to happen to a Pvt. Manning, who hasn’t even been convicted of a crime. Where is the justice in that? The easy answer, there is none.

When reading the novel, *Brave New World*, I was able to find a part that showed in no way are we heading towards a society ruled by pleasure, yet I was also able to find a case where you would be naive if you didn’t see the similarities. Throughout the novel, the author talks about the government giving a drug known as Soma to the citizens. People would use the drug to put them in a better. Just “one cubic centimetre cures ten gloomy” (Huxley 60). If the government always has people in a good mood then why would anyone revolt? The thing is, is I don’t think that in today’s world there is no where that shows the government urging us to take drugs or even alcohol. In my opinion the opposite is happening. Since 1914 there have been laws that have prohibited the manufacturing, transportation, and distribution on both alcohol and drugs. The government isn’t using trying to force drugs down our throat; they are trying to stop us from taking them.

On the other hand there are some similarities that the novel and today’s world possess. In the first chapter it explains how babies are born into the world, my manufacturing. It had been said that “they could make sure of at least a hundred and fifty mature eggs within two years” (Huxley 8). No longer are woman giving birth, instead in their place is machines. Now in today’s world there isn’t something this severe, yet. The reason I say there is a similarity is because in more ways than one we are heading for that kind of future. With today’s science parents can determine the characteristics of their child. They can even choose the gender ahead of time. What ever happened to just waiting and loving the child no matter what they came out to be like? Some would say that this could stop things like deformities, but our society wouldn’t
be the same without change and differences. I am troubled to think of where our science will lead us next.

The future of our world lies within the hands of our present choices, and all those choices seem to be leading towards a dystopia ruled by fear. It would seem that our future holds nothing but fear, control, and torture and that does not sound like a future I would want for my kids at all. Maybe that future is where our destiny truly lies, but I do believe in free will, so why couldn’t we change our future into something we would be proud to live in. We would need to change, but anything is possible if you put your mind to it. We would have to put an end to all of the surveillance and torture, and we as the people have to ensure our civil liberties stay intact. It will be a tough road, but if we truly want a different future then this is what needs to be done. “Rome was not built in a day” and like this quote, our future won’t change right away. With time and effort though, we could build a better future not only for us, but for the lives of all the generations to come. We just have to start right now.
Works Cited


