

## **The Perils of Modern Society: Orwell, Huxley, and Lewis**

George Orwell's *1984*, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, and C.S. Lewis's *That Hideous Strength* offer differing visions of just how we might fail as a society. Considering the condition and environment of the world's politics and society, Orwell's portrayal in *1984* best encapsulates the hazards of contemporary culture. Orwell's vision of a surveillance state, enforced conformity, and manipulation of facts is increasingly apparent nowadays. This contention will be supported by real-world examples and a close examination of each of the dystopian realities, as well as a comparison of these realities to our own. Dystopian literature has been used as a mirror for a long time, reflecting the anxieties of its time and warning of possible mishaps in the future. Orwell's depiction of pervasive surveillance and authoritarian control in *1984* is especially resonant in the present-day world, which is marked by unprecedented amounts of surveillance and information manipulation.

### **Orwell's *1984*: The Dystopia of Surveillance and Control**

*1984* offers a planet in which the government, controlled by Big Brother, exerts complete control over citizens through surveillance, censorship, and propaganda. Orwell's famous phrase, "Big Brother is watching you," (Orwell, 3) summarizes a society under continuous watch. In the present-day digital age, surveillance technology has developed to a place where governments and corporations can monitor people's activities to an unprecedented amount, which echoes Orwell's warnings.

The occurrence of cameras, data tracking, as well as social networking surveillance are modern-day equivalents to Orwell's telescreens, and they function as tools of observation and propaganda dissemination. For example, China's Social Credit System monitors its citizens' behavior and consequently punishes or rewards them according to their actions. This rapidly produces a society where privacy is given up for control and conformity. The sacrifice of privacy for security (as seen with government surveillance programs such as the NSA's PRISM and more) reflects Orwell's vision of a culture where citizens' actions and ideas are continuously monitored.

Additionally, Orwell's idea of "doublethink" - the strength of holding opposing ideologies simultaneously - and "newspeak" - language intended to limit thought - is strikingly relevant. Media and political entities' continual manipulation of language and information today often blurs the line, setting up a society in which unbiased facts are progressively elusive. As Orwell writes, "War is peace. Freedom is slavery. Ignorance is strength." (Orwell, 6). This particular manipulation of the fact is apparent in contemporary "fake news" phenomena as well as the strategic dissemination of disinformation to control public opinion. The Cambridge Analytical scandal, in which information was utilized to influence voters' views, highlights the manipulation of truth and information in the present day.

### **Huxley's *Brave New World*: The Dystopia of Pleasure and Control**

While Huxley's *Brave New World* provides an alternative type of dystopia, recognized by a culture sedated by pleasure and consumerism, it doesn't account for the imminent risks posed by the current political landscape as efficiently as *1984*. Huxley's world is but one where

happiness is artificially produced through drugs such as soma and also the elimination of specific thoughts.

Although parallels may be drawn between Huxley's usage of pleasure to manage the populace in contemporary consumer culture, the gravest dangers we encounter are less about pleasure management and more about the erosion of truth and privacy. In Huxley's vision, "Everybody's happy now." (Huxley, 75), but this particular happiness is artificial and shallow, contrasting with the more essential dangers of surveillance and authoritarian control common in Orwell's work. The opioid crisis in the United States, in which people sought escape by using medications, displays a society faced with designed happiness. However, it is still a symptom instead of the underlying cause behind deeper societal issues. Furthermore, the rise of social networking addiction and its impact on mental health reflects Huxley's warning about distraction and artificial contentment.

### **C.S. Lewis's *That Hideous Strength*: The Dystopia of Technocracy and Despotism**

Lewis's *That Hideous Strength* explores the perils of technocracy and also the dehumanization brought about by unchecked totalitarian governance. While informative, its focus on the hazards of technocratic rule ignores the primary issues of surveillance and truth manipulation dominating our current reality.

Lewis warns of a world in which human values are subjugated to technological progress, with institutions similar to the National Institute of Coordinated Experiments (N.I.C.E.) representing the epitome of dehumanizing technocracy. As Lewis illustrates, "The physical sciences, innocent and good in themselves, had... started to be warped," (Lewis, 85). This

particular concern, though legitimate, doesn't align as closely with modern imminent societal threats when compared with Orwell's vision. The rise of artificial intelligence and machine learning, while transformative, raises questions about the dehumanization of decision-making processes, but this is still a growing problem instead of an immediate threat.

## **Conclusion**

To conclude, while *Brave New World* and *That Hideous Strength* offer helpful insights into numerous areas of societal decline, Orwell's *1984* most effectively portrays the hazards we presently experience. The themes of pervasive surveillance, enforced conformity, and also the manipulation of truth resonate powerfully in the modern digital era, where security is diminishing, as well as the difference between fact and fiction is frequently blurred. Orwell's dystopian vision can serve as a stark warning, urging vigilance against the encroachment of authoritarianism and also the erosion of individual freedoms.

## **Works Cited**

Orwell, George. *1984*. Secker & Warburg, 1949.

Huxley, Aldous. *Brave New World*. Chatto & Windus, 1932.

Lewis, C.S. *That Hideous Strength*. The Bodley Head, 1945.