

## **Yesterday's Tomorrow**

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Since the beginning of time, man has tried to prevent man from becoming an individual. Governments have been implanted to unite all people and protect us from the horrid individual. George Orwell's novel, 1984, describes ways in which the government keeps all people as one, preventing anyone from moving away from the standard crowd. Big Brother watches where people go, controls people's thoughts, and gets rid of people that show signs of contempt or rebellion. "In the eyes of the Party there was [is] no distinction between thought and deed." (200). To prevent disloyalty and subversion, Big Brother catches the "criminal" before their thoughts are acted upon. Americans read George Orwell's novel in horror and disbelief, not realizing that Orwell's prediction of the future was correct. Both Orwell's government and America's democracy use subliminal messages, overplaying, and bias to make people believe in and agree with the government. We are living Orwell's future today.

Big Brother told the citizens of Oceania that they were fighting Eastasia, and therefore there needed to be rations. Bush said there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, and therefore we needed to go to war. "Whatever the Party holds to be the truth is truth. It is impossible to see the reality except by looking through the eyes of the Party." (205) These governments make you see what they want you to see, like looking through a viewfinder. Even if the world around you is burning, all you can see is the beautiful sunset that the government put in front of you. Orwell's prediction of ways to create the truth is used in American democracy.

George Orwell's society used ignorance as bliss. If you didn't know that life could be better, than you thought it was at its best. Big Brother used this ignorance to control people's lives. Citizens thought Big Brother created the best society possible, so they had no reason to fight against the government. "What was worst of all was that by means of such organizations as the Spies they [children] were systematically turned into ungovernable little savages, and yet this produced in them no tendency whatever to rebel

against the discipline of the Party.” (24) America, on the other hand, uses fear to control people’s lives. The government puts fear in Americans, and makes them willing to give up their rights of privacy and individualism. America puts millions of dollars into the FBI and CIA each year to “protect us.” In reality, they are breaking into the lives of harmless people. In order to keep society from straying to an unwanted route, both Big Brother and American democracy train people to detect and punish those that question the system.

In Oceania, questioning the system only leads to punishment, so citizens must choose to cooperate with society. Individualism in America often leads to prejudice and ridicule. Many Americans are afraid to be different, and thus pretend to be something they are not. “How easy it was! Only surrender, and everything else followed. It was like swimming against a current that swept you backwards however hard you struggled, and then suddenly deciding to turn around and go with the current instead of opposing it.” (228) Big Brother and American society force people to conform to society.