

UNIVERZA V LJUBLJANI  
FILOZOFSKA FAKULTETA  
FAKULTETA ZA DRUŽBENE VEDE

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George Orwell: 1984  
Dystopian Science Fiction or Grim Reality

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Distopijska znanstvena fantastika ali mračna realnost

Diplomsko delo

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Diplomsko delo z naslovom  
*George Orwell: 1984: Dystopian  
Science Fiction or Grimm  
Reality/George Orwell: 1984:  
Distopijska znanstvena  
fantastika ali mračna realnost* je  
izdelano s soglasjem obeh  
fakultet in urejeno po pravilnuku  
matične fakultete

## George Orwell: 1984: Dystopian Science Fiction or Grim Reality

The aim of this dissertation is the analysis of modern democracies through George Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. In his dystopian science fiction, the citizens of Oceania are under complete control of the government. This dissertation asserts that Orwell's characteristics of a totalitarian state such as surveillance, perpetual war and control over language and the media are present in modern democracies. If Orwell in his novel established the notion of surveillance state, then modern democracies are not trailing far behind. With Snowden's revelations of extensive government surveillance programmes there is an eerie similarity between Orwell's Big Brother and modern democratic governments. Similarly the perpetuity of war in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* can be identified in prolonged modern conflicts such as The War on Drugs, the Cold War and The War on Terror. The linguistic devices used in political language of Oceania to deceive its population resemble modern political phrases such as enhanced interrogation techniques, limited military operations, technical barriers etc. On the other hand, the fear of state controlled media is not a concern in modern democratic countries. However, as the analysis reveals, the modern media are not free from corporate monopoly and market forces.

**Key Words:** George Orwell, 1984, surveillance, perpetual war, the media

## George Orwell: 1984: Distopijska znanstvena fantastika ali mračna realnost

Cilj te diplomske naloge je analiza modernih demokracij na podlagi romana Georgea Orwella *1984*. Prebivalci Oceanije so v njegovi distopijski znanstveni fantastiki pod totalnim nadzorom vlade. To diplomsko delo poudarja, da so karakteristike Orwellove totalitarne države, kot so nadzorovanje, trajna vojna ter nadzor nad jezikom in mediji, prisotne tudi v modernih demokracijah. Če je Orwell v svojem romanu vzpostavil pojem države nadzora, potem moderne demokracije za tem pojmom ne zaostajajo prav veliko. Z razkritjem Edwarda Snowdna o obstoju obsežnih programov vohunjenja nad prebivalstvom so moderne demokracije postale strašljivo podobne Velikemu bratu. Podobno se lahko v karakteristikah trajne vojne prepoznajo moderni umetno podaljšani konflikti, kot so vojna proti drogam, hladna vojna in vojna proti terorizmu. Jezikovna sredstva, ki so v uporabi v političnem jeziku Oceanije, pa spominjajo na moderne politične fraze, kot so izboljšane tehnike zasliševanja, tehnične ovire in omejene vojaške operacije. Po drugi strani je strah pred državnim nadzorom nad mediji v modernih družbah dokaj neosnovan. Vendar, kot pokaže analiza, moderne medije omejuje korporativni monopol in sile trga.

**Ključne besede:** George Orwell, 1984, nadzorovanje, trajna vojna, mediji

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# 1 Introduction

*Nineteen Eighty-Four* has become universally recognized as a seminal work by the writer George Orwell. In the novel he discusses a society under complete control of its government. Every facet of human existence is monitored and scrutinized by the secret police. Personal freedom does not exist, positive human emotions such as love, friendship and camaraderie are repressed, and negative emotions such as hate and fear are exploited. Sex is only a tool for procreation, language is degenerated, war is omnipresent and history is changeable according to the Party's<sup>1</sup> needs. The rule of the Party is unbreakable, or as O'Brien explains to Winston in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

We control life, Winston, at all its levels. You are imagining that there is something called human nature which will be outraged by what we do and will turn against us. But we create human nature. Men are infinitely malleable. Or perhaps you have returned to your old idea that the proletarians or the slaves will arise and overthrow us. Put it out of your mind. They are helpless, like the animals. Humanity is the Party. The others are outside – irrelevant. (Orwell 2008, 282)

Orwell's dystopian depiction of the future is bleak and dreary and his presage very ominous, reflecting the zeitgeist of his era. During the decades before the book was written in 1948, Orwell experienced first-hand the inner workings of totalitarian regimes. He fought in the Spanish Civil War and was deeply disappointed by how the revolution was kidnapped from the working class. The fabrication of history, sheer lies and propaganda used to back the *official truth* definitely played the integral part in creating *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Crick 1992; Rodden 2007; Orwell 2014). The years before and during the Second World War offered additional inspiration. From the Great Purge<sup>2</sup> in the Soviet Union to

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<sup>1</sup> The Party is the ruling class in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. It is subdivided into an Inner and Outer Party. The Inner Party is the embodiment of a totalitarian oligarchy that controls every facet of life in Oceania.

<sup>2</sup> The disappearances of political opponents in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* were inspired by The Great Purge in the Soviet Union. From 1936 to 1938 Stalin orchestrated a brutal repression of his political opponents. The

Nazi concentration camps, from the German war propaganda machine to cults of personality, from the Gestapo secret police to the Tehran Conference<sup>3</sup>, Orwell, a keen political writer, observed it all and wrote a haunting warning of what the future might hold. His book should be viewed as more than just a work of art; it should be valued as a study of totalitarian regimes. Throughout the novel, but especially in “The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism”<sup>4</sup>, Orwell deals at length with the mechanisms of control that totalitarian regimes use to remain in power.

Orwell remains one of the most influential writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. His strong imagery, plain writing style and fervent political convictions engage the readers and compel them into a deeper contemplation of the topic in point. No other novel written by Orwell accomplishes that goal more effectively than *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Even though the book was written as a satirical account of the Soviet Union during the Stalin era and its primary purpose was to debunk the Soviet myth<sup>5</sup> and expose the Soviet Union as a totalitarian regime (Gottlieb 2007, 197), its true value lies in its relevance to today’s society. The main purpose of this dissertation is to show that the novel can be applied to expose the totalitarian tendencies and characteristics of modern capitalist democracies. It identifies these mechanisms and correlates them to modern, western, democratic societies such as the United States and the European Union. The main focus centres on recent history for the intention is to show that the novel remains relevant even in this day and age; not only in the autocratic societies of North Korea, China, Russia, etc., but also subtly, yet quite distinctly, in our free and democratic societies.

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era is known for false trials, forced confessions, killings and secret police surveillance, which all became an integral part of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Conquest 2007, 130).

<sup>3</sup> The Tehran Conference is another real life event that inspired the division of the world in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* into three super states: Oceania, Eurasia and Eastasia. It was the meeting of the *Big Three* allied leaders: Franklin D. Roosevelt, Winston Churchill and Joseph Stalin. One of the conversation topics was also the envisaged post-war division of the world (Orwell in Crick 1992, 550).

<sup>4</sup> *The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism* is a book within *Nineteen Eighty-Four* written by Emanuel Goldstein, a character based on Leon Trotsky. He represents the internal enemy of the Party and the book itself is a study of the Party’s totalitarian regime.

<sup>5</sup> The Soviet myth is a belief that the Soviet Union was being operated under socialist ideals and was a socialist country to be respected and emulated (Gottlieb 2007, 197).

No book can be completely understood without background knowledge of the author's life, influences and intentions, so the second chapter of this dissertation contains Orwell's biography. His most formative experiences, the events that brought about the creation of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and the acceptance and critique of the book are presented.

The next chapters are solely concerned with the mechanisms of control the Party uses to keep its autocratic reign intact and compares them to the techniques that governments use today to subordinate and control their citizens. Constant surveillance with telescreens<sup>6</sup>, perpetual warfare against external and internal enemies, control over language and media, fabrication of history, propaganda, the abolition of human connection (emotional as well as physical), physical torture and lack of laws are the main characteristics of the totalitarian regime in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. This dissertation examines the first three mechanisms more in depth, explains their function in the novel, and compares their usage in today's society. In conclusion, the assertion of whether we have fulfilled Orwell's dismal prophecy or have had, as the author hoped, the will to avert it, is assessed.

The moral to be drawn from this dangerous nightmare situation is a simple one: Don't let it happen. It depends on you. (Orwell in Crick 1992, 566)

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<sup>6</sup> The Party members are under constant surveillance through telescreens – television-like devices that transmit and receive both audio and video signal.



## 2 George Orwell and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

George Orwell was a complex and paradoxical person who was often misunderstood. His literary legacy has been fought over by the political left and the right yet it cannot be claimed by either. He was an avowed democratic Socialist<sup>7</sup> but also the harshest critic of England's leftist parties. He was anti-war and yet wanted to serve in the Second World War but was denied on terms of bad health. "Most interestingly, Orwell was an internationalist while at the same time a fervent patriot" (Rossi 2007, 87). He served as a moral beacon to leftist intelligentsia in times when political affiliations dictated turning a blind eye to the Soviet Union's crimes against humanity. He never compromised his unfaltering moral stance and strong beliefs, and was oftentimes declined by publishers because he would refuse to edit his works to make them more politically friendly. He distinguished himself as an essayist, a documentary (literary) journalist and ultimately as a novelist.

### 2.1 Early Years

George Orwell was born in India in 1903 as Eric Arthur Blair to an English father and half French, half English mother. His father was a minor imperial official in the opium trade. At the age of one he moved to England with his mother, while his father remained in his imperial post. His childhood years, judged by his own accord, were not particularly happy. In one of his autobiographical essays, "Such, Such Were the Joys", he describes his schooldays in St Cyprian prep school and the harsh treatment he received. He describes an incident of being flogged for wetting the bed: "This time Sambo laid on in real earnest. He continued for a length of time that frightened and astonished me – about five minutes, it seemed - ending up by breaking the riding-crop. The handle went flying across the room" (Orwell 2014, 419). His residence at St Cyprian was

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<sup>7</sup> Orwell wrote democratic Socialism with a lower case d and an upper case S to distinguish the order of importance. He was first and foremost a socialist and he never abandoned the ideas of socialism (Crick 1992, 568).

young Orwell's first encounter with the authoritarian regimes that he so detested later in life. The treatment that he received at the school, particularly as a poor student attending solely due to a scholarship, definitely left a mark. As Bernard Crick writes, "Such, Such Were the Joys", is so unhappy and so horrific a picture of institutional despotism that some have seen it, rather than the political events in Europe of the 1930s and 1940s, as the origins of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*" (1992, 41). However, the interpretation that childhood trauma from the prep school is responsible for *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is quite an exaggeration. Orwell himself concludes the essay by qualifying his memories:

I base these generalizations on what I can recall of my own childhood outlook. Treacherous though memory is, it seems to me the chief means we have of discovering how a child's mind works. Only by resurrecting our own memories can we realise how incredibly distorted is the child's vision of the world. (2014, 451)

Crick (1992, 61-64) further refutes the notion of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* stemming from childhood trauma with many letters published in the biography where Orwell recounts his childhood in a more favourable manner:

Those who are confident that they can find a psychological "hidden wound" in the young Eric and then locate *Nineteen Eighty-Four* on the map as a version of St. Cyprian's, as if the vision of totalitarianism arose from prep-school terror and sufferings, may be disguising their own lack of perception of the political horrors that Orwell said were under their own noses, far more dangerous, dramatic and objective, in their shared contemporary world of the 1930s and 1940s. (Crick 1992, 64-65)

As well as Crick, John Rossi and John Rodden (2007, 1) describe Orwell's depiction of his childhood as a little bit excessive, especially if one believes the memories of his neighbour Jacintha Buddicom, who knew him as a carefree, fun loving boy. The truth lies between the two extremes, the unhappiness and

the carefreeness (*ibid.*, 1). But although his St Cyprian's experience significantly impacted Orwell, it is far from the main reason for his creation of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

After St Cyprian Orwell attended Eton from 1917 till 1921, a distinguished boarding school for which he acquired a scholarship. The years at Eton were a much happier time for him. According to Crick, "once there, he rested on his oars, neglecting the set tasks; however, he read widely for himself in the canon of English literature and books by rationalists, freethinkers, and reformers like Samuel Butler, George Bernard Shaw, and H. G. Wells" (Crick 2004). His father was not keen on the idea of George going to a university and his lack of effort in studies assured that he could not receive a scholarship, so the matter was promptly resolved and Orwell followed his father's footsteps and joined the Imperial Indian Police in Burma.

## **2.2 Burmese Days**

Burma was definitely an important milestone in Orwell's life. While in the country he saw imperialism at work and grew to detest it. He later in life wrote two memorable essays, "A Hanging" and "Shooting an Elephant", that discuss his stint in Burma. Both essays express Orwell's anti-imperialist stance and dislike for his job that dehumanized both the oppressed and the oppressor. Orwell writes at length about how much he hated his position and sympathized with the Burmese people against the British. He reflects upon the awful conditions in which the Empire's prisoners were kept, "[t]he wretched prisoners huddling in the stinking cages of lock-ups, the grey, cowed faces of the long-term convicts, the scarred buttocks of the men who had been flogged with bamboo – all these oppressed me with an intolerable sense of guilt" (Orwell 2014, 19). Orwell recalls feeling young and unprepared for the silence and solitude in which he had to consider his disdain for imperialism (*ibid.*, 19). In the conclusion of his essay, Orwell sardonically and mockingly portrays how freedom of choice is taken away even from the tyrant himself. He describes the moment that he

realized the senselessness of Britain's colonization and felt as though he was "only an absurd puppet pushed to and fro by the will of those yellow faces behind" (*ibid.*, 22). In that moment, Orwell grasped how tyranny destroys the freedom of the ruler as much as of the oppressed. The ruler will spend the rest of his life trying to anticipate and live up to the expectations of his subjects, becoming a caricature that he cannot escape (*ibid.*, 22).

Orwell's dissent from imperialism does not end solely on a humanistic level but proceeds to an economic level as well. In the essay "How a Nation Is Exploited: The British Empire in Burma" published in a Parisian newspaper *Le Progrès Civique* in 1929, he meticulously details "the way the colonial power fleeces the Burmese of their natural resources and the fruits of their labour. It is, in all essentials, a study in deliberate underdevelopment and the means by which raw materials are used to finance another country's industrial progress" (Hitchens 2002, 18). His adamant rejection of imperialism is even clearer throughout some of his personal correspondence:

We like to think of England as a democratic country, but our rule in India, for instance, is just as bad as German Fascism, though outwardly it may be less irritating. I do not see how one can oppose Fascism except by working for the overthrow of capitalism, starting, of course, in one's own country. If one collaborates with a capitalist-imperialist government in a struggle "against Fascism", i.e. against a rival imperialism, one is simply letting Fascism in by the back door. (Orwell in Crick 1992, 350)

His strong belief in democratic socialism and egalitarianism made him an acute social critic who firmly stood behind his ideals. When being invited to speak for the League for European Freedom in November 1945, he simply replied: "I cannot associate myself with an essentially Conservative body which claims to defend democracy in Europe but has nothing to say about British imperialism. It seems to me that one can only denounce the crimes now being committed in Poland, Yugoslavia etc. if one is equally insistent on ending Britain's unwanted

rule in India” (Orwell in Hitchens 2002, 29). Burma had a major influence on Orwell’s political development. He went to the country as a former Etonian from the “lower upper middle class” (Orwell in Crick 2011) – though rebellious, not yet anti-establishment. He came back with a whole new awareness of social injustices that later helped form his unique political views. Orwell resigned from the Indian Imperial Police in 1927 and, as he later recalled for the American edition of *Burmese Days*<sup>8</sup>, the reason was, “partly because the climate had ruined my health, partly because I already had vague ideas of writing books, but mainly because I could not go any longer serving an imperialism which I had come to regard as very largely a racket” (Orwell in Crick 1992, 171).

### 2.3 Down and Out

After his Burmese days Orwell went “native in his own country” (in Crick 2004) as was described by Sir Victor Pritchett. The depiction was quite befitting as Orwell spent the next couple of years tramping around London and Paris on and off, living in quite severe poverty among the poorest classes. He recollects: “I sometimes lived for months on end amongst the poor and half criminal elements who inhabit the worst parts of the poorest quarters, or take to the streets, begging and stealing. At that time I associated with them through lack of money, but later their way of life interested me very much for its own sake” (Orwell in Crick 1992, 176). During those years he tried to become a writer by writing short stories and novels that nobody would agree to publish. He destroyed at least one or two of his early attempted novels (Crick 2004). “He wrote like a cow with a musket” (in Crick 2004), stated poet Ruth Pitter after reading one of his early manuscripts. Despite the initial failure, Orwell persisted in his endeavours and developed his trademark plain style of writing that still evokes critical thinking and entertains the readers even six decades after his own death.

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<sup>8</sup> *Burmese Days* is Orwell’s first fictional novel that drew from his personal experiences in Burma. The novel was published in 1934 and discusses corruption and imperial injustice. At its centre is John Flory, a solitary and misplaced individual trapped within a soul-crushing system of the British Empire.

Out of his tramping about arose his first published book *Down and Out in Paris and London* published in 1933 by Victor Gollancz. The book is mainly an autobiographical account of his life amongst the vagabonds, tramps, dishwashers, waiters and hoodlums between 1928 and 1931. As Orwell himself claimed, “[a]s for the truth of my story, I think I can say that I have exaggerated nothing except in so far as all writers exaggerate by selecting. I did not feel that I had to describe events in the exact order in which they happened, but everything I have described did take place at one time or another” (in Crick 1992, 187). The book was rather well received by the critics as an exceptional depiction of the misery of poverty, yet the sales were only mediocre, preventing Orwell from leaving his job as a teacher and focusing full-time on his writing.

His political views at the time were not yet defined. He called himself a “Tory anarchist” (Crick 2004). And even later in life that conservative aspect of his character persisted vividly in his patriotism, love of England and English way of life. However, his patriotism was never aggressive. He defines it in his acclaimed essay “Notes on Nationalism” that by patriotism he means “a devotion to a particular place and a particular way of life, which one believes to be the best in the world but has no wish to force upon other people. Patriotism is of its nature defensive, both militarily and culturally” (Orwell 2014, 301). He gives us another note on his motives to lead a vagabond life and another clue to his moral character in one of his later works, where he speaks of the overwhelming guilt that had followed him since serving as part of the imperialist force (Orwell in Crick 1992, 180-181). Orwell recalls a desire to fight back against the tyrannical oppressors, to reject societally accepted routes of success and to immerse himself within the subjugated classes (*ibid.*, 180-181).

Though not yet completely politically developed, Orwell had acquired a keen sense of social injustice. What was needed for one of the greatest political writers, social critics, essayists and novelists to be born was the personal experience of the Spanish Civil War and the disappointment of the revolution betrayed. Returning back to Sir Victor Pritchett’s depiction of Orwell as a man who “went native in his own country” (in Crick 2004) implies his dedication to

break the barriers of class that were inhibiting the literary strata of the age and to portray the England of its natives.

Through the years 1933 till 1936 Orwell had three of his fictional books published: *Burmese Days* in 1934, *Clergyman's Daughter* in 1935 and *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* in 1936. All three of them were widely regarded as badly written and even Orwell himself "directed his executors to ensure that at least two of his novels — *A Clergyman's Daughter* and *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* — were not republished" (Hitchens 2002, 172). Victor Gollancz's faith in his young protégé's literary ability was, nevertheless, quite strong. The same year that *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* was published, Orwell received an advance of £500 to write an account of poverty-stricken North England. The idea was not Orwell's but Gollancz's. Gollancz wanted a similar book as *Down and Out in Paris and London* about unemployed workers rather than tramps and outcasts. The result was one of Orwell's best works, a masterpiece of documentary (literary) journalism, *The Road to Wigan Pier*. The book was published in 1937 and it consists of two parts; the first part provides a description of the economic depression in North England and the second part elaborates upon Orwell's consideration of Socialism and its benefits (Sharrock 2011). The depictions of the conditions the unemployed workers lived in were emotionally striking. The powerful imagery of his writing evokes in the reader the exact picture of the conditions and leaves him with a resounding emotion of injustice.

As we moved slowly through the outskirts of the town we passed row after row of little grey slum houses running at right angles to the embankment. At the back of one of the houses a young woman was kneeling on the stones, poking a stick up the leaden waste-pipe which ran from the sink inside and which I suppose was blocked. I had time to see everything about her – her sacking apron, her clumsy clogs, her arms reddened by the cold. She looked up as the train passed, and I was almost near enough to catch her eye. She had a round pale face, the usual exhausted face of the slum girl who is twenty-five and looks forty, thanks to miscarriages and drudgery; and

it wore, for the second in which I saw it, the most desolate, hopeless expression I have ever seen. It struck me that we are mistaken when we say that “It isn’t the same for them as it would be for us,” and that people bred in the slums can imagine nothing but the slums. For what I saw in her face was not the ignorant suffering of an animal. She knew well enough what was happening to her – understood as well as I did how dreadful a destiny it was to be kneeling there in the bitter cold, on the slimy stones of a slum backyard, poking a stick up a foul drain-pipe. (Orwell in Crick 1992, 287)

Writing *The Road to Wigan Pier* was yet another formative experience for Orwell’s political ideas and his writing, but what finally shaped him into the man who wrote *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was his involvement in the Spanish Civil War. John Rossi and John Rodden claim, “[i]f *The Road to Wigan Pier* demonstrated Orwell’s embrace of socialism, his experiences in Spain during the Civil War completed the process while adding another dimension to his thought – a pervasive distrust of communism” (2007, 5). His socialism was of a peculiar sort, “combining egalitarianism, idealization of working class culture, and an intense dislike of Marxist bickering” (*ibid.*, 4). Orwell also had a profound distrust of his fellow socialists, believing that they wanted power and wouldn’t use it in the best interests of the working class (*ibid.*, 4).

## 2.4 Spanish Civil War

His final stage of political development began early in 1937. Supporting the socialist cause against the fascist Franco regime, Orwell joined the independent POUM<sup>9</sup>, ILP’s<sup>10</sup> sister party. He enlisted in England and was sent to Barcelona where he was stirred by the camaraderie he experienced there. He later recalled: “I was breathing the air of equality, and I was simple enough to

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<sup>9</sup> POUM is an abbreviation for *Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista* (The Workers' Party of Marxist Unification) which fought against Franco’s regime during the Spanish Civil War. The POUM was an independent Marxist movement hated by communists and in disagreement with the Trotskyists.

<sup>10</sup> ILP stands for Independent Labour Party. The ILP recruited soldiers and helped gather support in England for the fight against the fascists in Spain. It was the leftist party that Orwell most associated with.



imagine that it existed all over Spain. I did not realize that more or less by chance I was isolated among the most revolutionary section of the Spanish working class” (Orwell in Crick 1992, 322-323). In a personal letter to his friend Cyril Connolly, he wrote, “I have seen wonderful things and at last really believe in Socialism, which I never did before” (Orwell in Crick 1992, 323). And if the camaraderie of Barcelona convinced him that socialism was possible, it was the hostile takeover of the revolution by Stalin-backed communists that made him internally pessimistic. As John Rossi and John Rodden write, “[a]mong the lasting impressions Orwell took from his time in Spain was that true socialism was possible, but the Communists would destroy any left wing forces they could not control” (2007, 5).

Orwell fought on a relatively quiet front but was shot through the neck in 1937 and had to flee Barcelona while on medical leave. By that time, the communists were already executing purges of independent leftist movements including the POUM, of which Orwell was a part. He was disgusted by the way the revolution was betrayed for political reasons and wrote two major works on his experience in Spain: an essay “Looking Back on the Spanish War” and a book *Homage to Catalonia*. The Spanish Civil War burst his bubble. He experienced most of the themes that occupy *Nineteen Eighty-Four* first-hand, such as the fabrication of history and the disappearance of objective truth.

In his essay “Looking Back on the Spanish War”, he writes about the pure lack of authenticity in Spanish newspapers that embellished and falsified their stories. The reports went so far as to create their own wars, heroes and villains, all in accordance with what best promoted the various “party lines” (Orwell 2014, 223). The thematic similarity between his experience in Spain and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is even clearer as Orwell elaborates on the situation. He reveals that accurate, unbiased records for the period don’t exist (*ibid.*, 223). There will be no means to recreate the past without the clouding of propaganda and fallacious data (*ibid.*, 223). Orwell divulges: “This kind of thing is frightening to me, because it often gives me the feeling that the very concept of objective truth is fading out of the world. After all, the chances are that those lies, or at

any rate similar lies, will pass into history” (in Hitchens 2002, 69). This systemic manipulation of history culminates in a world where the ruling authorities control the past as easily as they define the future (*ibid.*, 69). They can dictate what did or did not occur. “If [the leader] says that two and two are five – well, two and two are five” (*ibid.*, 70).

Upon returning to England, Orwell was confronted with strong political opposition. His articles and reviews about Spain were being rejected by the leading leftist newspapers of the time, mainly for being too controversial and potentially harming the cause of fighting against the Franco regime (Crick 1992, 342). Many were ready to look the other way but Orwell found that mentality “a toleration of necessary murder and showing the mentality of a whore – a willingness to string along at any price” (in Crick 1992, 342). Even his publisher, Victor Gollancz, with whom Orwell had a valid contract for his next two books, refused to publish *Homage to Catalonia*. Orwell managed to find a new publisher, Fredric Warburg, and the book was published in 1938. It received decent reviews and Orwell was complimented as a great writer; nevertheless, left wing press savaged the book and the communist *Daily Worker* called it Trotskyist propaganda (Rossi and Rodden 2007, 6). The book sold poorly despite being historically correct, and regardless of its highly praised literary merit. “Some now think of it as Orwell's finest achievement, and nearly all critics see it as his great stylistic breakthrough: he became the serious writer with the terse, easy, vivid colloquial style” (Crick 2004). Spain finally moulded literary Orwell into his final embodiment. As Crick writes, “[a]fter the ordeals of Spain and writing the book about it, most of Orwell's formative experiences were over. His finest writing, his best essays and his great fame laid ahead” (1992, 352). Similar can be stated about his political side. By that point in time, Orwell was committed in his opposition to all forms of fascism, but he would spend his final decade trying to determine his exact brand of socialism (Rossi and Rodden 2007, 6).

## 2.5 Essays

Before the beginning of the Second World War, Orwell's sentiments were by and large aimed against it. He regarded the war to be one imperialism fighting the other and wrote profusely against it:

It is desperately necessary to get people to see through the humbug that is talked about 'fighting against Fascism,' or the next thing we know we shall find ourselves fighting another imperialist war (against Germany) which will be dressed up as a war 'against Fascism', and then another ten million men will be dead before people grasp that Fascism and so-called democracy are Tweedledum and Tweedledee. (Orwell in Hitchens 2002, 127)

His views changed radically after the war broke off. He realised his misjudgement; England was, nonetheless, the lesser of the two evils. Orwell defended his support of the war, recognizing the lack of alternative. He wrote in his essay "My Country Right or Left" about the inevitability of surrender or resistance and upheld his socialist stance that it was better to resist Hitler in the same manner as the Republican resistance in Spain and the Chinese resistance to Japan (Orwell 2014, 136-137). He saw the war as an opportunity for a socialist revolution and patriotism as a glue that bound the middle and working classes together (Rossi and Rodden 2007, 7). In his article in the Tribune, he urged, "a revolutionary has to be a patriot and a patriot has to be a revolutionary" (Orwell in Rossi and Rodden 2007, 7). Orwell wanted to enlist several times but was denied service on terms of bad health. Nevertheless, he joined the Home Guard and helped the war cause from home.

His fourth novel, *Coming Up for Air*, was published in 1939. The novel is largely a pessimistic premonition of the impending war combined with idyllic images from an Edwardian era childhood. Thematically, Orwell again borrowed from his

own life. The book was his first fictional novel to be well received critically, yet again the sales were underwhelming (Crick 2004).

The war crystalized Orwell's political views and, by this time, his writing was already at its stylistic peak. He finally resolved both sides of his character, the conservative and the liberal. During the Second World War and immediately afterwards, he wrote his best essays, such as "My Country Right or Left", "Notes on Nationalism", "The Prevention of Literature", "Politics and the English Language", Why I Write, "The Lion and the Unicorn: Socialism and the English Genius" etc (Crick 2004). In his essay "Why I Write", published in 1946, he explores his reasons for writing. He knew early on that he wanted to be a writer, but what kind remained a mystery (Orwell 2014, 2). At the beginning he wanted to write "enormous naturalistic novels with unhappy endings, full of detailed descriptions and arresting similes, and also full of purple passages in which words were used partly for the sake of their sound" (*ibid.*, 2). This indicates that he enjoyed the aesthetic quality of writing as strongly as the political, but the times in which he was born forced him to become a political writer. His final resolution states, "[e]very line of serious work that I have written since 1936 has been written, directly or indirectly, against totalitarianism and for democratic Socialism, as I understand it" (*ibid.*, 5). In conclusion of the essay he confesses, "I see that it is invariably where I lacked a political purpose that I wrote lifeless books and was betrayed into purple passages, sentences without meaning, decorative adjectives and humbug generally" (*ibid.*, 7). Orwell defined himself as a political writer, but never a political writer for a particular political option. He once wrote "no writer can be a loyal member of a political party" (Orwell in Crick 2011), while simultaneously being a member of the ILP. But in his writing he remained "committed to objective truth – a manifest truth out there that he clung to amid totalitarian apologists and truth-deniers" (Cain 2007, 83).

Orwell's political essays show his astute awareness of his political reality and in some cases foreshadow the themes of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. In the essay "Politics and the English Language" he pinpoints the misuse of language for

political reasons: a theme prevalent in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* with its Newspeak, a language devoid of unorthodox political concepts:

In our time, political speech and writing are largely the defence of the indefensible [...] Thus political language has to consist largely of euphemism, question-begging and sheer cloudy vagueness. Defenceless villages are bombarded from the air, the inhabitants driven out into the countryside, the cattle machine-gunned, the huts set on fire with incendiary bullets: this is called pacification. Millions of peasants are robbed of their farms and sent trudging along the roads with no more than they can carry: this is called transfer of population or rectification of frontiers. People are imprisoned for years without trial, or shot in the back of the neck or sent to die in scurvy in Arctic lumber camps: this is called elimination of unreliable elements. Such phraseology is needed if one wants to name things without calling up mental pictures of them. (Orwell 2014. 356)

In the second part of the essay "The Lion and the Unicorn: Socialism and the English Genius" Orwell concerns himself with how a socialist state should be organized in order to prevent totalitarian tendencies. As he describes, "[c]entralized ownership has very little meaning unless the mass of the people are living roughly upon an equal level, and have some kind of control over the government. 'The State' may come to mean no more than a self-elected political party, and oligarchy and privilege can return, based on power rather than on money" (Orwell 2014, 161). This exact point is widely satirized in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* where Ingsoc, a Newspeak word for English Socialism, bears no relation to the actual idea of socialism. Similarly, the manifestation of communism in the USSR bore no relation to its original concept. Orwell's essays are invigorating and thought-provoking. The powerful imagery of his writing and pure force with which he advocates his beliefs engages the reader and encourages deeper thought on the topics that he addresses. He stands apart as a captivating and stimulating author.

## 2.6 *Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four*

After working for the BBC from 1941 until 1943, Orwell joined the *Tribune* as a literary editor. His essays brought him acclaim and he could finally choose for whom to write. But his next book, *Animal Farm*, propelled him into being one of the greatest novelists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. *Animal Farm* is a “take on the Russian Revolution and its aftermath in the deceptively simple form of a barnyard fable and satirical allegory” (Dickstein 2007, 134). The book was Orwell’s confrontation with Stalin’s regime. Similarly as with *Homage to Catalonia*, he had problems finding a publisher since it was a very inopportune time to criticize a war ally. The book was finally published in 1945 by Secker & Warburg and achieved huge sales both in Britain and the United States, ironically, because the Cold War followed quickly after the Second World War, and the USSR was no longer seen as an ally. The book was widely misunderstood by some American critics and writers “as a satirical polemic against all forms of socialism, rather than a betrayal of revolutionary egalitarian ideals by Stalin and the Communist Party” (Crick 2004). It is ironic how, in lieu of Orwell’s emphasis on straight talking and plain writing, his two most successful works of art were written as elaborate metaphors and have been so widely misread.

After the success of *Animal Farm* and the death of his first wife, Orwell moved to Jura, a secluded Scottish island in the Inner Hebrides, where, seriously ill from tuberculosis, he wrote *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. It was his final, most complex and widely read novel published in 1949 by Secker and Warburg. Orwell himself was not particularly happy with the end result. He called it “a good idea ruined” (Orwell in Crick 1992, 551) and commented, “I ballsed it up rather, partly owing to being so ill while I was writing it” (Orwell in Crick 1992, 551). The book received favourable reviews except from the communists, who saw it as a direct attack. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* offers many interpretations. It is a controversial work that has been widely misunderstood. Even Orwell’s publisher

misinterpreted its idea and believed it to represent the final breach between Orwell and socialism:

The political system which prevails is Ingsoc = English Socialism. This I take to be a deliberate and sadistic attack on socialism and socialist parties generally. It seems to indicate a final breach between Orwell and Socialism, not the socialism of equality and human brotherhood which clearly Orwell no longer expects from socialist parties, but the socialism of Marxism and the managerial revolution. 1984 is among other things an attack on Burnham's managerial revolution; and it is worth a cool million votes to the Conservative Party; it is imaginable that it might have a preface by Winston Churchill after whom its hero is named. (Warburg in Crick 1992, 567)

Similar interpretations were concocted by the left- and right-wing critics, believing that Nineteen Eighty-Four is Orwell's recantation of socialism. The right used the book as anti-propaganda against communism, socialism, Marxism and the left in general and praised Orwell for it, while the left denounced him as a traitor. As Crick writes, "[t]he espousal of Orwell by the American right and free-market liberals made some British socialists immediately brand him as a betrayer of socialism and a cold war warrior" (2004). Bernard Crick, Orwell's biographer, also refutes the idea that Nineteen Eighty-Four represents Orwell's divorce with socialism by relying on the evidence that Orwell "continued to write for the Tribune and American left wing journals right up to his final illness, during the time of the composition of Nineteen Eighty-Four" (2007, 146).

Many left-wing critics tried to downplay Orwell's importance as a political writer and Nineteen Eighty-Four as a serious political work. Raymond Williams in his book *Culture and Society 1780-1950* believes Orwell to have put himself in a position of self-exile as a continuously critical outsider (1960, 310). Williams asserts that as an exile, he is incapable of relying on anyone or developing strong social connections since by doing so, his position might be compromised

(*ibid.*, 310). He further fears his self-imposed standing, as he has no means by which to confirm his unique social identity and individuality (*ibid.*, 310). Williams continues on to brand *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as a deterministic prophecy of doom (1960, 313). Orwell, as an intellectual exile against the whole system, recognized that he could not win; “there was no hope at all” (*ibid.*, 313). Many left wing critics share similar perspectives. Isaac Deutscher describes the book as “a cry from the abyss of despair” (Deutscher in Gottlieb 2007, 196) and Anthony West believes that Orwell’s pessimistic approach may be due, in part, to the sudden death of his wife and deterioration of his own health (see Gottlieb 2007, 197). But more significantly, West continues, Orwell’s “mood of suicidal despair” seems to result from the exhaustion of hope for solutions to the “monstrous progress” of mankind (West in Gottlieb 2007, 197).

But the literary value of the book must not be regarded as a doomsday prophecy as is suggested by the leftist critics, whose criticism is largely a defence mechanism against Orwell’s harsh attacks on his own kind. This type of interpretation completely disregards the historical context and his political shrewdness in identifying the pitfalls that await us in order to protect our liberal values. Orwell, in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, managed to portray with such accuracy the inner-workings of Stalin’s regime that even some Soviet Union writers, such as Milan Simecka and Czeslav Milos, were obfuscated at how a person who never lived in Russia managed to write such an accurate account (Gottlieb 2007, 196). *Nineteen Eighty-Four* also received validation as a political study in Hannah Arendt’s *Origins of Totalitarianism*, and Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinsky’s *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (*ibid.*, 196). As Erica Gottlieb suggests, these books are evidence of “scholarly confirmations that Orwell’s original ‘anatomy’ of totalitarianism was an accurate diagnosis of reality and not the fantasmagorical ‘invention’ of an author in the throes of terminal despair” (*ibid.*, 196).

And if *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is not a prophecy of the impending future, what is it? As Bernard Crick suggests, it is a “Swiftian satire” and a “warning” (2007, 147; 153). Orwell parodies the Soviet Union and totalitarian regimes in general.



The switching of the enemy during Hate Week in the heights of ceremonial anti-propaganda against Eurasia satirizes the German-Soviet non-aggression pact<sup>11</sup>. False confessions by the leading politicians of the Party in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* mock the Moscow Trials and the Great Purge. The falsification of history that was performed by Winston in the Ministry of Truth derisively attacks the falsifications that were made by the USSR, such as Trotsky's disappearance from official pictures in the begging stages of the revolution<sup>12</sup>. The examples are numerous; Orwell made a dark parody of the world he lived in and tried to warn us of how quickly great ideals fall prey to desire of power. But in the end, disappointed by the misinterpretations of the book, he explained it best himself in an open letter:

It has been suggested by some of the reviewers of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* that it is the author's view that this, or something like this, is what will happen inside the next forty years in the Western World. This is not correct. I think that, allowing for the book being after all a parody, something like *Nineteen Eighty-Four* could happen. This is the direction in which the world is going at the present time, and the trend lies deep in the political, social and economic foundations of the contemporary world situation.

Specifically the danger lies in the structure imposed on Socialist and on Liberal capitalist communities by the necessity to prepare for total war with the USSR and the new weapons, of which of course the atomic bomb is the most powerful and the most publicised. But danger lies also in the acceptance of a totalitarian outlook by intellectuals of all colours. (Orwell in Crick 1992, 565-566)

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<sup>11</sup> Just days before the beginning of the Second World War, the Soviet Union and Germany signed a non-aggression pact allowing Germany to attack Poland unopposed. Orwell was especially frustrated by British communist newspapers who heavily criticized Nazi Germany before the pact, and overnight became very apologetic towards Hitler's regime.

<sup>12</sup> The October Revolution occurred in 1917 when the communists overthrew the Tsar of Russia. Leon Trotsky was one of the leading figures of the revolution. After his loss against Stalin in the political struggle for Lenin's legacy, he was exiled and later assassinated. Stalin's regime deleted him from pictures and historical records in order minimize his importance within the revolution.

And Bernard Crick agrees, “*Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a long premeditated, rational warning against totalitarian tendencies in societies like our own rather than a sick and sudden prophecy about a Soviet or neo-Nazi takeover, still less a scream of despair and recantation of his democratic Socialism” (1992, 568).

George Orwell died on the 21<sup>st</sup> of January 1950 of pulmonary tuberculosis but his literary legacy survived. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* entered social consciousness and helped us prevent the totalitarian horror world of Oceania. But to what extent? Is his warning still relevant? The following chapters explore whether the techniques of control used in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are still in use today and to what extent they affect modern society.

### 3 “Big Brother Is Watching You”

“Big Brother is watching you” is the most quoted Party slogan from *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Orwell 2008, 3). It instantly evokes the thought of a totalitarian state with ubiquitous surveillance of its citizens. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the Thought Police<sup>13</sup> scour the streets for unorthodox behaviour, microphones are planted everywhere to listen in on conversations and telescreens transmit propaganda and record every moment. Privacy is completely eliminated for the Party functionaries of Oceania and discipline is internalized. This chapter centres on explaining Orwell’s concept of surveillance in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and its modern theory and application. Present-day examples will provide ample evidence validating Orwell’s warnings of a surveillance state.

#### 3.1 *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Panopticon and Panopticism

Orwell’s concept of an infallible surveillance apparatus derives from Jeremy Bentham’s idea of the Panopticon. The British philosopher devised a perfect prison where the inmates are kept under control by an invisible, yet omnipresent, inspector. The inspector resides in the central tower overlooking all the cells and their inmates. The tower is positioned at the centre of the courtyard and the cells are built around the tower allowing the inspector an unobstructed view of all the cells at any time. In turn he himself is visible, yet owing to the numerous apparatuses devised by Bentham to conceal him, he is only “visible as a silhouette, a shadow, or an opaque, dark spot” (Božovič 1995, 13). This presence, but not complete visibility, creates an illusion of constant surveillance. The prisoners never know when they are being watched and believe they might be under surveillance continuously. Similarly, control over Party members by an omnipresent inspector is established in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the role of the inspector being filled by the Thought Police. Winston’s

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<sup>13</sup> The Thought Police are the secret police in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* that are concerned with uncovering political opponents of the Party. Their job is to uphold the Party’s regime by recognising and exposing thought-criminals who disagree in the slightest with the official Party line. Even unorthodox thoughts are considered a crime in Oceania.

apartment had a telescreen that provided the Thought Police with a partial view of his actions and a constant input of all sounds made above the level of a whisper (Orwell 2008, 4-5). It provided no notice of when the screen was transmitting, so it was impossible for individuals to know when they were being monitored, raising the fear the Thought Police could be watching everybody at every given moment (*ibid.*, 4-5). The people in Orwell's dystopia had to be constantly on guard and act upon the assumption that the Party could use everything they said or did against them (*ibid.*, 4-5).

Bentham delves into the idea even deeper. What happens when the prisoners try to test whether or not they are being watched? Bentham devised a simple solution. When observing a transgression by a prisoner, the inspector should write it down and pay close attention to that prisoner, carefully noting any subsequent misdeeds (Bentham in Božovič 1995, 16). After some time has passed, the inspector should confront the prisoner with the exact list of his wrongdoings, thusly amplifying the illusion of the all-seeing, all-knowing inspector and creating an even more hopeless atmosphere for insurrection (*ibid.*, 16). Božovič concludes:

Although the inspector may completely abandon surveillance, from this moment on, each prisoner will believe that the inspector is preying upon him – whereas in truth, each prisoner is only praying upon himself. Thus discipline is internalized, while the inspector himself has become superfluous. In this way, then, the impression of the inspector's invisible omnipresence and the idea of constant surveillance are produced in prisoners' minds. (1995, 17)

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* the same technique is used. Winston is not arrested after his first transgression when buying the diary. Instead, all his crimes are duly noted and listed back to him by O'Brien in the interrogation Room 101. The Party knows everything, or better yet, the Party has known everything all along. There is not even the slightest possibility of hope for Winston to keep at least a single memory, a shred of privacy, secret from the Party. Nevertheless, there is

a slight difference between Bentham's and Orwell's purpose for what Božovič calls "the deferral of inevitable punishment" (1995, 17). Bentham uses it to establish control over the individual and to warn others that all transgressions are recorded so that future dissent is prevented. On the other hand the Party has no need for warnings, their single purpose for deferral of inevitable punishment is to deconstruct a heretic and transform him into a believer. Inevitably, that is what happens to Winston in the end.

The concept of the Panopticon was also used by French philosopher Michel Foucault in his seminal work *Discipline and Punish* to explain the functioning of modern society. He asserts that the idea of a perfect prison permeates all modern institutions including schools, hospitals, workplace, mental institutions, etc (Foucault 1995, 205). Foucault developed the architectural idea into a theory of power relations within our modern "disciplinary society".

But the Panopticon must not be understood as a dream building: it is the diagram of a mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form; its functioning abstracted from any obstacle, resistance or friction, must be represented as a pure architectural and optical system: it is in fact a figure of political technology that may and must be detached from any specific use. (Foucault 1995, 205)

According to Lyon, Foucault established surveillance at the forefront of social analysis (1994, 26) and his concept of the Panopticon at the centre of surveillance studies. Many scholars use the schema of the Panopticon to elucidate modern surveillance practices as it will be shown in the next paragraph. Unlike in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, where Big Brother represents the central hub of surveillance, Foucault suggests many "mini Big Brothers" across the social sphere. As Lyon proposes, "the Panopticon epitomises the disciplinary network of society seen not only in prisons but also in the capitalist enterprise, military organization, and a multitude of state-run institutions. It does not wait for offenders to act, but classifies and situates

before any 'event', producing not 'good citizens' but a 'docile deviant population'" (1994, 72).

Foucault's social theory of panopticism has been widely used in the theoretical field of surveillance. Its polyvalent applicability is useful to elucidate many modern examples. Lyon in his work *The Electronic Eye: The Rise of Surveillance Society* presents different authors and their application of Foucault's concept. Cohen (see Lyon 1994, 68) for example, applies the theory to electronic tagging of minor offenders who might be under constant supervision and have to report back to the central control. Gary T. Marx (*ibid.*, 68), in his study of American undercover police work, notices the dispersion of panoptic shifts such as manipulation instead of coercion, computer chips instead of prison bars and invisible restraints instead of handcuffs and straitjacket into society. Meanwhile, Diana Gordon (*ibid.*, 68) in her analysis of the National Crime Information Centre suggests that with the computerization of data the entire function of crime-control becomes a *panoptic schema*, where the records replace the inmate and all of law enforcement replaces the warden.

Perhaps the most obvious example of the Panopticon in modern society is CCTV (closed circuit television or video surveillance), which has become a widespread and publicly accepted means of surveillance and crime prevention. Its normalizing discipline pervades our public and private spaces such as squares, shopping malls, train stations, airports, etc. Its popularity evokes the image of Big Brother and the feeling of ubiquitous surveillance. A study in England showed that there is approximately one surveillance camera for every 32 citizens and 1.85 million across Britain, which denotes it as the most watched society (Lewis 2011). Similar findings have also been reported in Slovenia, where, interestingly, Ljubljana alone is home to 4000 cameras, 800 of them facing public areas (Mazzini 2002). In 2014 the Slovenian Pirate Party started an initiative of logging all the security cameras in the centre of Ljubljana with the help of the public. Their final count was 700, however, they haven't covered the entire city (Pirati 2014).

The Foucauldian view of surveillance remained relevant for some authors even with the invention of new information communication technologies (ICTs). As Whitaker explains it, “the ‘carceral texture’ persists and deepens in a ‘disciplinary’ society, though the actual walls of the prison may have been removed. Contemporary surveillance becomes here a noticeably intense and intrusive form of discipline, which depends on observation, assessment and analysis as matters of routine” (in Ball and Webster 2003, 6). Robin and Webster agree that the computer brought about the extension and intensification of panoptic control and rendered social control more pervasive, more invasive, more total, but also more routine, mundane and inescapable (see Fuchs *et al.* 2012, 7).

### **3.2 Beyond Panopticism**

But not all critics acknowledge new technological advancements only in a negative light. For some, new technologies brought new hope of democratization of society, economic prosperity, enhanced global understanding and a renaissance of journalism (see Amon Prodnik 2014, 1227). Yet this hope was premature. As Jernej Amon Prodnik suggests, technology cannot be viewed autonomously outside the existing social structures. It can only be examined through the system in which it is incorporated. So it is only natural that modern technology did not bring the revolutionary change it promised (Amon Prodnik 2014, 1226-1228). Companies like Google, Facebook, You Tube, Twitter, etc., are ingrained in capitalist society so their goal is not democratization but profit. Every click on the internet is followed, every search is logged and every user profiled in order to seduce us more efficiently and make us better consumers.

The pervasiveness of new technologies has demanded new theories of surveillance, theories less centralized than Big Brother and the Panopticon, less totalizing, more benign and democratic. The idea behind these new theories being that even if we are surveilled more, the surveillance is more suggestive

and less coercive. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (see Ball and Webster 2003, 20-21) suggest the analogy of a creeping plant (rhizome<sup>14</sup>) rather than central tree trunk with spreading branches, which makes surveillance appear to be a looser, more malleable and flowing set of processes. Haggerty and Ericson (see Ball and Webster 2003, 20-21) propose the term “surveillance assemblage”, where surveillance functions by abstracting bodies from places and splitting them into flows to be reassembled as virtual data-doubles, once again questioning hierarchies and central power. Many critics believe that new technologies have made surveillance more democratic and participatory (Fuchs *et al.* 2012, 7) and made the process of surveillance less one-sided, enabling the surveilled to surveil back in return.

The modern society with its technology and surveillance proposes a new social contract. In order to augment our lives, make them safer, more efficient and convenient, we agree to renounce some of our privacy, and consent to be surveilled. Every time we pay with a credit card we do not object to the logs of the transaction being recorded and stored in our online banking account because it enables us a clear overview of our spending. We do not object to stores monitoring our buying habits with loyalty cards because we like their offered deals custom tailored just for us. We are not bothered by the security cameras recording our movements because they make us feel safer. And we do not mind the apps on our smart phones requiring our location because they offer us something in return, whether it is logging how many miles you jogged today or tagging a location next to a picture so that we can easily remember where it was taken.

This does not mean that we no longer care about our privacy, we are just more willing to trade it off for the benefits of convenience, social interaction and safety. As Monika Taddicken suggests, empirical evidence can be found in numerous studies that social web users are quite concerned about their privacy, yet those concerns usually do not manifest in increased measures to protect it

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<sup>14</sup> The term rhizome derives from botany. It is an underground stem of a plant that produces new roots and shoots, and is spreading quickly in multiple directions. Examples of such plants include hops, asparagus, some types of orchids, etc.



(Taddicken 2012, 258). The future to some scholars might be more Huxleyan<sup>15</sup> than Orwellian. As Clifford Shearing and Philip Stenning suggest:

Less like Orwell's nightmare, much more like Huxley's *Brave New World*, here is consensually-based control in which people are seduced into conformity by the pleasures offered by the drug 'soma' rather than coerced into compliance by threat of Big Brother, just as people are today seduced to conform by the pleasures of consuming the goods that corporate power has to offer. (in Lyon 1994, 75)

Neil Postman, in his influential study of the media *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, commented, “[i]n short, Orwell feared that what we hate will ruin us. Huxley feared that what we love will ruin us. This book is about the possibility that Huxley, not Orwell, was right” (Postman 2006, xx). And at first glance he might have been correct. We more and more willingly allow intrusions into our privacy for the sake of safety and convenience. As Ball and Webster imply the surveillance “intrudes and enables at the same time” (2003, 12). So where does that leave Orwell? Is his warning of a Big Brother just a remnant of a tumultuous past of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that has no place in modern society? To answer that question we must ask ourselves another - what happens to those who do not comply?

Kirstie Ball and Frank Webster provide an answer to the above mentioned question. They suggest that by not complying with surveillance one will “invite both hardship and the attention of disciplinary agencies” (Ball and Webster 2003, 12). And they continue, “[i]ndeed, to be excluded in today’s world means, at least for the majority, that surveillance will be directed at them as ‘outsiders’, as probable ‘deviants’, ‘threats’ or, more kindly, ‘in need of help’. Bluntly, to be included one must submit to surveillance, while the excluded will be watched willy-nilly” (Ball and Webster 2003, 12).

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<sup>15</sup> Aldous Huxley was a British writer and Orwell’s teacher during his years at Eton. Huxley’s most famous novel *Brave New World* is a dystopian story often compared to Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. In *Brave New World* social control is not coerced but rather achieved through apathy and pleasure.

### 3.3 Facecrime and Profiling

Orwell in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* suggests the same conclusion as Ball and Webster that suspicion intensifies surveillance and goes beyond the theory of Bentham's Panopticon. Bentham anticipates that all cells are not equally visible to the inspector, but concludes that the invisibility of the prisoner actually reveals his location to the inspector, thusly extending the inspectors gaze from the field of visibility to the field of invisibility, making him even more omniscient and omnipresent (Božovič 1995, 18). The architecture of Winston's room and the position of the telescreen suggest the same notion:

For some reason the telescreen in the living room was in an unusual position. Instead of being placed, as was normal, in the end wall, where it could command the whole room, it was in the longer wall, opposite the window. To one side of it there was a shallow alcove in which Winston was now sitting, and which, when the flats were build, had probably been intended to hold bookshelves. By sitting in the alcove, and keeping well back, Winston was able to remain outside the range of the telescreen, so far as sight went. He could be heard, of course, but so long as he stayed in his present position he could not be seen. It was partly the unusual geography of the room that had suggested to him the thing that he was now about to do. (Orwell 2008, 7-8)

But what Bentham's theory is lacking and Orwell's is not, is the understanding that by hiding in the alcove Winston exposes himself even more. The "unusual position" of the telescreen suggests that the safe, invisible alcove in Winston's room is actually a trap constructed by the Thought Police and that Winston, by hiding in it, exposes himself to even more scrutiny. The Party member has no privacy and those who seek it must be even more closely examined. Suspicion alone is a punishable offence in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and even the slightest deviation from orthodoxy arouses suspicion. To react improperly is called

“facecrime”. Citizens of Oceania must be constantly aware of their facial expressions and body language so as not to betray themselves as traitors (Orwell 2008, 65). Minute reactions could give them away -- “[a] nervous tic, an unconscious look of anxiety, a habit of muttering to yourself – anything that carried with it the suggestion of abnormality, of having something to hide” (Orwell 2008, 65). Party members were unable to ever fully relax or be inattentive when out in public or in range of a telescreen (*ibid.*, 65).

Orwell’s intensification of surveillance based on suspicion is extensively present in our modern society. Gary T. Marx notes that as an individual you do not have to do anything, you simply come under “categorical suspicion” by virtue of possessing certain characteristics (see Lyon 1994, 50). Those characteristics may vary greatly depending on the nature of surveillance. For example, Canadian blood donors can be prohibited from blood donation not because they are HIV positive, but because their lifestyle might suggest such a possibility. Additionally, couples expecting babies receive special offers on diapers and baby food simply because they fall into that category (Lyon 1994, 50). The new technologies enable quick analyses of enormous amounts of data, allowing profiling depending on different red flag characteristics. As Ball and Webster suggest, “the increasingly automated discriminatory mechanisms for risk profiling and social categorizing represent a key means of reproducing and reinforcing social, economic and cultural divisions in informational societies” (Ball and Webster 2003, 22). Though the above mentioned examples do not precisely represent Orwellian suspicion, they show the wide range in which categorical suspicion and profiling are used in our modern society. On the other hand, more Orwellian forms of profiling are also present. For example, Steinberg points to the racial profiling of Arabs after 9/11 which is clearly seen in the American detention of several thousand “suspects” and the FBI’s thorough search of more than 200 campuses to collect information about “Middle Eastern” students (see Ball and Webster 2003, 20). This type of monitoring based upon race, religion, ethnicity etc. is pervasive within federal institutions and publicly denounced by the American Civil Liberties Union.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation is collecting racial and ethnic information and ‘mapping’ American communities around the country based on crude stereotypes about which groups commit different types of crimes. Nationwide, the FBI is gathering reports on innocent Americans’ so-called ‘suspicious activity’ and sharing it with unknown numbers of federal, state and local government agencies. (American Civil Liberties Union 2015)

Orwell’s facecrime may not be solely a dystopian future but also quite a serious threat to freedom and equality in our modern societies. Examples are numerous and spread all around the world and are not endemic just to the United States. After the terrorist threats became more real in the wake of the Paris<sup>16</sup> and Belgium<sup>17</sup> attacks, similar stories began echoing in Europe as well. CNN reported an 18-year old Belgian student who was arrested at gun point while buying food just for “looking suspicious” (Elbagir *et al.* 2016). Suddenly the profiling and categorical suspicion has become not just a gentle nudge in direction of conformity, but a centralized governmental policy to prevent and neutralize possible threats.

### **3.4 Orwell’s Surreptitious Surveillance and Snowden Leaks**

As the above subchapters indicate, Orwell uses panoptic surveillance in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* extensively with the help of telescreens. And that type of surveillance is still widely present in our modern society, be it for commercial or institutional purposes. Yet in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* Orwell introduces another type of surveillance which Michel Yeo defines as “surreptitious” (Yeo 2010, 53). If in Bentham’s Panopticon the surveillance is clearly indicated and that

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<sup>16</sup> In 2015 Paris was a target of two major terrorist attacks. The first occurred in January when two shooters entered Charlie Hedbo’s offices at a satirical newspaper famous for its caricatures of Prophet Muhammad, and killed 12 people. The second, much larger attack took place in November. The terrorists attacked multiple locations across Paris killing 130 people.

<sup>17</sup> Belgium is the latest victim of terrorism in Europe. In March 2016 terrorists bombed Brussel’s Airport and a metro station resulting in 32 deaths.

conspicuousness functions to internalize discipline, then in surreptitious surveillance, the surveillance is concealed and that inconspicuousness functions to reveal secret thoughts and to exercise control beyond overt actions and into the realm of beliefs (Yeo 2010, 54). Bentham never really had the need to include surreptitious surveillance in his surveillance apparatus. For him it was enough to achieve compliance in actions, but thoughts were to be judged by God.

I hope no critic of more learning than candour will do an inspection-house so much injustice as to compare it to Dionysius ear<sup>18</sup>. The object of that contrivance was to know what prisoners said without their suspecting any such thing. The object of the inspection principle is directly reverse: it is to make them not only suspect, but be assured, that whatever they do is known, even though that should not be the case. Detection is the object of the first: prevention, that of the latter. In the former case the ruling person is a spy; in the latter he is a monitor. The object of the first was to pry into the secret recesses of the heart; the latter, confining its attention to overt acts, leaves thoughts and fancies to their proper ordinary, the court above. (Bentham 1995, 94)

Orwell's totalitarian world is full of surreptitious surveillance. It is evident throughout the book; in the above mentioned "unusual position" of the telescreen that suggests a meticulously placed trap; in the hidden telescreen in Mr. Charrington's spare bedroom that Winston and Julia use; in the concealed microphones placed throughout the countryside where telescreens are not present; in the surveillance of parents by their children, comrades by comrades, Party members by thought-police patrols and Winston and Julia by O'Brien. But Orwell's is a totalitarian world. What relation does it have to our modern societies?

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<sup>18</sup> Dionysius ear refers to a limestone cave in Sicily. The legend has it that the cave was used as a prison by Dionysius I of Syracuse to listen in on his prisoners because the cave had perfect acoustic properties.

In lieu of recent revelations by Edward Snowden, a former contractor for the National Security Agency (NSA), Orwell's visions have seemingly more to do with our society than is initially apparent. Snowden's leaks of internal, confidential, federal documents have revealed a number of covert surveillance methods that are currently being used by the American NSA and the British Government Communication Headquarters (GCHQ). As reported by Glenn Greenwald, the journalist who conducted the initial interviews with Snowden, the NSA obtained a top secret court order that requires Verizon<sup>19</sup> to hand over the information on all telephone calls in its system on a daily basis, including domestic and foreign calls. Though the court order did not include the content of the conversations nor the personal information of the subscribers, it did encompass the metadata of both parties such as location data, call duration, unique identifiers and the time and duration of a call, which would allow the NSA to easily build a comprehensive picture of communications and extract red flag characteristics. What is particularly worrying about this court order is that it had no particular named target or a finite set of individually named targets suspected of terrorist activity. The order allowed the metadata collection of all Verizon's customers without suspicion and it barred Verizon from disclosing to the public the existence of the request and the court order itself. (Greenwald 2013a)

Another example from Snowden's leaked documents is the existence of a secret surveillance program called PRISM, which allows the NSA to collect material such as search history, the content of e-mails, file transfers, live chats etc. directly from the servers of the US internet companies such as Microsoft, Google, Facebook, You Tube, Skype, PalTalk, Yahoo, Apple etc. The companies supposedly assisted the NSA by creating a back door to their servers, though several companies denied any such involvement. The PRISM program is designed to monitor foreign individuals and allows for data collection in any communication involving at least one party located outside the United States. While explicitly stipulating that it cannot collect data on conversations between two domestic parties, PRISM leaves the door open for potential abuse

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<sup>19</sup> Verizon is one of the largest telephone communications corporations in the US.

by requiring only a “reasonable suspicion” that one party is located abroad at the time of the communication. Communications can be obtained without having to request them from the service provider and without having to obtain individual court orders. The access is granted to stored communications as well as real-time surveillance. The PRISM program circumvents FISA (Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act), which requires individual warrants and confirmations that both the sender and receiver of a communication were outside the US. (Greenwald 2013b)

The Guardian reported similar data surveillance being used by Britain’s GCHQ to obtain personal communications by gaining access to the network cables which carry phone calls and internet traffic across the globe. Similarly to the NSA’s PRISM program, the Tempora operation allows the GCHQ access to phone call recordings, content of e-mails, Facebook entries, browsing history etc. The scale of the surveillance is supposed to be the largest of the Five Eyes electronic eavesdropping alliance (US, UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand) amounting to 600 million recorded “telephone events” each day (MacAskill *et al.* 2013). According to documents leaked by Snowden, the tapping of optical cables was done in close association with commercial companies, for which some were supposedly compensated. The access to data collected was also allowed to the NSA and US private contractors with top secret clearance, indicating well established collaboration between the NSA and the GCHQ as well as Britain and the US. The legal grounds for this operation are questionable to say the least. A loophole in the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) was exploited. Even though RIPA requires authorised warrants for tapping of defined targets, a clause allows a foreign secretary to authorize the interception of broad categories of material, as long as one end of the monitored communication is abroad. Yet this does not protect the domestic communication, since a portion of UK’s internal traffic is routed to different servers abroad before being returned back to the recipient in the UK, making it a foreign communication and thus suitable for collection and retention. (MacAskill *et al.* 2013)

If Orwell wrote in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* that no other government before the Party had the power to keep its citizens under constant surveillance and that technological advancements (i.e. the invention of the telescreen) allowed every citizen, or at least every citizen important enough, to be under continuous watch (Orwell 2008, 214), then modern society with its technological development has superseded his wildest dreams. Computers have enabled vast amounts of data to be stored on hard drives and computer algorithms have provided a solution to process that enormous quantity of information and search for suspicious indicators. As referenced in the article by Ewen MacAskill (2013), GCHQ recorded 600 million “telephone events” each day and was able to tap at least 46 optic cables at a time. These cables can carry up to 10 gigabits of data per second amounting to 21 petabytes of data a day, which is equivalent to all the information in all the books in the British Library 192 times over, every 24 hours. Every day these capacities expand (MacAskill *et al.* 2013). New technologies have made totalizing surveillance economically viable in capitalist societies. There is no need for Orwell’s expensive human-monitored surveillance by the agents of the Thought Police. The computers collect and sift through the data recording logs of “suspicious activity” for further analysis and the rest is discarded. The only thing that separates us from the totalitarian world of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is our liberal values and the judicial safeguards that we have put in place in order to prevent that exact future. Yet, even those safeguards are being incrementally eroded, as is evidenced by the above examples.

Surveillance in modern society takes many forms and is present throughout the social sphere, but what Snowden’s leaks have revealed is that surveillance is becoming increasingly one-sided and in the hands of what Prodnik defines as (supra)state agencies or institutions (Amon Prodnik 2014, 1231) such as the NSA, GCHQ, etc. Although the leaks themselves are proof of counter-surveillance, quite impossible to imagine in Winston’s Oceania, power relations are still very much asymmetrical and in favour of state surveillance. Our society is not totalitarian, but some totalitarian tendencies are quite obvious including the use of surreptitious surveillance, profiling and the circumvention of laws to



carry out mass surveillance. Clearly Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* still has a lot to offer regarding surveillance in modern society. Big Brother is still watching and his gaze might be as penetrating as ever.

## 4 “War Is Peace”

*Nineteen Eighty-Four* has a rather peculiar structure as a novel. The appendix “The Principles of Newspeak” and the insert “The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism” seem like they do not belong in the book but Orwell found them an integral part. When the American Book-of-the-Month Club offered to print *Nineteen Eighty-Four* without those two additions, Orwell vehemently refused the publishing and turned down hefty royalties (Crick 1992, 554). Both inserts provide theoretical insight into the society of Oceania and totalitarianism in general.

This chapter of the dissertation explores Orwell’s outlook on modern war as depicted throughout *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, but particularly in the third chapter of “The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism”. The chapter itself is titled “War Is Peace”, which is one of the three oxymoronic maxims<sup>20</sup> the Party uses to establish the principles of doublethink<sup>21</sup>. The true meaning of the maxim “War Is Peace” in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* should be understood as the concept that war enables the continuing existence of hierarchical society by creating a siege mentality and a justification for destroying production surplus (Orwell 2008, 191-208). According to Orwell, war is a mechanism of social control that perpetuates internal peace and preserves the existing social structure and power relations. It creates a psychological outbreak of war hysteria and fear which makes it easier for the ruling class to control the population, and it justifiably depletes production surpluses of modern mechanized societies, directing them towards war efforts rather than social programmes or the advancement of society. Thus, the war must be perpetual and never ending, since the goal of the war has changed. The goal is no longer victory, but extending the conflict indefinitely. This chapter focuses on whether or not the continuity of war is something that democratic governments strive towards in

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<sup>20</sup> The other two maxims are “Freedom Is Slavery” and “Ignorance Is Strength”.

<sup>21</sup> “To tell deliberate lies while genuinely believing in them, to forget any fact that has become inconvenient, and then, when it becomes necessary again, to draw it back from oblivion for just so long as it is needed, to deny the existence of objective reality and all the while to take account of the reality which one denies – all this is indispensably necessary” (Orwell 2008, 223).

modern societies; it explores how different types of wars are used by governments to create the same mentality as in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and finally delves into whether or not modern governments use war as a justifiable excuse for the expenditure of public funds.

## 4.1 Perpetual War

Orwell's totalitarian society of Oceania is in a state of perpetual war. The three super-states in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Oceania, Eastasia and Euroasia) are self-sufficient and unconquerable. Traditional reasons for waging war such as the acquisition of new territories for raw materials, expanding political influence, etc., have become obsolete, yet war continues. In Orwell's novel war has fundamentally changed its character. Prior to the establishment of Ingsoc, wars had a definitive end; whether they ended in victory or defeat was inconsequential because the finality of war kept human societies in touch with reality. The possibility of defeat and forfeiting power ensured that physical facts could not be ignored so the power that the ruling class could exert on its subjects was limited (Orwell 2008, 192-206). As the character of Goldstein explains in his diatribe "The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism" within *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, "[w]ar was a safeguard of sanity, and so far as the ruling classes were concerned it was probably the most important of all safeguards. While wars could be won or lost, no ruling class could be completely irresponsible" (Orwell 2008, 206). But the war Oceania wages cannot be won or lost, nor is either its goal. With the realisation by the Inner Party that war no longer poses a threat of defeat, the Party seizes control over reality and shapes it in its own accord. Two plus two no longer add to four; they total five. History and statistics are made arbitrary and have no relation to the reality of life in Oceania. The new objective of war is social control. As such the conflict must never come to an end.

But though [the war] is not real it is not meaningless. It eats up the surplus of consumable goods, and it helps to preserve the special

mental atmosphere that a hierarchical society needs. War, it will be seen, is now a purely internal affair. [...] The war is waged by each ruling group against its own subjects, and the object of the war is not to make or prevent conquest of territory, but to keep the structure of society intact. (Orwell 2008, 207)

In Oceania it does not matter whether the war is actually happening; the only thing that matters is that a state of war should exist (Orwell 2008, 200). It is quite possible, as Julia remarks to Winston, that “[t]he rocket bombs which fell daily on London were probably just fired by the government of Oceania itself, ‘just to keep people frightened’” (Orwell 2008, 160).

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, war, whether external or internal, functions to create a society of malleable individuals that can be easily controlled and led in whichever direction the Party desires. It establishes a mental atmosphere that perpetuates the existing social structure. Thus the war can never be won, it must be continued indefinitely.

But Orwell’s lessons regarding continuous war transcend totalitarian regimes, as democratic governments today display many of the same tendencies to initiate and perpetuate conflict for their own benefit. By maintaining wartime status, democratic leaders also extract support from the populace. Meierhenrich, in his article elucidating the relationship between democracy and war, asserted, “[t]he promotion of democratic peace makes necessary the waging of democratic war” (Meierhenrich 2007, 645). Incessant wars are commonplace throughout western democracies, but perhaps nowhere as much so as in the United States. Since the founding of the nation, the U.S. has been locked into battles with various external and internal foes. Tallying just the conflicts that have been recorded as official wars by the Department of Veterans Affairs, the U.S. has been at war for 25 of the past 50 years (Department of Veterans Affairs 2015). This number does not account for additional wars that did not deploy military, such as the Cold War, or domestic, non-violent disputes such as the War on Drugs. These battles range from

violent international conflicts to domestic wars of words and the trend rages on incessantly, showing no indication of ending soon. Naomi Klein spoke of America's protracted war on terrorism in her book *The Shock Doctrine*:

The recipe for endless worldwide war is the same one that the Bush administration offered as a business prospectus to the nascent disaster capitalism complex after September 11. It is not a war that can be won by any country, but winning is not the point. The point is to create "security" inside fortress states bolstered by endless low-level conflict outside their walls. (Klein 2008, 441)

As Greenwald remarked of the same war, "[t]here's no question that this 'war' will continue indefinitely. There is no question that US actions are the cause of that, the gasoline that fuels the fire" (Greenwald 2013c). With each conflict, political leaders have rallied citizens to join a cause and accept an ideological stance.

These ceaseless wars have led to a phenomenon in presidential elections. A famous quote often attributed to Abraham Lincoln advises "don't change horses in midstream", alluding to the tendency to re-elect incumbent leaders when facing crisis situations such as wars. Indeed, by analysing American electoral history it can be concluded that no president has ever been defeated for re-election during wartime (Wickham 2004).

Additionally, the connection between the military-industrial complex and politics runs much deeper in the United States. As some authors suggest, the United States has been in a state of permanent war economy since the Second World War (Higgs 2007; Boggs 2011; Coyne and Duncan 2012). The appropriation of enormous funds to the military aids economic growth and lowers unemployment rates. As such, the American economy is dependent on the military industry even in peaceful times (Duncan and Coyne 2013).

With the permanent war economy an intimate relationship has developed between the politicians and the military industry that perpetuates incessant wars and the constant build-up of military apparatus (see Higgs 2007, 307). Especially indicative of this relationship is the phenomenon of the revolving doors, “where personnel rotates between Congress, the military, and the defence industry” (Duncan and Coyne 2015, 2), which results in corruption and clientelism (*ibid.*). As Higgs reports, thirty-two major appointees in Bush’s administration were former executives, consultants or major shareholders of top weapons contractors and the number increased significantly on the lower levels (see Higgs 2007, 300). Furthermore, the military industry is a significant donor to political campaigns and a strong lobbyist in Washington DC. According to the data from the Centre for Responsive Politics, the military industry provided \$25.3 million of contributions in the 2014 election cycle<sup>22</sup> and spent \$127.8 million on lobbying in 2015 alone (Centre for Responsive Politics 2016) in order to secure defence contracts and influence the defence budget.

According to Higgs (2007, 308), military contracts are not decided by the lowest cost but by technical and scientific capabilities, size, experience and established reputation as a military supplier, which are characteristics that are more easily manipulated in the favour of one’s friends. Out of the top five defence contractors in 2001, four of them remained in the top five position in 2011; the top 20 defence contractors control 58% of the market (see Duncan and Coyne 2015, 9). Similarly, Boggs (2011, 9) suggests that the politicians who are not in favour of the enormous military apparatus find it much harder to be elected because of the great influence of military contractors in Congress. In addition, some members of Congress have a personal investment in the military industrial complex. “According to the Centre for Responsive Politics, as of 2009 at least 150 members of Congress were profiting from U.S. corporations engaged in military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan [and] businesses with congressional investors reaped more than \$275 billion from Pentagon contractors in 2006 alone” (in Boggs 2011, 9).

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<sup>22</sup> The election cycle represents a two-year period between January 1<sup>st</sup> 2013 and December 31<sup>st</sup> 2014.

Similarly to Orwell's Oceania, political and economic elites in modern democracies, especially the United States, perpetuate war and military build-up for their own personal interests as well as the preservation of a capitalist society that is heavily dependent on the military industry. Wars and conflicts are no longer won or lost but perpetuated indefinitely for a large part of the economy depends on military spending and the economic and political elites benefit from it greatly.

## **4.2 The Consciousness of Being at War**

According to Orwell war creates an atmosphere of a besieged city which enables the ruling elite to obtain more power and makes the population more willing to relinquish their rights. As Orwell explains, "the consciousness of being at war, and therefore in danger, makes the handing-over of all power to a small cast seem the natural, unavoidable condition of survival (Orwell 2008, 200). Foucault concurs:

In order to make rights and laws function according to pure theory, the jurists place themselves in imagination in the state of nature; in order to see perfect disciplines functioning rulers dreamt of the state of plague. Underlying disciplinary projects the image of the plague stands for all forms of confusion and disorder. (Foucault 1995, 198-199)

Both Foucault and Orwell realised that in the state of emergency, whether it is war, plague, natural disaster etc., discipline and order are easier to obtain for the ruling elite. This allows even democratic leaders to pass more totalitarian laws that have long-lasting effects even after the crisis is over. Greenwald comments: "It's always been the case that the power of political officials is at its greatest, its most unrestrained, in a state of war" (Greenwald 2013c). To elaborate, specific crises were exploited by the democratic governments of the

United States and France to pass undemocratic legislation and exert stronger social control over the populations.

When terrorists flew two planes into the World Trade Centre in 2001, western democratic nations were rocketed into a new era of warfare. Fear overtook individuals throughout the United States and other democratic countries, and leaders sought new means by which to inspire confidence in their governing. Politicians in the U.S. ultimately redirected the fear and uncertainty into support for invasions in the Middle East and a protracted role as guardians of democracy. As Greenwald remarked, “[i]t’s [the war on terror] that generates limitless power, impenetrable secrecy, an unquestioning citizenry, and massive profit”<sup>23</sup> (Greenwald 2013c). Leaders saw an opportunity to capitalize off of the tragic event and advance their own agendas. Polls of the American public immediately following the attack showed that trust in the government had risen to 64%, more than doubling a previous national poll recorded six months prior (Chanley 2002, 469). This outpouring of faith in government opened the door to a number of drastic policy changes.

While most of the country remained in a state of shock, leaders pushed forth policies that have dramatically altered electronic surveillance and national security. The United States government passed legislation that tightened security, gave police and intelligence services greater powers and lifted limitations on wire-taps (Lyon 2003, 17). Warrants no longer needed to be obtained prior to any law enforcement investigation of residence or property, and in some cases personal property could be seized without notifying the owner (American Civil Liberties Union 2016). Additionally, a new law signed by President George W. Bush two months after the attacks, the Aviation and Transportation Security Act (ATSA), federalized security screening of all airline passengers at commercial airports and screening of all checked baggage (Blalock *et al.* 2007, 1). These security measures relinquished immense authority to government to undermine individuals’ rights of privacy and incited

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<sup>23</sup> The profits to which Greenwald is referring are funnelled from public monies to private corporations through military contracts.



the development of the abusive surveillance practices that were revealed by Edward Snowden and discussed in the previous chapter. Furthermore, author Robin Cameron wrote of the administration's drafted memos establishing broad presidential powers that would allow military action against domestic terror suspects:

The drafting of such memos authorising greater domestic power and willingness to act unilaterally abroad was an attempt by the Bush administration to act decisively in the face of the 9/11 attacks, demonstrating it would not be held hostage to acts of terrorism or wait for the tide of public opinion to determine its course of action. (Cameron 2013, 139)

President Bush benefited by exploiting the state of crisis to advance his party's political ideologies and the power of the presidential office, cultivating the public's opinion of his tenure by acting decisively. "There is zero reason for US officials to want an end to the war on terror, and numerous and significant reasons why they would want it to continue" (Greenwald 2013c).

A similar situation is currently being faced in France, as they debate the necessity of a prolonged state of emergency. Following the terrorist attacks in and around Paris on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2015, the government declared a state of emergency within the country for the first time since 1961 (Chrisafis 2015). This granted immense power to law enforcement and government officials to seize control of the population in the name of national security. Journalist Emile Chabal reported that "Sure enough, in the month following the 13 November attacks, the police carried out 2700 searches and made over 300 arrests" (Chabal 2016). This tactic that had so rarely been used in recent history has now been drawn-out to maintain that measure of control. "A state of emergency can only last 12 days, after which a vote is needed to define and prolong the measures" (Chrisafis 2015). Following extensions in December and February, the French government has voted a third time to extend the state of emergency to "cover two major sporting events taking place this summer in France – the

Euro 2016 soccer tournament and the Tour de France cycling race” (Breedon 2016). It remains to be seen whether the emergency controls will be willingly relinquished once the latest deadline has passed.

While the decision to declare a state of emergency was understandably justified in the immediate aftermath of the tragedy, leaders have clearly benefited from the results. France’s emergency law grants a number of potentially dangerous powers to the government including:

The right to set curfews, limit the movement of people, forbid mass gatherings, establish secure zones where people can be monitored and close public spaces such as theatres, bars, museums and other meeting places. It can also allow for controls to be imposed on the media. (Chrisafis 2015)

By restricting judicial privilege and freedom of movement from citizens, the French government has seized the power to exercise authority over what individuals can say or do without repercussions. Similarly, although the government has asserted that they will not utilize their right to command what the media is or is not allowed to publish, the potential for abuse remains a concern. Should he choose to fully exercise his powers, President Francois Hollande could be granted complete discretion to determine what the public has a right to know. By these measures, France’s government starts to resemble Orwell’s totalitarian regime more than a modern democracy. Additionally, President Hollande may have further motivation for imposing the state of emergency:

Hollande wanted to ‘reassure’ the French. Despite the wide-range of existing anti-terrorist legislation and the inherent difficulty in stopping small-scale terrorist operations, a state of emergency gives the illusion of strength. With Hollande struggling desperately in opinion polls, he hoped a firm response to the recent attacks would reinforce his image. (Chabal 2016)

Indisputably, the French government gains considerable influence due to France's current condition. By capitalizing upon public fears and uncertainty, French leadership has established a situation wherein they remain steadfastly in control of their nation and its people. This seizure of power and opportunity echoes the case in the United States following 9/11, and they both harken back to Orwell's cautionary tale. The perpetual state of war in Oceania and its capacity for enabling dictatorial leadership and compelling public support offers frighteningly accurate explanations for these recent events.

Modern examples of Orwell's perpetuating warfare are not restricted to violent conflicts between nations. Sometimes the wars that engender patriotism and submission are waged against internal foes. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* that internal enemy is Emanuel Goldstein. In the everyday ritual of Two Minutes Hate, he is blamed for all the crimes, treacheries and acts of sabotage against the Party. He is exploited as a scapegoat to redirect attention from every conceivable issue; he is utilized to fuel patriotism and thus solidify the Party's power; and the Two Minutes Hate functions as a discharge of pent up frustration and anger.

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. A hideous ecstasy of fear and vindictiveness, a desire to kill, to torture, to smash faces with a sledgehammer, seemed to flow through a whole group of people like an electric current, turning one even against one's will into a grimacing, screaming lunatic. And yet the rage that one felt was an abstract, undirected emotion which could be switched from one object to another like the flame of a blowlamp.  
(Orwell 2008, 16)

Modern societies have, like Orwell's Oceania, similar internal enemies and wars that redirect attention, utilize emotions and compel support. One such example

is the War on Drugs initiated by President Nixon in the United States during the 1970's to discourage illegal drug use. Statements made by public officials at the time criminalized the drug trade and capitalized upon the fears of the public. "There was a conscious effort by the government to convince the American public and the US Congress of the intimate linkage between drug traffickers and leftist guerrillas" (Morales 1989, 155). The American people began to vilify all users, blaming them for the violence in the country and rejecting more moderate measures of treatment to combat drug abuse. These sentiments led to demand for harsher prison sentences, resulting in a tenfold increase in drug-related incarceration from 1980 to 1996 (Zakaria 2012).

But the government's purposes for declaring a War on Drugs extended far beyond their stated intentions. "Prosecution of the drug war often remained in the background and was manipulated to win congressional and public support while fighting the 'real' war on communism" (Morales 1989, 155-156). Leaders built support for their campaigns by redirecting public attention towards restricting and punishing drug use, leaving their actions and choices on other issues free from public criticism. The Reagan and Bush administrations were able to leverage the war on drugs to foster support from the nation for their interventionist foreign policies in Latin America, while Congress used the doctrine to secure bipartisan support and reassert their influence (Morales 1989, 155). Furthermore, the militarisation of drug operations enhanced US military power and capabilities.

Some recent revelations even suggest that President Nixon initiated the war on drugs to intentionally target the anti-war left and the black population. As John Ehrlichman, a former domestic policy advisor to Nixon, told Dan Baum:

The Nixon campaign in 1968, and the Nixon White House after that, had two enemies: the anti-war left and black people. You understand what I'm saying? We knew we couldn't make it illegal to be either against the war or black, but by getting the public to associate the hippies with marijuana and blacks with heroin, and then criminalizing

both heavily, we could disrupt those communities. We could arrest their leaders, raid their homes, break up their meetings, and vilify them night after night on the evening news. (in Baum 2016)

Ultimately, the War on Drugs serves its purpose primarily as a political tactic that expands political power, wins support for hidden agendas and perpetuates the existing social order.

Some wars even exist solely as concepts within the minds of a populace. War can be an effective tool for leaders to gain support even when their foe is immaterial and its harm is inconsequential. Bill O'Reilly of Fox News has advanced fears of a "War on Christmas" that has been waged by atheists and followers of others faiths. O'Reilly has claimed that the non-believers intend to de-emphasize the religious history and spirit of Christmas by promoting usage of the term "holiday" and eliminating overtly Christmas symbols from public buildings and companies.

The irony is that nobody is bothering the atheists. They are free to celebrate whatever they want to celebrate. They are free not to believe and they are free to snicker at anybody who does believe. That's not good enough for these people. They want to banish any mention of Jesus in the public square. They are the oppressors. (O'Reilly 2013)

By establishing those that object to a blatantly Christmas-centric society as the enemy, O'Reilly has attracted a significant following and launched a crusade to protect Christmas traditions. In 2015, the War on Christmas took aim at a choice made by the Starbucks Corporation to serve its beverages in plain red cups for the holiday season, rather than its previous holiday cups decorated in snowflakes, reindeer, and other "Christmas" symbols (Dvorak 2015). While it seems a silly and inconsequential battle, the War on Christmas has succeeded in rallying individuals to the cause and focusing national attention so that they can further their agendas. Despite the apparent triviality of their claims,

Christmas crusaders fostered allegiance and passion by declaring their cause a “war” in the same manner as Orwell’s Party keeps control of its population by war.

### **4.3 The Pouring of Resources into the Stratosphere**

Orwell as a devout socialist believed in a classless society or at least in a society where the divide between the classes is not so enormous. As is evident from *Nineteen Eighty-Four* Orwell deemed that with mechanization, for the first time in human history, a classless society was possible.

From the moment that the machine first made its appearance it was clear to all thinking people that the need for human drudgery, and therefore to a great extent human inequality, had disappeared. If the machine were used deliberately for that end, hunger, over-work, dirt, illiteracy and disease could be eliminated within a few generations. (Orwell 2008, 197)

But, according to Orwell, the general equality of wealth would bring with it the destruction of hierarchical society. Even though it is plausible to envisage a society where wealth is distributed equally while power remains in the hands of the privileged elite, in practice such a society is not possible. With an equal distribution of resources the majority of people would become educated and thus realize that the ruling class has no function. According to Orwell hierarchical society can only exist on a basis of poverty and ignorance (Orwell 2008, 198). Since the reversion to an agrarian society is not possible because it entails military weakness, the only option to preserve hierarchical society is continuous war. Thus goods can be produced and justifiably destroyed.

War is a way of shattering to pieces, or pouring into the stratosphere, or sinking into the depths of sea, materials which might otherwise be used to make the masses too comfortable, and hence, in the long

run, too intelligent. Even when weapons of war are not actually destroyed, their manufacture is still a convenient way of expending labour power without producing anything that can be consumed. (Orwell 2008, 198-199)

Although Orwell suggests that the production surplus of mechanized societies could be squandered by numerous different methods such as building temples and pyramids, digging holes and filling them up again, or even by producing vast quantity of goods and then setting fire to them, only war provides emotional justification for such action (Orwell 2008, 200).

Not much is different in modern democratic societies. Wars are abused to induce public support and channel enormous amounts of public money into military spending. Howard Zinn, in his book *A People's History of the United States*, explores how politicians in the United States exploited the Cold War to create a staggering military budget. According to Zinn the threat of a Soviet Union attack on Western Europe or the United States was vastly exaggerated, as were the CIA's estimates of the yearly growth of the Soviet Union's military expenditures. As Zinn writes, the CIA admitted that the Soviet Union's spending on military was exaggerated by 2-3% (Zinn 2003, 583-584). The Cold War was readily abused by politicians to instil fear in the population and convey the image of strength by building unnecessary military apparatus. As Howard Zinn writes:

However, the creation of such fear in the public mind was useful in arguing for the building of frightful and superfluous weapons. For instance, the Trident submarine, which was capable of firing hundreds of nuclear warheads, cost \$1.5 billion. It was totally useless except in a nuclear war, in which case it would only add several hundred warheads to the tens of thousands already available. That \$1.5 billion was enough to finance a five-year program of child immunization around the world against deadly diseases, and prevent five million deaths. (Zinn 2003, 583)

The Cold War ended but other wars soon followed. The War on Drugs proved to be as superfluous as the Cold War. According to some estimates, around \$1 trillion dollars have been spent in the last 40 years on drug law enforcement alone by the United States combating the drug trade (Transform Drug Policy Foundation 2015, 3). However, the trend is not in decline, as is evident when reviewing official US government data. The expenditure on drug war in the fiscal year 2015 was \$26.3 billion and the requested amount for fiscal year 2016 is \$27.5 billion, an increase of 4.7%. These numbers do include spending on treatment (39.8%) and prevention (5.0%), which adds to 44.8% of total spending for the year, according to the official documents. The remaining amount is spent on domestic law enforcement (35.3%), interdiction (16.1%) and international spending (5.8%) (Executive Office of the President of the United States 2015, 21). In sum, more than half of funding dedicated to the war on drugs is used for the enforcement of harsh punishments rather than preventing the problem.

Despite the enormous amount spent, the war on drugs has not yielded the desired results. As Jensen (*et al.* 2004, 100) suggests, the war has failed to eliminate illicit drug use and drug related crimes; on the other hand, it has created a number of new issues. The United States expanded the war on drugs beyond just its borders. By offering financial aid to foreign governments in Latin America in order to pass harsher legislation on drug offenders and engage in a military battle against drug cartels, the United States efficiently exported their war on drugs abroad as well (Huey 2014). The globalization of the war has been misused by the United States government to promote their own political agenda as was discussed in the previous subchapter. More importantly, the harsh anti-drug legislation has created a number of domestic social issues that resemble Orwell's claim that war is a perpetuator of a hierarchical society.

According to Jensen (*et al.* 2004, 103), the inmate population of the United States increased by 75% between 1990 and 1999. The majority of the increase can be attributed to the criminalization of drug use and harsh policies on non-



violent drug offences such as possession. The war on drugs, accompanied by different laws such as mandatory minimum sentencing laws<sup>24</sup>, “three strikes” laws<sup>25</sup> and legislation preventing inmates or convicted felons to vote<sup>26</sup>, disenfranchised a vast number of people and disproportionately affected minorities, particularly young black males (*ibid.*, 113). At the end of the millennium 86% of convictions for crack offences were against African-Americans and the median sentence for a comparable drug offence was almost double for black citizens than white (*ibid.*, 106). Additionally, as Jensen (*et al.*, 105-108) explains, convicted felons have a harder time finding a job, creating a stable family etc., and are thus more likely to return to the viscous cycle of drug abuse, crime and poverty. With all these adverse consequences disproportionately affecting the minorities and the poor, the war on drugs, to some extent, perpetuates a hierarchical society and white domination in the United States. A considerable portion of the population is pushed out of public life and is unable to participate in the democratic process, which, similarly to Orwell’s Party, benefits the existing social order.

With an estimated \$1 trillion dollars spent and little to show for it, the American war on drugs continues to “pour into the atmosphere” an incomprehensible amount of public funds that could have been redirected to the elimination of poverty, the establishment of free healthcare and education, investments in infrastructure, the prevention of and education against drug use and other similar projects that the public might benefit from. According to Jeffery A. Miron and Katherine Waldock, legalization of drugs would reduce US government expenditure by \$41.3 billion per year and the revenue acquired from taxation<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Mandatory minimum sentences set baseline punishments for various crimes that judges must meet or exceed. Critics of mandatory sentences argue that by dictating specific punishments, the law impedes judicial discretion and increases incarceration rates.

<sup>25</sup> Three strikes laws are American statutes enacted in twenty-four states that mandate harsher sentences on convicted individuals who have previously been convicted of two serious crimes. The three strikes law in California is particularly controversial as it mandates minimum sentencing of 25-to-life if the first two convictions are deemed either “serious” or “violent”. As a result, a person that was convicted twice of burglary charges who had committed no additional crimes for many years could be mandatorily sentenced to twenty-five years in prison for possession of marijuana.

<sup>26</sup> Forty-eight of the fifty states in the US partake in some form of felony disenfranchisement wherein convicted felons are prevented from voting while their prison sentences are being served. In many cases, this ban from voting extends past parole or probation, or even indefinitely, making eligibility for restoration of voting rights contingent on the success of individual petitions.

<sup>27</sup> Assuming taxation levels comparable to alcohol and tobacco

would bolster the government budget by an additional \$46.7 billion per year (Miron and Waldock 2010, 1). However, this study focused only on the economic benefits of drug legalization and made no attempt to assess any other implications of such a policy. Nevertheless, other examples including the 2001 decriminalization of drugs in Portugal shed light to these implications. In a review of the available data on drug use and related issues before and after the Portuguese drug decriminalization, Caitlin Elizabeth Hughes and Alex Stevens arrived to the conclusion that drug tolerance and the establishment of prevention and treatment programs proved to have favourable effects on drug consumption and drug related deaths. Additionally the new policies slightly improved Portugal's performance regarding drug issues as compared to other European Countries (Hughes and Stevens 2012).

Because Portugal had never waged such a large scale war on drugs as the United States, even before they chose to pursue decriminalization, it is safe to assume that a change in the US policy would be largely beneficial from the demarginalization of minorities and the poor to budgetary savings. Yet it seems that the war on drugs continues to claim bipartisan support. From its conception by President Nixon through to the sitting President Obama, the war on drugs has not changed its character. Although recent years have seen some progress in states such as Washington and Colorado, which have both legalized marijuana<sup>28</sup> as well as Obama's pardons of 61 drug offenders<sup>29</sup> (Holpuch 2016), the war on drugs continues to squander public funds to little beneficial effect with striking similarity to *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

While the war on drugs continues to rage on, the US and its allies have begun to engage in yet another military conflict. Following the 9/11 attacks the Cold War was substituted by the war on terror. If Howard Zinn wrote that the US military budget in 1992 was \$281 billion and was slowly decreasing because the

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<sup>28</sup> Marijuana has remained an illicit drug on the federal level even despite legalisation in some states. Thus consumption and distribution remain a federal offence, punishable by federal law. The US government has not yet decided to exercise the law and has acknowledged state sovereignty regarding drug policy, but their decision can be altered at any time.

<sup>29</sup> An insignificant number compared to the number of people currently imprisoned as a result of the harsh drug laws.

Soviet Union no longer posed a threat (Zinn 2003, 584), then the 9/11 terrorist attacks spurred another military spending spree. As Melvyn Leffler explains, “[a]fter 9/11, there was an accelerated build-up of US military and intelligence capabilities, defence expenditures skyrocketed; counter-insurgency initiatives proliferated; new bases were constructed throughout Central and Southwest Asia; a new military command in Africa was established” (Leffler 2011, 35). To put things in perspective, the US military budget in the fiscal year 2008 represented 58% of all discretionary spending<sup>30</sup>. Other discretionary programs such as education, health, housing assistance, international affairs, natural resources and environment, justice, veterans’ benefits, science and space, transportation, training/employment and social services, economic development, and several more items combined received the remaining 42% (see Hossein-zadeh 2009, 151). With military budget increases, what gets pushed out is usually not private-sector investment spending but non-military public spending, which includes physical capital or physical infrastructure (roads, bridges, mass transit, energy, drinking water...) and human capital or soft/social infrastructure (health, education...) (Hossein-zadeh 2009, 158). The unnecessary wars, in which the US government has involved itself, have had a rather Orwellian effect. As Hossein-zadeh writes:

With minor exceptions, the trend that was thus set in motion in the early 1980s – sustained increases in military spending financed primarily by sustained cuts in non-military public spending – continues to this day. The resulting steady decline in social spending has had dire consequences: increased economic insecurity for many, further deepening of class divisions, and a considerable slowdown or reversal of the so-called upward social mobility that appeared so promising in the immediate few decades after World War II. (Hossein-zadeh 2009, 162)

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<sup>30</sup> Discretionary spending refers to all federal spending outlined in appropriations acts rather than laws and reallocated on a yearly basis. It includes funding for military, education, scientific research, NASA, the State Department, housing assistance, the Justice Department, and most other government agencies and programs. Medicaid, Medicare and Social Security constitute the majority of non-discretionary, mandatory spending. Military spending comprises approximately 17% of the total federal budget annually.

In a comparison between the afore-mentioned military budget of the United States in 1992 and the proposed military budget for the fiscal year 2016<sup>31</sup>, a 21.6%<sup>32</sup> increase can be detected, adjusted for inflation. However, neither of these budgets reflect the peak spending of the war. According to Hartung, the fiscal year 2008 with military expenditure of \$647 billion represented “the highest level of military spending (in real, inflation-adjusted dollars) in decades – higher than Vietnam and higher than the peak of the Reagan military build-up” (in Hossein-zadeh 2009, 151).

Despite the excessive appropriation of funding to the military by the US government, the world does not seem to be terrorist-free or a safer place. Even though the war in Afghanistan may have weakened Al-Qaida, the destabilization of Iraq and Syria gave rise to the Islamic State. Terrorist attacks have become a regular feature of everyday life in modern societies and war against them does not seem to have much effect. The United States could have learned from their own history of the Vietnam War that armed conflict may not have been the best solution. Instead it seems that this is yet another Orwellian war, fought for reward of internal peace rather than a definitive victory.

Ultimately, we do not live in the nefarious world of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, yet the socio-economic consequences of modern warfare as described by Orwell continue to ring true. As evidenced by the given examples, modern warfare has become more and more incessant, it has been exploited to frighten the population in order to tighten up legislations, and it burns up public funds that could have otherwise propelled a social change. Unlike Winston Smith’s totalitarian Oceania, modern democracies continue to be shaped by their populations regardless of the asymmetry on the side of corporate and governmental power. However, Orwell’s writing remains relevant by revealing the functions of modern warfare and enabling the actions against them.

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<sup>31</sup> The military budget of the United States for the fiscal year 2016 is \$586 billion (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) Chief Financial Officer 2015, 1-2)

<sup>32</sup> This number may vary depending on what sources include under the category of a military budget. Howard Zinn source does not explain the number precisely. The budget for fiscal year 2016 is taken directly from the Department of Defence and does not include any military spending that is not appropriated to the Department of Defence. Other sources might include additional related spending.



## 5 Newspeak and Media

George Orwell concluded his essay “Politics and the English Language” by stating, “Political language – and with variations this is true of all political parties, from Conservatives to Anarchists – is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give appearance of solidity to pure wind” (2014, 359).

Orwell was well aware of the political power that language possesses and in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* he developed the ideal archetype of a political language.

Newspeak, the official language of Oceania, was designed to limit the thought and make unorthodox political concepts inconceivable or at least inexpressible. As Syme, one of the lexicographers tasked with creating the 11th and final edition of Newspeak, notes:

Don't you see that the whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought? In the end we shall make thoughtcrime literally impossible, because there will be no words in which to express it. Every concept that can ever be needed will be expressed by exactly one word, with its meaning rigidly defined and all its subsidiary meanings rubbed out and forgotten. (Orwell 2008, 55)

This chapter addresses the origins that inspired Orwell's formation of Newspeak and explores different manipulating linguistic tools of political language which Orwell presents in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and exemplifies their usage in the political language of modern societies. The final subchapter addresses the propagandistic role of the media in the novel and compares it to a dysfunctional role of the media as a watchdog or fourth branch of the government in our modern society.

## 5.1 Development of Newspeak

Orwell's development of Newspeak was spurred in part by a simplified version of the English language, developed by C. K. Ogden and popularized in the 1930s and 1940s. This so-named *Basic English* focused upon a vocabulary of 850 words and was designed to universalize the English language so that everyone would be able to participate in trade and communications (Ogden 1944, 4). Numerous leaders including Sir Winston Churchill supported the development of Basic, including George Orwell himself in the early 1940s (Fink 1971, 156). However, Orwell soon became overtly critical of such an idea and modelled Newspeak in large part upon the drastic simplification of words and grammar suggested by Basic. He exaggerated Ogden's proposals through Newspeak, using examples such as the plurals of man, ox and life (mans, oxes, lifes) to emphasize the ridiculousness of stringent grammatical rules (Fink 1971, 161). He recognized the propensity for a seemingly harmless shift towards uniform communications to manifest in losses of language and understanding.

But Orwell's parody of the communications of his time did not end with Basic English. Additional inspiration for Newspeak came from a form of verbal shorthand called Cablese. Often used by journalists to communicate quickly, Cablese has also been termed "telegram style" and was developed as a solution for the slow speed and high cost of sending telegrams (Wenzlhuemer 2010, 14).

Cablese uses condensed terms and systematic truncation to get the message across in as few letters as possible (Courtine and Willett 1986, 71). William Shirer gave an example of a cablese dispatch in the early 1900s detailing French-German communications regarding reparations for the First World War. A portion of the dispatch read, "Exclusive poincare chicatribward untruth unpay wardebts americaward STOP france unintends upgive reparations due extreaties STOP" (Hochfelder 2012, 82). The usage of words such as 'untruth' and 'upgive' as well as the general illegibility of the sentence draws a close comparison to Orwell's samples of Newspeak. For example, to express the

need to rewrite and resubmit an unsatisfactory article, Winston's supervisors wrote, "Times 3.12.83 reporting bb dayorder doubleplusungood refs unperson rewrite fullwise upsub antefiling" (Orwell 2008, 46-47).

A final motive for Orwell's development of Newspeak came out of the Soviet Union's syllabic abbreviations. Terms such as Politburo (political bureau), Kolkhoz (collective farm) and Komsomol ("Young Communist League") were developed through similar techniques as Cablese to simplify and standardize Russian speech (Reed 2015). This Newspeak (as it shared the name of Orwell's language) was the official language of the Soviet bureaucracy and it dominated public discourse from the 1930s. Descriptions of Soviet Newspeak by author Martin McCauley sound as though they are directly taken from Orwell's novel.

[Soviet] Newspeak was a language that could not be verified or questioned; it was an indicator of accepted, undisputed and absolute truth (Marxism-Leninism). All alternative views to those stated by official state ideology were inadmissible; there were no words, concepts or linguistic categories to express counter-thoughts. (McCauley 2008, 296)

As throughout his novel in its many subtle and overt links to the totalitarian state of the Soviet Union, Orwell's emulation of Newspeak accurately represents the ability of a state to dictate the ideology of its people through use of language. As Gleckner reveals, "Orwell uses the Russian state as a model simply because, as satirist, he wants to present the failings of our world in their most fully developed form" (Gleckner 1956, 98).

By combining Basic English, Cablese and Russian abbreviations, Orwell created a new language that is equally streamlined and perplexing. Unlike Ogden's Basic English and Cablese that both propagate simplified communication in order to facilitate trade and save time and money delivering messages, Orwell's Newspeak more closely models the Soviet Union's



bureaucratic language. Although it shares structural foundation with the first two, it is ideologically much closer to the third, promoting simplified communication in order to diminish the range of thought. Orwell's language has a strictly political function and the interest of the next subchapter lies in the analysis of modern political language and its similarities to Orwell's Newspeak.

## 5.2 Newspeak Today

One of the pillars of Orwell's Newspeak relies upon abbreviations to create new terms such as Ingsoc and Minitrue. By creating new names for these concepts, the Party distances the institutions from their implications, encouraging society not to think about the principles for which they stand. Simplifying and abbreviating the language causes the old terms to become obsolete and their concepts to be lost from public thought. "If you don't have the word available for an idea, you have trouble thinking of it" (Tibbetts 1978, 164). By applying one term to a range of problems, individuals are encouraged not to delve too deeply into causes or consequences and will over time lose the linguistic capacity for critical analysis. This loss of linguistic understanding will further impede their ability to think critically about the issue itself. Therefore the manipulation of language becomes a political tactic in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by which the Party can actually dictate the thoughts of people by controlling their vocabulary. As Orwell notes in the appendix, the tendency to use abbreviations had a conscious purpose in Oceania. The cutting of the word cuts out the association that the word possesses and assigns it a new meaning, less broad, stripped-down (Orwell 2008, 320-321). Similarly as the physical manifestation of the word is truncated, the mental association is diminished.

A very recent example of a Newspeak-influenced abbreviation comes out of the United Kingdom. Although it first entered media usage back in January 2013, the term Brexit reached immense popularity in 2015 when the United Kingdom was nearing the referendum regarding its European Union (EU) membership.

“Brexit is an abbreviation of ‘British exit’<sup>33</sup>, which refers to the June 23, 2016 referendum by British voters to exit the European Union” (Investopedia 2016). It emphasizes the visualization of UK’s independence from the EU and it was harnessed as a marketable catchphrase by the “Leave” campaign (Lowrie-Chin 2016). Leadership for the “Remain” campaign failed to develop messaging that proved as engaging, which was ultimately reflected at the polls as the British people chose to abandon the EU. “By coining ‘Brexit’ (rather than ‘Breave’, which simply sounds like ‘breathe’ in a particular kind of British accent) the leave side were already onto a winner” (Gallagher 2016). Furthermore, the choice to apply the name Brexit conceals the complexity of the issue and simplifies it down to one uncomplicated question – should the UK leave the European Union (Toles 2016)? By focusing solely upon this question, the leave campaign was able to focus the attention of the public away from the real consequences of a “Brexit”. Economists and experts announced widespread agreement about the negative effects of leaving the EU, to the scorn of Michael Gove, one of the leaders in the Leave campaign. Gove announced, “People in this country have had enough of experts” (Cohen 2016). The choice to encourage citizens to reject complex economic theory and instead vote based upon the rallying theme of freedom from Europe ultimately swayed public opinion. Just as Orwell predicted, the simplification of language influenced a lack of thought and consideration given to the issue at hand. “[Orwell] emphasized that thinking requires language, and, conversely that language reflects the thinking of the speaker” (Lang 1989, 171-172). As a result, the UK is now facing an uncertain future and nobody, including the Leave campaign leaders, is entirely sure how to progress.

In addition to abbreviations, Orwell’s political language of Newspeak makes use of two other linguistic constructs to exert control over the population. The first is the use of euphemisms which Orwell describes as “giving the appearance of

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<sup>33</sup> The Brexit vote has spawned a new set of catchphrases to reference the possibility of other countries leaving the EU: Austria La Vista, Italeave, Donegary, Nethermind, Byegium, Czechout. . . (Daileda 2016) While these terms place a comedic spin on the issue, the disintegration of the European Union should not be explored in a comic manner. Brexit provided a catchy phrase for a serious political decision that might have dire consequences for the united Europe. The leaders of the right wing populist parties in the Netherlands and France have already called for similar referendums.

solidity to pure wind” (2014, 359). In other words, euphemisms, in the Orwellian dystopia, are pleasant words deliberately chosen to deceive and misguide the citizens of Oceania. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is abundant with such words. The names of all four ministries in Oceania reflect euphemistic expressions; the Ministry of Truth concerns itself with disseminating propaganda; the Ministry of Love practices torture; the Ministry of Peace presides over war; and the Ministry of Plenty issues quarterly reductions in rations. Similarly, modern political language is abundant in euphemisms such as the use of enhanced interrogation techniques for torture, limited military operations for war and technical barriers for razorblade wire.

The other linguistic construct Orwell introduces in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is what could be defined as generalization. According to Orwell (2008, 318), unorthodox political concepts in Newspeak expand in their meaning and cover all the specific examples in a single comprehensive term. The specific examples can now be scraped from the language and forgotten, for there no longer exists a need for their use. As Orwell writes, “[t]he greatest difficulty facing the compilers of the Newspeak Dictionary was not to invent new words, but, having invented them, to make sure what they meant: to make sure, that is to say, what ranges of words they cancelled by their existence” (2008, 318). One example of a generalized word in the novel is crimethink. The word encompasses all the specific meanings of unorthodox political terms in Oceania such as freedom, democracy, religion, morality, justice, etc., and by doing so it eliminates the nuances of meaning and disables the ability to imagine specific concepts. All you are left with is a single general, all-encompassing term with no deeper meaning. As Orwell explains, “[i]n Newspeak it was seldom possible to follow heretical thought further than the perception that it was heretical: beyond that point the necessary words were non-existent” (2008, 319).

Modern languages are not diminishing in their vocabulary, quite the opposite, the number of new words and new meanings added to the existing words is increasing on a daily basis. In their most recent quarterly update (June 2016),

the Oxford English Dictionary added over 1000 new words to their wordlist<sup>34</sup> (Oxford English Dictionary 2016). Our governments are not dominating over the language in the way that Orwell's Party does. There is no destruction of words in order to diminish the range of thought, but the use of generalizations in combination with euphemisms is quite a common practice in modern political demagoguery, which emphasise structure and form above the actual content. As the following examples show, Orwell's criticism of political language remains relevant in this day and age.

Comedian George Carlin gives comical analysis of the modern trend of euphemisms through his stand-up routine. One particularly poignant example highlights the progressive re-labelling of the term shell shock to battle fatigue and its current form: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (Carlin 2012). Carlin asserts that the newer labels represent a detachment from the intensity and emotion of the original term (*ibid.*). He elaborates that this detachment has made it easier for society to disassociate from the causes of PTSD and to justify minimal action in assisting suffering veterans (*ibid.*). Just as Newspeak allows the Party to push forth or bury information as they see fit, society's movement towards politically correct language and euphemisms has produced severe consequences in the ability to generate social support for issues.

Orwell's linguistic tools are also used to distract the public from the severity of governmental and military action. In response to the September 11th terrorist attacks, the US government made great use of both generalizations and euphemisms in fostering support for their pursuit of al Qaeda. The United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) developed a number of methods to interrogate the prisoners that they dubbed Enhanced Interrogation Techniques (EITs). The EITs were so controversial that at least three CIA officers refused the training, but fourteen CIA officers completed their training and proceeded to use it against top al Qaeda suspects (Ross and Esposito 2005). Enhanced Interrogation Techniques is simply a euphemistic term for torture; it encapsulated extremely brutal, controversial practices such as waterboarding.

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<sup>34</sup> New words coined in 2016 include terms such as glamping, starter marriage and the common texting acronym ROFL (Rolling On the Floor Laughing).

The techniques<sup>35</sup> have been strongly condemned by the American people in recent years. Almost immediately after assuming the presidency, President Obama signed an executive order prohibiting their usage (BBC News 2014). But there was surprisingly little backlash during the Bush presidency, due in large part to the avoidance of the term torture. When a CIA report on their practices was finally released in December 2014, the American people “reacted in shock” and the general public realized that “the interrogation tactics used by the CIA against suspected terrorists were much harsher than previously thought” (Ross 2014). By choosing an alternative label for their practices, the CIA attempted to minimize the cruelty of their practice in the minds of the American public and prevent a mass-scale public outcry. Euphemisms for torture such as “enhanced techniques” and “aggressive interrogation tactics” were specifically chosen to manipulate public perception and diminish indignation over the harsh methods, as well as protect interrogators from the potential legal consequences associated with torturous acts (Vicaro 2011). This use of euphemisms detracts from the unpleasant reality of torture and allows the CIA to proceed with questionable tactics while the American people sit idly by.

The CIA’s tactics were further compounded by the general nature of the term. Enhanced Interrogation Techniques infers a vague idea of harsh lighting and manipulative interview questions, suggesting a much too positive perception of the practices. Some of the interrogation techniques involved slapping the prisoners, sleep deprivation, cramped confinement, subjection to nudity and exhaustive body positions, as well as the highly condemned practice of waterboarding (Associated Press 2014). By encapsulating each of these severe procedures within one overarching term, the CIA was able to lessen the connection between each technique and the term itself. The American people found themselves incapable of visualizing the actual techniques until more

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<sup>35</sup> The Enhanced Interrogation Techniques were known to be used most often at Guantanamo Bay, causing public outcries for the closure of the facility. Despite presidential promises to shut down operations and release those currently detained, as of today 79 individuals remain imprisoned at Guantanamo (Close Guantanamo 2016).

specific information was released. Using these methods of euphemism and generalization, the CIA proceeded to perform cruel acts against non-convicted individuals for years.

In another circumstance, when entering an escalating conflict in Libya, the US government very strategically avoided the term war. In 2011, Libya was a major participant in the Arab Spring that inspired a wave of revolutions throughout the Middle East. A rebel group rose up to overthrow Colonel Muammar Gaddafi<sup>36</sup>, inciting a Libyan Civil War. In response, a NATO<sup>37</sup> coalition was formed to support the revolution. The US played a significant military role, but it applied linguistic manipulation to protect its ability to act from being harnessed by public reproach or a congressional blockade. The government insisted that the situation in Libya was not to be considered a war because there was no presence of US ground troops. They claimed exemption from the requirement to request congressional authorization, while simultaneously sending bombers and drones to drop fire upon Gaddafi and his supporters (Savage and Landler 2011).

In his address to the American public, President Obama stated: “We hit Qaddafi’s troops in neighbouring Ajdabiya, allowing the opposition to drive them out. We hit Qaddafi’s air defences, which paved the way for a no-fly zone. We targeted tanks and military assets that had been choking off towns and cities, and we cut off much of their source of supply” (Obama 2011). Despite this clear depiction of combat, the term war was mentioned only once in his speech. He encouraged the American people to continuing fighting to avert “the dark forces of civil conflict and sectarian war”, but never acknowledged the US as participating in a war in Libya. Instead, the US government proposed terms including “kinetic military action” and “limited military operations” as means to describe their intervention (Schell 2011). Both terms encourage an apathetic, unengaged response from the public as they deescalate the severity of the

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<sup>36</sup> Sources disagree on the correct spelling of Muammar Gaddafi's name due to the translation from Arabic. He is often referenced as Qaddafi or Kadafi.

<sup>37</sup> NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) is an intergovernmental military alliance between the United States, Canada, and 26 European nations. The foundation of the alliance is a pact to respond mutually to an attack on any member state.

situation using a vague technical expression. Just as Enhanced Interrogation Techniques obscured the brutality of torture, “limited military operations” could be mistaken for paper pushing or training procedures. The term offers a sanitized version of the actions being taken, specifically manipulated to achieve a particular response. By avoiding the usage of the term war, the Obama administration was free to move forward and act without facing public criticism or extensive congressional review.

The machinations of the language are not endemic only to the big superpowers of the world. In November 2015 the refugee crisis reached its peak in Slovenia after Hungary closed off its borders. The migrant route was redirected through Slovenia and thousands of refugees crossed the country daily. The prime minister of Slovenia, Miro Cerar, who had in September critically labelled the Hungarian policy of closing off the border and setting up fences in order to stop the refugee flow through Hungary as non-European and unilateral, suddenly applied the same tactic (Miheljak and Juri 2015).

Yet, somehow astoundingly and in an Orwellian manner, Slovenian barbed wire was not labelled as such by the left leaning ruling party SMC (The Modern Centre Party). As reported by STA (The Slovenian Press Agency) in the government press release, Simona Kustec Lipicer (SMC parliamentary group leader) harshly denied that Slovenia was merely erecting barbed wire on the border with Croatia. According to her statement, the border was seeing the construction of “technical barriers” which in no way should be understood as merely the erection of barbed wire (in Miheljak and Juri 2015). According to political commentators Vlado Miheljak and Franco Juri, the prime minister and his associates were actually competing to find as many euphemisms as possible to replace the word barbed wire with a more appropriate term such as technical means, technical tools or barriers (*ibid.*). Strictly technically speaking, the Slovenian government was correct. What was being erected on the Slovenian southern border was not barbed wire, but razor blade wire, a more inhumane and dangerous variant (*ibid.*). In addition, the construction of the fence was presented by the Slovenian government as an urgent measure that

would protect the citizens of Slovenia as well as the immigrants by redirecting them towards safe and legal border crossings (Vlada Republike Slovenije 2015).

The language used by the Slovenian government referring to the barbed wire employs both of Orwell's linguistic constructs, euphemism and generalization, at the same time. Technical barrier is a much more euphemistic term than razor blade wire. It does not carry the same connotation and as such it does not provoke the same reaction. It is intentionally used to deceive the population and prevent opposition. There is no notion of harm in the term technical barrier, no association with oppression. It is a general, bland term that does not make us think of the negative consequences of such a policy and the government used it intentionally for such a purpose as is evident by the statement of Simona Kuster Lipicer. The term could mean anything and the SMC parliamentary group leader wants it to mean anything except what it really means. Our dictionaries still contain all the different terms for a fence, but the gist of Orwell's satire of language persists in our modern world nevertheless.

Another linguistic tool that the Party exploits in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is propagandistic phrases such as Victory Gin, Victory Coffee, Victory Mansions, Victory Chocolate, etc. Every product in Oceania seems to allude to a victorious nature of its country. The self-glorifying phrases assure the population of the final grandiose military triumph and rally them behind the war cause. Modern governments have made similar usage of the propagandistic phrases. In 2003 the US began campaigning for support from other world leaders in invading Iraq to seek out and confiscate their weapons of mass destruction<sup>38</sup>. France opposed going to war. In response, a US congressman, Bob Ney, proposed a bill that would rename the French fries served in the congressional building to "freedom fries", in an attempt to punish the French for their betrayal (Williams 2015). The suggestion immediately gained widespread attention and spawned a trend of freedom fries and freedom toast. This rejection of French associations and simultaneous embrace of nationalistic pride betrays a propagandistic

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<sup>38</sup> Weapons of mass destruction is another term that was highly politicized and used to garner support for the invasion of Iraq.



message about sticking to the ideals of American freedom above and beyond any alliances. “By changing the name of ‘French fries’ into ‘freedom fries’ in the cafeteria of the American Congress, the American people have symbolically shown that in times of uncertainty they prefer their own freedom rather than collective security. They have proved that the case for the nation-state remains strong” (Korab-Karpowicz 2005, 88). Furthermore, the seemingly harmless switch of terms caused the American people to develop an antagonistic stance towards France. The “freedom fries” propaganda further justified acts of fury as Americans poured French wine and champagne into the gutter and televised the destruction of French products (Williams 2015). French’s Mustard even put out a press release to reassure customers that the brand name was unrelated to the French nation (Fisher 2012). Overall, Americans’ opinions of the nation in 2003 were 60 percent unfavourable, worse than toward any other European country (Fisher 2012). While the basis for Americans’ frustrations may or may not have been sufficiently justified, it was indisputably magnified by the propagandistic promotion of the term “freedom fries”.

Orwell’s Newspeak is very much present across the world and beyond party affiliation. The governments are trying to deceive its populations daily with vague phrases, technical terms and euphemisms in order to promote their political agenda. There is no need for destruction of words, for obliteration of the vocabulary as is done by the Party. It is sufficient to package the truth in meaningless phrases and repeat them for as long as there is no question of their validity.

### **5.3 The Role of the Media**

Discussion of Orwell’s Newspeak in the modern world would be incomplete without at least a brief examination of the media industry in Oceania as compared to today’s democratic societies. The media in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is merely used as a tool of propaganda for the Party, spouting its ideology to the Party members and producing trashy infotainment for the proles. This stands in

direct contrast to the generally accepted role of the media in modern democratic societies, where it is used as a means for the public to check their government and prevent leaders from usurping excessive power. In his 1971 opinion on the case *New York Times Co. v. United States*, Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black elaborated upon the media's responsibility, saying "[o]nly a free and unrestrained press can effectively expose deception in government. And paramount among the responsibilities of a free press is the duty to prevent any part of the government from deceiving the people" (*New York Times Co. v. United States* 1971). Just as democracies cannot exist without elections and protected individual rights, a government without an independent media would not be considered truly democratic.

But there is question as to whether modern media have been compromised in their role as government watchdogs. The media hold a great deal of power in their ability to pick and choose what information is accessible by the citizenry. This places even more responsibility into the hands of journalists and news anchors to maintain their independence and integrity when deciding upon and addressing topics. However, the capitalistic nature of most westernized nations has incentivized independent media corporations to allow their news coverage to be determined by their business interests (Oswald 2009, 386). Covering a story that compromises sponsorship or advertising funds, or that doesn't garner public attention, often clashes with their corporate pursuit of profits. As such, stories are specifically chosen to appeal to the widest audiences possible and are often marketed more for entertainment purposes than for the intention of educating or enlightening the public (Oswald 2009, 398-399).

The modern media landscape, especially in the United States, is dominated by enormous media conglomerates that spread their tentacles across a variety of media outlets such as newspapers, book publishers, motion picture studios, radio and television stations... Smaller, local, independent media is swallowed by large corporations that are interested in universal stories that can be used everywhere and anywhere (Bagdikian 2004, 3). In effect, these media behemoths are cutting back on local correspondents and staff to increase

profits because the media programme produced is the same for all the subsidiary companies. This media policy leads to the lack of real investigative journalism. As exemplified by Ben Bagdikian (*ibid.*, 3), one of the largest radio broadcast companies in the United States airs the same programme in Minnesota, North Dakota etc. as well as New York.

Furthermore, the five largest corporations that control the American media landscape (Time Warner, The Walt Disney Company, News Corporation, Viacom and Bertelsmann) function as an oligopoly and cooperate amongst one another in many different ways. "The Big Five have similar board of directors, they jointly invest in the same ventures, and they even go through motions that, in effect, lend each other money and swap properties when it is mutually advantageous" (*ibid.*, 4). As Ben Bagdikian claims, the media corporations do not compete on the market with innovative material but merely imitate the content with the highest rating, taking their piece of the pie and leaving the American public with an artificially narrowed selection in their media (*ibid.*, 6-7). With the growth of these media conglomerates grows their political influence as well. Through campaign donations and lobbying they are capable of promoting new laws that increase their corporate domination and, as Bagdikian suggests, their content promotes their corporate values that usually do not have much in common with the needs of the public (*ibid.*, 17-26).

The following paragraphs analyse three current examples: the primary election in 2016, the Iraq War and Snowden's leaks, where the largest mainstream American media corporations utterly failed to inform American citizens or present them with objective news or diversified views of the situation. The companies instead followed their interest of profit or accepted the official government line at face value. As the following examples indicate, modern American media functions more like a propaganda machine serving its own interest and propagating the government policy, especially when it comes to war, and it thus resembles Orwell's state-dictated media.

A particular example of how the media gratifies the political world is evident in the current US presidential election cycle. According to a news coverage analysis of the invisible primary<sup>39</sup> conducted by the Shorenstein Centre, the Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump has received approximately \$55 million<sup>40</sup> in free publicity, which was one-and-a-half times the ad-equivalent value of Bush, Rubio, and Cruz's coverage, more than twice that of Carson's, and more than three times that of Kasich's (Patterson 2016). In fact, despite a large primary field of six highly prominent candidates, Trump received 34 percent of all news coverage, which was almost twice as much as the next most heavily covered Republican candidate Jeb Bush (*ibid.*). While this comes across as innately unfair, there is no law protecting equal airtime for candidates. Media outlets have simply had additional incentive to publicize Trump. Because of his celebrity status as a financial mogul and television host many viewers tuned in to see updates about his life and career even prior to his presidential campaign. As Patterson (2016) suggests, the news media's fascination with Trump is due to the fact that journalists are driven by news values rather than political values. "Journalists are attracted to the new, the unusual, the sensational – the type of story material that will catch and hold an audience's attention. Trump fit that need as no other candidate in recent memory. Trump is arguably the first bona fide media-created presidential nominee" (*ibid.*).

This public interest was compounded when Trump became the figurehead for the "Birther"<sup>41</sup> campaign; Trump began to build a reputation as a constant source of shocking news headlines. Whether in awe or disgust, Americans from both sides of the aisle are consistently eager to hear what he has to say. As a

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<sup>39</sup> The invisible primary is a crucial one-year period before the actual primary elections where political candidates try to lay the groundwork for their campaign (Patterson 2016).

<sup>40</sup> The number itself might actually be a lot higher because the analysis only included eight major news sources: CBS, Fox, the *Los Angeles Times*, NBC, *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The Washington Post*. Additionally, the researchers based the amount only on positive or neutral news coverage while excluding the negative (Patterson 2016). According to some estimates Donald Trump's free media coverage was worth \$1.9 billion (Kristof 2016).

<sup>41</sup> The "Birther" campaign was an assertion made by right-wing conspiracy theorists alleging that President Obama had been born in Kenya. They demanded evidence of his natural-born US citizenship to prove his right to hold the presidential office. President Obama responded in June 2008 by posting his birth certificate online for public viewing, but a poll in 2011 contended that 25 percent of Americans still believed that he had been born outside the United States (Johnson 2011).

result, providing airtime to the Trump campaign has been a financially beneficial decision on the part of the media conglomerates.

But few could have predicted the result of Trump's added media attention and public celebrity. Many of the news agencies and journalists marketed Trump's initial entry into the presidential race as farcical, disbelieving that he would have any staying power once primary voting began. Even the Republican Party dismissed Trump as an outsider and sham contender for the nomination. Now, barring a massive upset by the GOP<sup>42</sup> at the Republican National Convention, Donald Trump will be the Republican nominee competing against Democrat Hillary Clinton in the 2016 presidential election. As a result, many have begun criticizing the media for promoting Trump's candidacy and failing to fact-check him. President Obama even came out strongly in rebuke of the media, "This is not entertainment. This is not a reality show. This is a contest for the Presidency of the United States... Every candidate, every nominee needs to be subject to exacting standards and genuine scrutiny" (in Manchester 2016). Political commentator Keith Olbermann reflected that the objectivity of the American media, founded upon a "marketplace of ideas" where the "best-presented and most logical would win – or at least balance – out" may be failing in the face of Donald Trump's campaign (Olbermann 2016). Many in the American public feel betrayed by a media industry that put their pocketbooks ahead of their responsibilities as critics. Unlike in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, where the media was completely dependent and intertwined with Big Brother and the Party ideals, modern media in the United States stands autonomous from the government. But the dependency within their funding structure upon marketing what is newsworthy can lead to biased journalism and, in turn, the sacrifice of media's most important role in a democracy: universally-accessible critical analysis of the political system and its leaders.

The disproportionate media coverage of Trump calls to mind another circumstance wherein the American media failed to serve its role as government watchdog. When the Bush administration made the decision to

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<sup>42</sup> GOP (Grand Old Party) is synonymous with the Republican Party.

invade Iraq in 2003, the main media outlets failed to adequately scrutinize the White House's decision. President Bush began the conversation by referencing a report that proved Iraq was six months away from developing a nuclear weapon. That report never materialized, yet no media sources challenged his claim (FAIR 2007). As a result, the American people were led into the conflict on false pretences because journalists failed to thoroughly investigate the Bush administration's source. Things didn't improve from there. Fox News immediately took a strong patriotic stance on the war, using depictions of the American flag and pro-American language to garner public support; the subsequent ratings surge led other networks to follow their example (Rutenburg 2003). The passion and hope inherent in patriotic sentiments meant that critical analyses based upon logic and caution could not compete. Media companies suddenly found it more profitable to follow the nationalistic trend than to stick to their analytical instincts. Thus numerous misconceptions about the war spread like wildfire across major news agencies. These included the claim that weapons inspectors had been kicked out of Iraq in 1998 and that the Iraqi people fostered resentment over the effects of US sanctions that had contributed to the death of many people, primarily children (FAIR 2002). The media ultimately failed to provide a clear critical and compelling case for the opposing side. Americans supported the war largely because they were faced with no specific reasons why they should not. Just as the Party controlled the people by dictating what was published in the *Times*, Americans were unable to rally behind an anti-war stance until the media, belatedly, led the way. Because the media conglomerates failed in their responsibility to provide adequate scrutiny leading up to the invasion, the United States immersed itself in an unnecessary conflict it would not be able to conclude until many years later.

Another recent example of how the modern media and the journalism it propagates have abdicated their responsibility as a government overseer can be witnessed in the reporting of major media outlets on Snowden's leaks (previously discussed in the chapter on surveillance). As depicted by Glenn Greenwald in his book *No Place to Hide: Edward Snowden, the NSA and the US Surveillance State*, even *The Guardian*, his primary choice for running the

stories, had been incredibly wary of publishing at first. The newspaper had first consulted its legal team and it warned the editors that revealing classified information might be construed by the US government as a violation of the Espionage Act; the newspaper might be, albeit unlikely, vulnerable to prosecution (Greenwald 2014, 59). Furthermore, *The Guardian* advised the NSA and the White House of their intention of publishing confidential documents on the US surveillance programme. Only after the government officials could not come up with a compelling enough reason not to publish the leaked documents, *The Guardian* decided to run the story (*ibid.*, 67-70).

As soon as the first articles on the leaks were published, major mainstream media such as *The New York Times*, CNN, NBC, CNBC, *The Washington Post* etc. began discrediting Greenwald as well as Snowden. Greenwald was described by *The New York Times* as a blogger and an activist instead of a legitimate journalist thus setting the precedent for the US government to take legal action against him. Being a blogger implies that he is not a journalist and thus not entitled to the same legal protections (*ibid.*, 212-213). Some of the same media outlets not only uncritically cited government sources that declared the publishing of NSA leaks is a crime, but actively participated in that rhetoric. The *Washington Post's* political commentator Marc Thiessen quite readily defended that thesis stating that Greenwald violated the 18 USC 798 disclosure of classified information act (*ibid.*, 216). The question posed to Greenwald by NBC's journalist David Gregory went even a step further. He asked him: "To the extent that you have aided and abetted Snowden, even in his current movements, why shouldn't you, Mr. Greenwald, be charged with a crime" (Gregory in Greenwald 2014, 218)? Such willing acceptance of the government position by the US journalist is quite worrying. As Greenwald describes, "that journalists had joined the call to treat my reporting as a felony was a remarkable triumph of propaganda for the powers of government, which could rely on trained professionals to do their work for them and equate adversarial investigative journalism with a crime" (Greenwald 2014, 222).

Similar defamation of character by the media happened to Snowden as well. Greenwald gathered various remarks by leading commentators and politicians labelling Snowden a narcissist, college dropout, coward and a spy (Greenwald 2014, 223-224). Furthermore, even the esteemed newspaper *The New York Times* reported dubious statements from government officials discrediting Snowden's act and portraying him as a traitor and a threat to national security. The paper reported that the Chinese government managed to drain Snowden's computer of all the contents without any evidence, relying only on the beliefs of two western intelligence experts (*ibid.*, 224). All this defamation of character and acts of dissidents serves its purpose. It renders the critic and criticism less effective and deters future dissidents from speaking out.

But the question that poses itself next is: why is the modern media so willing to uncritically propagate the government views? Greenwald offers a similar answer as Bagdikian: the modern media has become a part of the political and economic elite. Thus instead of challenging the status quo, they amplify the interests of the privileged few since they reside among them. As Greenwald describes:

Those who thrive within the structure of large corporations tend to be adept at pleasing rather than subverting institutional power. It follows that those who succeed in corporate journalism are suited to accommodate power. They identify with institutional authority and are skilled at serving, not combating it. (Greenwald 2014, 233)

The press in modern society is nothing like the press of Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The government has no real control over the media. But as Curran explains, where politics has failed to establish the press as a means of social control in modern capitalistic societies, the market forces have succeeded with their latent censorship (see Amon Prodnik 2012, 13). Whereas Orwell's media is directly controlled by the government, the modern media seems free and democratic, able to report about anything and everything. However, by being ingrained in the capitalist system as companies that strive for profit, they



reproduce its ideology and values. News have become a commodity to be bought and sold, and media outlets have become companies that follow the market logic of profit instead of public interest. As Bourdieu explains, “[t]he farther a paper extends its circulation, the more it favours such topics that interest ‘everybody’ and do not raise problems” (in Amon Prodnik 2012, 11) and Prodnik concludes, “the results are the topics that do not repel the potential audiences and a general tendency for homogenization, banalization and de-politicization” (Amon Prodnik 2012, 11). In order for democracy to function it needs independent media, free from overt government and corporate control as well as from the forces of the market.

Even though control of the media in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* does not directly translate into our modern societies, Orwell was very well aware of the more market-like censorship of the media from his personal experiences. As explained in the second chapter of this dissertation, Orwell had problems publishing several of his essays, as well as the novels *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen-Eighty-Four*. He notes in his essay “The Freedom of the Press”, which was to be a preface to the novel *Animal Farm*, that during the Second World War government censorship was not particularly irksome. The publishers and editors were not scared of government persecution but of public opinion (Orwell 2015). As he explains:

Anyone who has lived long in a foreign country will know of instances of sensational items of news – things which on their own merits would get the big headlines – being kept right out of the British press, not because the Government intervened but because of a general tacit agreement that “it wouldn’t do” to mention that particular fact. (Orwell 2015)

Orwell’s satire of the media in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is an exaggeration, but it is an exaggeration that serves its purpose, the purpose of viewing the media in a more critical light and taking the news they serve with a grain of salt.

## 6 Conclusion

The aim of this dissertation was to analyse the modern democratic world in terms of George Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Orwell's dystopian science fiction explores a futuristic society where the government exerts total social control over its population. This dissertation explores three means (surveillance, war and control over language and the media) by which the government of Oceania keeps its citizens subjugated and compares their usage to modern democratic countries in order to assess the applicability of Orwell's writing to today's society.

The chapter on Orwell establishes the writer as a keen political observer through the analysis of his essays and books as well as his life. Orwell's experience of the British public school system at St. Cyprian, his years in Burma as an imperial officer, his period residing among the poorest classes as well as his first-hand involvement in the Spanish Civil war formed the writer into an acute social critic with an avid sense of social injustice. Orwell must be understood, first and foremost, as a political writer. His novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is not a prediction of a dystopic future but a satirical account of the totalitarian systems of Nazi Germany, fascist Italy and the communist USSR, as well as a poignant warning to today's modern democratic societies. This dissertation argues that the means of social control Orwell depicted in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are still present in today's modern society and thus Orwell's novel remains relevant in this day and age.

As a prominent tool of social control in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Orwell established two types of surveillance: panoptic and surreptitious. Both are still widely present in today's modern society, raising concern about a surveillance state. Especially worrisome are the recent revelations by Edward Snowden that divulged widespread secret government surveillance programmes. Much like Oceania, where the Thought Police spies on Party members, modern governments collect enormous amounts of data on their citizens. Government agencies such as the NSA and GCHQ bypass existing legislation that protects

privacy and use profiling in order to intensify surveillance on *suspicious individuals*.

According to Orwell, modern warfare has changed. War has become a tool for social control and as such it must not be won nor lost. In order to fulfil its function of preserving the social order and subjugate populations, modern warfare must be perpetual. The consciousness of being at war produces fear and hysteria, which creates malleable individuals, and the war itself squanders resources that could have otherwise been used for improvement of society. By analysing different wars (war on terror, war on drugs, cold war...), the conclusion can be drawn that modern societies, similarly to Oceania, engage in numerous wars that have no foreseeable end. Furthermore, the military-industrial complex has become an indispensable part of the modern capitalist economy and as such perpetuates the continuous state of war. Additionally, wars have been abused by the American government to promote undemocratic legislation and infringement upon human rights and have provided justification for the redirection of resources towards military efforts, rather than the social welfare, thus increasing the wealth gap.

The abuse of language and control over media is another prevalent theme of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The new political language of the Party, Newspeak, is decreasing in vocabulary in order to diminish the range of thought, and the Party uses numerous linguistic devices in order to deceive its population. Similar linguistic constructs are often used by modern politicians to hide the true meaning of their policies and actions. Modern societies do not apply the drastic measures of destroying words; however, modern political speech has a lot in common with how Orwell depicted it in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The use of vague, propagandistic and euphemistic language has been a regular feature of modern political speech.

While the media in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is under complete control of the Party, this cannot be claimed for modern societies. Modern media operates as an independent entity unrestricted by the government. However, after closer

examination it can be concluded that modern media is not free from the market forces and corporate monopoly, which ultimately hinder its role as a fourth branch of the government. Orwell's depiction of state controlled media in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* may not reflect modern societies; however, his satire of the suppressed media still holds relevance.

Orwell's world bears little resemblance to our modern societies at first glance; however, a deeper analysis displayed certain totalitarian characteristics are well present within modern societies. The totality of control exerted upon the population does not come close to the one depicted in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, but Orwell never intended his book to be a prediction, but a warning. And as a warning it stands as true as it did in 1948. And if Orwell wrote, "[t]his is the direction in which the world is going at the present time, and the trend lies deep in the political, social and economic foundations of the contemporary world situation" (in Crick 1992, 565), then, 68 years after the book was published, the same claim can be made.

The stability of modern capitalist democracies depends heavily on the military industry for much needed economic growth and lowered unemployment. This increases the political power of the military industry and in return perpetuates constant wars to justify the enormous budget appropriations. Continuous wars create a state of permanent emergency that enables politicians to solidify their power, exert tighter restrictions and limit personal freedoms and thus effectively disable any opposition. The modern media, which is controlled by large corporations, is playing an integral part as well. The once diversified media landscape is now controlled by an increasingly smaller number of large media conglomerates that are more inclined to making profit than serving the public. The public discourse set by these corporations reflects their corporate ideology and rarely challenges status quo, which is in return used by politicians to further their political agenda without any real challenge to their official story. Thus, Orwell's satire can be quite accurately applied to modern democracies as well. Even with "independent media" and free elections in place, modern

democracies are to some extent a tyranny of the political and economic elites over the population. Orwell's cautionary novel remains as relevant as ever.

## 7 Izvleček

George Orwell je eden najbolj znanih avtorjev dvajsetega stoletja. Njegov roman *1984* pa spada med najboljša dela angleške literature tistega časa. Orwell se v svojem romanu ukvarja s totalitarno oblastjo, ki v vseh aspektih družbenega in privatnega življenja izvaja totalni nadzor nad prebivalstvom. Cilj te diplomske naloge je analizirati poglobljene značilnosti Orwellovega totalitarnega režima in jih primerjati z modernimi demokracijami. Teza te diplomske naloge je, da je Orwellov roman še vedno relevanten v današnji družbeni situaciji. Kljub temu, da se na prvi pogled zdi, da moderne demokracije, kot so Združene države Amerike in Evropska unija, nimajo nič skupnega s totalitarnim sistemom Oceanije, pa podrobnejša analiza pokaže, da so nekatere karakteristike Orwellovega totalitarizma prisotne tudi v modernih družbah.

Nobena analiza romana ni popolna brez poznavanja avtorjevega življenja in ozadja, v katerem je bil roman napisan. Zato se tudi to diplomsko delo v veliki meri ukvarja z Orwellovo biografijo in vplivi, ki so pripeljali do nastanka romana *1984*. George Orwell se je rodil leta 1903 kot Eric Arthur Blair. Njegovo otroštvo ni bilo ravno najsrečnejše. Predvsem je nanj imelo velik vpliv šolanje na internatu St. Cyprian, kjer se je Orwell prvič seznanil z avtoritarnimi režimi. Kot piše Bernard Crick (1992, 41), so mnogi avtorji iskali razlog za *1984* ravno v institucionalnem despotizmu, ki je vladal na tej šoli, namesto v političnih dogodkih v Evropi med leti 1930 in 1940. Takšna interpretacija je zagotovo preveč površinska, saj Orwell (2014, 451) sam priznava, da so otroški spomini lahko varljivi in da je otroška vizija sveta dostikrat popačena. Prav tako Bernard Crick (1992, 61–64), John Rossi in John Rodden (2007, 1) podajo dovolj dokazov, da Orwellovo otroštvo le ni bilo tako travmatično, kot ga sam opisuje v eseju »Such, Such Were the Joys«.

Naslednja Orwellova življenjska prelomnica je delo v Burmi, kjer je med leti 1922–1927 služil kot indijski imperialni policist. O tem obdobju svojega življenja je napisal dva pomembna eseja »A Hanging« in »Shooting an Elephant« (v prevodu »Ustreliti slona«), ki odražata njegovo antiimperialistično držo in mržnjo do službe, ki jo je opravljal. Kot sam pravi, je čutil neizmerno krivdo ob zatiranju burmanskega ljudstva (Orwell 2014, 19). Vendar njegovega odmika od imperializma ni čutili le na humanistični ravni, temveč tudi na ekonomski. V eseju, objavljenem v pariškem časniku *Le Progress Civique* leta 1929, opisuje, kako britanski imperializem izrablja Burmo in njene prebivalce ter državo namenoma ohranja nerazvito (Hitchens 2002, 18). Crick (1992, 350) in Hitchens (2002, 29) ponujata dodatne dokaze o njegovi trdni antiimperialistični drži. Orwell v svoji privatni korespondenci večkrat kritizira britansko zunanjo politiko in jo enači s fašizmom. V Burmi je pridobil povsem novo zavedanje o družbeni nepravici in si oblikoval unikatna politična prepričanja.

Naslednja leta svojega življenja je Orwell preživel kot potepuh v Londonu in Parizu, kjer je prebival, kot se sam spominja, med revnim in na pol kriminalnim slojem prebivalstva (Orwell in Crick 1992, 176). Med tem časom je poizkušal s pisanjem kratkih zgodb, ki jih nihče ni hotel objaviti (Crick 2004). Kljub vsemu je iz te izkušnje vzniknilo njegovo prvo objavljeno delo *Na robu in na dnu v Londonu in Parizu*. Njegovo politično prepričanje v tem času še ni bilo popolnoma izoblikovano, sam se je označil za torijevskega anarhista (Crick 2004). Tudi leta pozneje je bilo mogoče ta konservativen aspekt njegovega značaja razbrati iz njegovega patriotizma, ljubezni do Anglije in angleškega načina življenja. Vendar njegov patriotizem ni bil nikdar vsiljiv. Kot ga je sam opisal v eseju »Notes on Nationalism«, nacionalizem pomeni »pripadnost določenemu prostoru in načinu življenja, za katerega verjameš, da je najboljši na svetu, vendar nimaš nobene želje, da bi ga vsiljeval drugim« (Orwell 2014, 301). Leta 1936 je Orwell napisal mojstrovino literarnega novinarstva *Pot v Wigan*, ki opisuje revščino z recesijo prizadetega severnega dela Anglije in njegove premisleke o socializmu in njegovih prednostih (Sharrock 2011). Kot poudarjata John Rossi in John Rodden (2007, 5), predstavlja *Pot v Wigan* Orwellovo dokončno sprejetje socializma.

Zadnjo stopnjo njegovega političnega razvoja predstavlja udejstvovanje v španski državljanski vojni, kjer je Orwell iz prve roke doživel ponarejanje zgodovine in izginjanje objektivne resnice – dve tematiki, ki močno zaznamujeta njegov roman *1984*. Kot piše v eseju »Looking Back on the Spanish War«, so španski časniki izkrivljali resnico ter ustvarjali bitke, heroje in sovražnike, kjer jih ni bilo (Orwell 2014, 223). Orwell trdi, da iz tega obdobja ne obstajajo natančni in objektivni zapisi o tem, kaj se je v španski državljanski vojni v resnici dogajalo (prav tam). Veliko razočaranje nad izdano revolucijo s strani Sovjetske zveze, ki je vojno izkoristila za lastne politične namene, je Orwell pretvoril v knjigo *Poklon Kataloniji*, ki kljub zgodovinski točnosti in visoki literarni vrednosti ni bila sprejeta najbolje. Levičarski časopisi so knjigo označili za trockijevsko propagando (Rossi and Rodden 2007, 6), mnogi pa so Orwellovo pisanje o španski državljanski vojni videli kot škodljivo borbi proti Francovemu režimu (Crick 1992, 342). Kljub temu *Poklon Kataloniji* predstavlja Orwellov stilistični preboj. Dokončno je postal resen pisatelj z jedrnatim, nazornim, jasnim in enostavnim slogom (Crick 2004). Španska državljanska vojna je dokončna izklesala Orwellovo literarno podobo, ki mu je prinesla nesmrtno slavo. Prav tako je tudi politično dozorel. Začel je verjeti v socializem (Rossi in Rodden 2007, 5) in izoblikoval odpor do vseh oblik fašizma (prav tam, 6).

Pred drugo svetovno vojno je Orwell le-tej močno nasprotoval, saj jo je videl kot vojno enega imperializma proti drugemu (Orwell in Hitchens 2002, 127). Njegov pogled pa se je radikalno spremenil že takoj po začetku vojne. Spoznal je, da je Anglija manjše zlo in uvidel vojno kot priložnost za socialistično revolucijo, patriotizem pa kot vezni element med srednjim in delavskim razredom (Rossi and Rodden 2007, 7). V tem obdobju je napisal svoje najboljše eseje, kot so »Notes on Nationalism«, »The Prevention of Literature«, »Politics and the English Language« (v prevodu »Politika in angleški jezik«), »Why I Write«, »The Lion and the Unicorn: Socialism and the English Genius« (v prevodu »Lev in samorog«) itd. Mnogi od teh esejev nakazujejo teme romana *1984*, kot sta npr. zloraba jezika v politične namene in zloraba oblasti.

Orwellova naslednja knjiga, *Živalska Farma*, ga je povzdignila med največje pisce 20. stoletja. Knjiga je bila v veliki meri napačno razumljena kot satirična polemika, uperjena proti vsem oblikam socializma, namesto kot veleizdaja revolucionarnih idealov s strani Stalina in njegove komunistične partije (Crick 2004). Podobno se je zgodilo tudi z Orwellovo zadnjo knjigo *1984*, ki jo je celo njegov založnik napačno interpretiral kot dokončni razkol med Orwellom in socializmom (glej Crick 1992, 567). Takšne interpretacije, kot dokazuje Crick (2007, 146), niso pravilne, saj je Orwell pisal za levo usmerjene časopise vse do svoje smrti. Mnogi levičarski kritiki so poizkušali diskreditirati pomembnost Orwella kot političnega pisca in njegov roman *1984* kot resno politično delo. Tako na primer Williams (1960, 313) opiše roman kot deterministično prerokbo pogube. A kot poudarja Crick (2007, 147; 153), je roman treba razumeti kot satiro in opozorilo. Podobno obrazložitev je podal tudi Orwell sam. Razočaran nad napačnimi interpretacijami knjige, je v odprtem pismu zapisal, da je treba roman razumeti kot parodijo oz. kot nekaj, kar bi se lahko zgodilo, saj so trendi takšnega sveta globoko zakoreninjeni v političnih, družbenih in ekonomskih temeljih moderne družbe (glej Crick 1992, 565–566). George Orwell je umrl 21. januarja 1950 za posledicami tuberkuloze. Toda njegova zapuščina živi dalje in to diplomsko delo v skladu z njo analizira značilnosti Orwellovega totalitarizma in išče vzporednice v modernih demokratičnih družbah.

Orwell v svojem romanu *1984* vzpostavi dva tipa nadzоровanja: panoptično in skrivno. Oba se v veliki meri uporabljata v modernih demokratičnih družbah. Koncept panoptičnega nadzоровanja je prvi zasnoval angleški filozof Jeremy Bentham. V njegovem idealnem zaporu, Panoptikonu, se nadzor nad jetniki vzpostavlja s pomočjo nevidnega, vendar vseprisotnega nadzornika. Jetniki nikdar ne vedo, kdaj so nadzorovani, zato verjamejo, da so pod nenehnim nadzorom, zaradi česar se disciplinarni režim ponotranji in nadzornik postane nepotreben (Božovič 1995, 17). Panoptični nadzor v romanu *1984* opravlja Miselna policija z nadzorom telekranov, ki lahko v vsakem momentu sprejemajo ali oddajajo sliko in zvok. Člani Partije tako nikdar ne vedo, kdaj se jim prisluškuje oz. kdaj se jih opazuje (Orwell 2008, 4–5). Panoptični nadzor je podrobneje razvil francoski filozof Michel Foucault (1995, 205), ki pravi, da je



Panoptikon idealni diagram mehanizma moči, s pomočjo katerega se vzpostavlja disciplinarna družba. Kot predlaga Lyon (1994, 72), se panoptični nadzor vzpostavlja ne samo v zaporih, temveč tudi v kapitalističnih podjetjih, vojaških organizacijah in različnih državnih institucijah. Najbolj prepoznavna oblika panoptičnega nadzora v modernih demokratičnih družbah so zagotovo nadzorne kamere, ki s svojo normalizacijsko funkcijo prežemajo naše javne in privatne prostore, kot so trgi, trgovski centri, letališča, železniške postaje itd. O njihovi razširjenosti priča podatek, da je v Angliji 1,85 milijona nadzornih kamer oz. ena na vsakih 32 prebivalcev, kar postavlja Anglijo v sam vrh najbolj nadzorovanih družb (Lewis 2011).

Posebna tehnika nadzorovanja, ki je razširjena v modernih demokratičnih družbah, je profiliranje, ki mu Orwell v svoji totalitarni nočni mori nadene ime obraznega zločina. Nadzorovanje v Oceaniji se potencira z vsakim najmanjšim sumom o neortodoksosti. Že najmanjši obrazni tik te lahko izda (Orwell 2008, 65). Podobno se v modernih informacijskih družbah s pomočjo novih tehnologij, ki omogočajo obdelavo enormnih količin podatkov, vzpostavlja profiliranje glede na različne sumljive dejavnike. Tako na primer FBI zbira rasne in etnične podatke ter »mapira« ameriške skupnosti po vsej državi na podlagi grobih stereotipov o tem, katere skupine zagrešijo katere tipe zločina. (American Civil Liberties Union 2015). Takšno početje omogoča intenziviranje nadzorovanja nad rizičnimi oz. sumljivimi skupinami.

Drugi tip nadzorovanja v Orwellovem romanu *1984* Michael Yeo (2010, 53) definira kot skrivno nadzorovanje, pri katerem ne vemo, da smo pod nadzorom, ta nevednost pa razkriva skrite misli in širi nadzor iz področja dejanj v področje prepričanj. Orwell v romanu ponudi nešteto primerov skrivnega nadzorovanja, kot so: skriti telekran v sobi gospoda Charnigtona, skrivno nastavljeni mikrofoni na podeželju, vohunjenje Miselne policije za člani Partije itd. V luči nedavnih razkritij ameriškega žvižgača in bivšega pogodbenega izvajalca za ameriško Nacionalno varnostno agencijo (NSA) Edwarda Snowdna se zdi, da moderne demokratične družbe postajajo vedno bolj podobne totalitarnim režimom, ki se poslužujejo skrivnega tipa nadzorovanja. Edward Snowden je razkril obsežne

programe vohunjenja ameriške varnostne agencije NSA in britanske obveščevalne agencije GCHQ nad domačim prebivalstvom. Tako je bila na primer ameriška telekomunikacijska korporacija Verizon na podlagi strogo zaupnega sodnega naloga primorana vsakodnevno predajati informacije o vseh klicih, tako domačih kot tujih, agenciji NSA (Greenwald 2013a). Takšen napad na človekovo pravico do zasebnosti pa še zdaleč ni osamljen primer. Greenwald (2013b) je poročal o obstoju zaupnega programa PRISM, ki NSA omogoča neposreden dostop do strežnikov največjih internetnih podjetij (Microsoft, Google, Facebook, Skype itd.). Ta program omogoča izvajanje trenutnega nadzora nad uporabniki, kot tudi masovno zbiranje podatkov. Podoben nadzor izvaja tudi GCHQ s programom Tempora, ki ima dostop do optičnih internetnih kablov, ki prenašajo podatke po vsem svetu. Program Tempora naj bi bil najobsežnejši prisluškovalni program katere koli od petih največjih obveščevalnih agencij, ki skupaj sodelujejo v zavezništvu Petih oči (Five Eyes Alliance) (McAskill in drugi 2013). Snowdnova razkritja tako upravičeno vzbujajo strah pred Orwellovim Velikim bratom in državo nadzora.

Naslednji aspekt družbenega nadzora, ki ga Orwell predstavi v romanu *1984*, je vojna, ki omogoča vzpostavljanje izrednega stanja in upravičeno uničenje produkcijskega presežka. Ker vojna pripomore k ohranjanju obstoječe družbene hierarhije, sama ne sme biti končna, temveč mora biti stalna (Orwell 2008, 191–208). Velešile v Orwellovem romanu so v stalni vojni, v kateri ne more zmagati nobena od vpletenih držav. In ravno to je po Orwellu nov cilj vojne: večni zunanji konflikt, ki ohranja notranji mir, obstoječo družbeno strukturo in razmerja moči. Podobno vojna funkcionira v modernih demokracijah, predvsem v Združenih državah Amerike. Vojaška industrija je postala pomemben člen pri gospodarski rasti in zmanjševanju brezposelnosti, zato nekateri avtorji namigujejo, da so Združene države Amerike v stanju stalne vojne ekonomije (Higgs 2007; Boggs 2011; Coyne and Duncan 2012), kar pomeni, da se mora za vojsko namenjati ogromen proračun tudi v času relativnega miru, saj bi v nasprotnem primeru lahko prišlo do ekonomskega kolapsa (Duncan in Coyne 2013). Vzporedno s stanjem stalne vojne ekonomije se je razvil tudi intimni odnos med politiko in vojaško-industrijskim kompleksom, ki se kaže na različne

načine. Duncan in Coyne (2015, 2) govorita o pojavu »vrtljivih vrat«, kjer zaposleni v Kongresu, vojski in vojaški industriji rotirajo med službami, kar prinaša razcvet korupcije in klientelizma. Vojaška industrija je postala tudi močen lobist in radodaren donator političnim kampanjam, kar s pridom izkorišča za širjenje svojega vpliva in zagotavljanja donosnih vojaških pogodb (Centre for Responsive Politics 2016). Boggs (2011, 9) pa izpostavlja še en konflikt interesov med politiko in vojaško industrijo: osebne finančne investicije politikov v podjetja z vojaškimi pogodbami. Podobno kot v Orwellovi Oceaniji politične in ekonomske elite izkoriščajo vojno za ohranitev svojega privilegiranega statusa in umetno podaljšujejo konflikte v svoj prid.

Kot je bilo že omenjeno v zgornjem odstavku, vojna ustvarja izredno stanje, ki omogoča lažje vzpostavljanje discipline s strani oblasti (Foucault 1995, 198–199) in se pogosto izkorišča za sprejemanje nedemokratičnih zakonov, ki imajo trajne posledice za demokracijo tudi potem, ko je kriza že zdavnaj mimo. Vzorčen primer, kako se izredno stanje izkoristi za omejevanje osebnih svoboščin in utrditve oblasti, je teroristični napad na Združene države Amerike 11. septembra 2001. Takoj po napadih je podpora takratni Bushevi vladi narasla na 64 %, kar je skoraj dvakrat več kot v predhodnih javnomnenjskih raziskavah (Chanley 2002, 469). Busheva vlada je izkoristila javnomnenjsko podporo in šok prebivalstva ter sprejela zakonodajo, ki je zaostрила varnostne ukrepe, dala policiji in varnostnim agencijam večja pooblastila in ukinila omejitve za prisluškovanje (Lyon 2003, 17). Ti varnostni ukrepi so dali vladi izredna pooblastila, ki so imela za posledico erozijo osebnih svoboščin in razvoj zlonamernih praks nadzora, ki jih je razkril Edward Snowden.

Orwellova Partija pa ne izkorišča le zunanjih sovražnikov, temveč tudi notranjega. Emanuel Goldstein – nekoč vodilna figura revolucije, sedaj pa glavni krivec za vse prevare in sabotaže proti partiji – služi za preusmerjanje pozornosti s številnih problemov, za podžiganje patriotizma in utrditev oblasti. Podobne notranje sovražnike najdemo tudi v modernih demokratičnih državah. Tako je na primer ameriški predsednik Richard Nixon v sedemdesetih letih prejšnjega stoletja začel vojno proti drogam, da bi odvrnil javno pozornost s

»prave« vojne proti komunizmu (Morales 1989, 155–156), hipijevski levici in manjšinam (glej Baum 2016).

Naslednji razlog, ki osmišlja stalno vojno v Orwellovi Oceaniji, je, da le-ta skrbi za emocionalno upravičeno uničenje presežka dobrin. S tem se ohranja hierarhična družba, saj produkcijski presežek ni na voljo ljudstvu, ki bi z njim lahko postalo preveč izobraženo in zadovoljno (Orwell 2008, 198–199). Analiza modernih demokracij dokazuje, da se za ohranjanje stalnih vojn, ki same po sebi nimajo zelenega učinka, nameni enormna proračunska sredstva. Tako naj bi po nekaterih podatkih ameriška 40-letna vojna proti drogam stala približno 1 bilijon dolarjev (Transform Drug Policy Foundation 2015, 3). Kljub ogromnemu denarnemu vložku pa Amerika ni nič bližje rešitvi problema. Represivna politika proti drogam kvečjemu ustvarja dodatne socialne težave, kot je marginalizacija manjšin (Jensen *et al.* 2004, 113). Naslednja v vrsti orwellovskih stalnih vojn je vojna proti terorizmu. S terorističnimi napadi 11. septembra 2001 je ameriški vojaški proračun dobil nov zagon. Kot piše Hartung, je leta 2008 v višku vojne proti terorizmu ameriški vojaški proračun znašal neverjetnih 647 milijard dolarjev, kar je več kot v obdobjih vietnamske vojne in Reaganovega vojaškega kopičenja (glej Hossein-zadeh 2009, 151). Vendar pa tudi vojna proti terorizmu ni prinesla zelenega uspeha, saj število terorističnih napadov ne upada. Tako se zdi, da je to le še ena orwellovska vojna, ki se bojuje bolj za notranjo stabilnost kot pa za zmago proti terorizmu, in čeprav ne živimo v Orwellovem totalitarnem režimu, socialno-ekonomske posledice modernih vojn spominjajo na njegov opis.

Orwellov politični jezik Novorek je bil ustvarjen z namenom, da omeji mišljenje in naredi ortodoksne koncepte nepredstavljive ali vsaj neizrekljive. Glavni namen jezika je zožiti obseg misli in narediti miselni zločin nemogoč (Orwell 2008, 55). Tako iz Novoreka vsakodnevno izginjajo besede, kar pa ne moremo trditi za moderne jezike, ki se iz dneva v dan večajo po obsegu. Moderne demokratične vlade ne posegajo v jezik, vendar lahko v Orwellovem opisu jezikovnih sredstev, ki se jih poslužuje Novorek, najdemo vzporednice z modernim političnim govorom. Glavna jezikovna sredstva Novoreka so

okrajšave, evfemizmi, generalizacija in propagandne besede. Te so stalnica modernega političnega govora. Tako je lahko na primer ameriška vlada z uporabo evfemizmov in generaliziranih terminov, kot sta »izboljšane tehnike zasliševanja« in »omejene vojaške operacije«, zavajala svoje prebivalstvo in trdila, da prvo ni mučenje in drugo ne vojna.

Vladni nadzor, ki ga izvaja Partija nad mediji v Oceaniji, ne predstavlja realne slike modernih demokratičnih družb. Svoboda medijev je eden izmed pogojev demokracije, brez katere ni obstoja demokratične družbe, saj mediji opravljajo pomembno funkcijo nadzornika oblasti. Vendar pa moderni mediji niso povsem svobodni. Kot razlaga Bagdikian (2004), so mediji v modernih kapitalističnih demokracijah postali žrtev korporativnega monopola, ki zmanjšuje raznolikost mnenj in medijskih vsebin. Greenwald (2014, 233) dodaja, da so mediji postali del politične in ekonomske elite in kot taki ne izzivajo statusa quo, temveč delujejo kot ojačevalec interesov privilegirane elite, med katero sodijo tudi sami. Dodatno pa medijsko vsebino diktira tudi vpetost v kapitalistični sistem, ki narekuje dobičkonosne medijske vsebine in zanemarja pomen medijev za javno dobro (Oswald 2009, 386–389). Analiza poročanja ameriških medijev o iraški vojni, predizborih kandidatov za predsedniške volitve 2016 in razkritjih Edwarda Snowdna dokazuje, da moderni mediji v demokratičnih državah ne opravljajo svoje vloge psa čuvaja. V primeru poročanja glavnih medijev o vojni v Iraku, so ti nekritično širili vladna poročila in s patriotskimi vsebinami skrbeli za lastno gledanost. Podobno lahko trdimo tudi v primeru poročanja o predizborih, kjer so mediji v ospredje postavljali kandidata, ki je najbolj ustrezal njihovim novičarskim vrednotam in povečeval gledanost, ne pa kandidata, ki je imel največ politične kredibilnosti (Patterson, 2016). Tako so mediji sledili interesom profita in močno vplivali na končne nominacije kandidatov. Še en korak dalje v disfunkcionalnosti modernih medijev pa je bil narejen pri poročanju o razkritjih Edwarda Snowdna, kjer so mediji ne le nekritično podajali vladna stališča, temveč tudi prevzeli vladno retoriko in diskreditirali tako Snowdna kot tudi Greenwalda ter se več kot očitno postavili na stran oblasti. Kljub temu da moderni mediji niso pod vladnim nadzorom, pa je nadzor s strani korporacij in sil trga dovolj močan, da mediji ne izpolnjujejo svoje dolžnosti nadzornika

oblasti, zato je Orwellova kritika medijev še vedno relevantna tudi v modernih demokratičnih družbah.

Cilj te diplomske naloge je bil pokazati, da je Orwellovo opozorilo modernim družbam, ki ga v sebi nosi roman *1984*, še vedno relevantno. S pomočjo analize treh glavnih oblik družbenega nadzora v romanu (nadzorovanje, vojna kot mehanizem družbenega nadzora ter nadzor nad jezikom in mediji) in primerjave, kako se te oblike kažejo v modernih demokratičnih družbah, lahko trdimo, da Orwellovo delo ostaja relevantno tudi danes. Demokratične vlade postajajo vedno bolj podobne tiraniji političnih in ekonomskih elit nad prebivalstvom, ki se vzpostavlja s pomočjo stalnih vojn, vedno bolj obsežnih programov nadzorovanja in disfunkcionalnosti sodobnih medijev.

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