

Control in WWII Novels: *1984* and *Brave New World*

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Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and George Orwell's *1984* portray future society in very different ways. Whereas Huxley's society verges on utopia, Orwell's Oceania resembles an authoritarian wasteland. Strong parallels exist between the societies in *Brave New World* and *1984* and the society that Orwell and Huxley experienced as they lived and wrote these novels. Through their work, Orwell and Huxley extrapolate the future consequences of the developments and trends they observed in real-world society, presenting their novels as a means of cautioning the populace against such an outcome. However, where Orwell's *1984* exists as a clear and explicit warning of the potential dangers of authoritarian rule, Huxley's *Brave New World* functions more as a satire, subtly conveying Huxley's prediction that advances in science will ultimately allow the world to be controlled utterly without resistance by a few individuals.

The impact of Orwell's and Huxley's experiences living and writing in London before and during World War II provided influence and inspiration for their works. Observations and commentary of the social and political developments manifest clearly within their texts. Symbolism in *1984* and *Brave New World* consistently indicates each novel is a commentary on European society during the years leading up to (and during) World War II, particularly the governments of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. For instance, the names of characters in *Brave New World* are obvious homages to important figures in the development of communism and socialism. Bernard Marx, of course, is named for Karl Marx, a prominent philosopher and major proponent of communism. Lenina Crowne's first name evokes that of Vladimir Lenin, a politician and communist revolutionary, and the Bokanovsky Process is named for Maurice Bokanowski, a French politician and prominent socialist, to name but a few examples. Symbolism is less obvious in *1984*, but still apparent. For example, the fictional Ministry of Truth, which produces propaganda and revises history, appears to be modeled off the real-life

Ministry of Information, an organization created by the British government during World War II to create and disseminate propaganda. George Orwell himself spent time working as a reporter for the BBC during WWII, writing propaganda to be broadcast over the radio, and so the similarity seems more than simply circumstantial. Of course, Orwell's descriptions of Big Brother's "black mustachio'd face" and "dark eyes [looking] deep into Winston's own," (Orwell 4) as well as the way he appears to "tower up, an invincible, fearless protector" (Orwell 19), evoke the likenesses of both Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin, both known for their mustaches and powerful, commanding appearance in propaganda. Even the mottos of the World State, Party, Nazi Party and Soviet Union bear similarities to each other. The World State's motto, "Community, Identity, Stability," is strikingly similar to the unofficial slogan of the Nazi Party, "One People, One Nation, One Leader," and also bears resemblance to the Soviet Union motto: "Workers of the World, unite!" The motto of the Party in *1984* is somewhat of an outlier in this example ("War is peace. Freedom is slavery. Ignorance is strength."), yet still maintains the same themes as the others: establishing a sense of strength through unification and national pride.

Dmitry Halavach, Preceptor of History at Princeton, explains the similar ideologies apparent in each of these mottos. He writes that Orwell's fictional society, as well as Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, focused on unity and "affirmed the public sphere and the collective as the only domain in which it was possible to achieve true happiness and true self-realization" (Halavach 106-107). *Brave New World* also fits this description, and places great emphasis upon citizens "being 'useful' to society" (Halavach 106-107), an additional similarity Halavach points out between *1984*, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. Emphasis on unity under a single national identity were core tenets of real-life socialist and communist regimes during WWII, and clearly inspire societal structures in the works of Huxley and Orwell

Another example of parallels between *1984*, *Brave New World* and real life regimes is the use of scapegoats for the problems of society. In *1984*, a presumably fictional character known as Emmanuel Goldstein, “the Enemy of the People” (Orwell 15), supposedly an ex-member of the Inner Party, is often blamed in propaganda for whatever problems society faces. If Oceania experiences a shortage of food, it is because Goldstein sabotaged a factory. Bombings are often attributed to him. Winston explains that after Goldstein’s initial betrayal of the Party, “All subsequent crimes against the Party, all treacheries, acts of sabotage, heresies, deviations, sprang directly out of his teaching” (Orwell 16). In fact, an event known as the “Two Minutes Hate,” a daily Party-organized ritual wherein all Party members are forced to observe a telescreen spewing propaganda meant to inspire fear and hatred, almost exclusively features Goldstein as a villain. Orwell’s choice to include a scapegoat for all of society’s problems mirrors the propaganda campaigns employed against the Jewish people, as well as other minority groups like gypsies, in Nazi Germany. Posters depicted Jews in particular as greedy, evil, or anti-German, often exaggerating features to make them appear grotesque. Some propaganda blamed Jews for economic woes, or else depicted them carrying the flags of the enemies of Nazi Germany, or suggested they were working toward the ruination of Hitler’s conception of a perfect, Aryan race. Frequently accompanied by mottos such as “Jews are our Misfortune” or “How the Jew Cheats,” these propaganda pieces paved the way for the dehumanization of the Jewish people and encouraged inaction on the part of German citizens when the Holocaust began. In a similar way, the “Two Minutes Hate” dehumanizes Goldstein and other enemies of the party, making it easier for citizens to stand idly by when they are inevitably exposed and arrested by the Thought Police. Additionally, the daily ritual inevitably ends with a message of reassurance from Big Brother, further solidifying him as a powerful figure to be respected and revered above all else.

On the other hand, *Brave New World*, which relies upon perpetual happiness rather than the threat of violence to keep citizens in line and society stable, has no need for an individual or group on which to blame problems in the same way that *1984* or Nazi Germany do. However, in a less direct way, the pursuits of science, technology, and equality between castes are seen as dangerous, subversive thoughts and must therefore be controlled. Following John's outburst at the hospital, Mustapha Mond summons John, Bernard Marx and Helmholtz Watson to his office. When confronted by John about why the World State retains its caste system when it possesses the technology to make every human supernaturally intelligent and physically capable in order to further develop society, Mond responds, "'We don't want to change. Every change is a menace to stability. That's another reason why we're so chary of applying new inventions. Every discovery in pure science is potentially subversive; even science must sometimes be treated as a possible enemy'" (Huxley 154). Science is viewed not as the method by which society might advance and improve, but instead as a threat to society itself. Indeed, Mond goes on to blame science and truth for the conflicts that initially led to the establishment of the World State in the first place. The structure of the World State is therefore carefully constructed to suppress development, instead encouraging the populace to remain in a constant state.

Whereas *Brave New World* is largely satirical in nature, pessimistically portraying an exaggerated version of Huxley's fears about the future based on the events he observed leading up to World War II, *1984* serves more (as Orwell puts it) as a cautionary tale, a slightly exaggerated yet more realistic version of humanity's potential future. The ways in which the governments of *1984* and *Brave New World* maintain control and exercise power over the populace are particularly telling of the attitude each author holds with regard to the future, should the influence of the Nazis or Soviet Union spread globally.

One of the ways in which the governments of *1984* and *Brave New World* control their citizens is by crushing individuality, a trait seen as a threat to the stability and order of society. They accomplish this by obliterating family structures and conventional relationships, creating and maintaining caste-like systems, and placing emphasis on citizens making sacrifices “for the good of Society” at the expense of the individual. In *Brave New World*, humans are not born; rather, they are manufactured, largely cloned from the same cells in groups of tens or hundreds of identical individuals. Depending on society’s current needs, new batches of humans may be intentionally handicapped either physically or mentally by poisoning the fetuses as they develop in order to fit them into a lower societal class. For instance, Epsilons, the lowest caste, are intentionally severely stunted during their development, rendering them useless for all but the most menial tasks. However, interestingly, even those performing the handicapping see it is a positive, necessary thing – the hatchery director explains to a group of new trainees working in London’s hatchery, “You really know where you are. For the first time in history” (Huxley 7). In the eyes of those entrapped by it, this caste system, brutally enforced by physical and mental handicapping, is not only necessary, it is the natural order of things. The sentiment that sorting humanity into distinct classes results in a society that functions more efficiently and effectively than otherwise is echoed in Huxley’s other writings from the time. As literary critic and University of Washington history professor Joanne Woiak observes, “for Huxley at this time in his life and in this social context, eugenics was not a nightmare prospect but rather the best hope for designing a better world if used in the right ways by the right people” (Woiak 106). Indeed, far ahead of the state of the technology, Huxley believed that eventually, it would become possible to genetically manipulate and perhaps enhance human beings. However, he likewise believed that rather than refining the human race to collectively improve physical and intellectual

proress, such a technology would instead be used in a dysgenic sense, to subjugate, oppress and control. This sentiment is apparent in Mustafa Mond's discussion of the Cyprus experiment, which entailed relocating the entire population of Cyprus and replacing them with a batch of 22,000 Alphas. Mond recounts, "The result exactly fulfilled all the theoretical predictions. The land wasn't properly worked; there were strikes in all the factories; the laws were set at naught, orders disobeyed" (Huxley 153). In this case, creating a society composed solely of physically and mentally capable individuals turned out to be significantly less efficient and sowed discontent in a way that a society based on castes, uniformity and conditioning did not. In the end, the experiment ends with the death of 19,000 of the original Alphas, and a unanimous plea from the survivors that the World State intervene. Mustapha Mond offers the failure of this experiment as evidence to John the Savage, who argues in favor of Huxley's views throughout, that a society in which every person is an intelligent, autonomous individual cannot hope to function as effectively as a society in which the majority are subjugated, mindless drones and the intelligent minority rule. For this reason, inequality must exist, and Huxley's suggestion here is that authoritarian governments in the future may employ genetic manipulation to guarantee that inequality survives. Jerome Meckier, an English professor at the University of Kentucky, observes that instead of bettering humanity, "the trend, Huxley believes, is in the opposite direction, not toward improvement of the race. While utopians, notoriously wishful thinkers, talk about eugenics and salutary systems of education, the approaching dystopia will be founded on a scheme of dysgenics." (Meckier 2). Meckier agrees with Huxley that instead of using genetic manipulation to enhance humanity, those with the technology are far more likely to use it to produce castes, physically and mentally enforcing societal inequality. Indeed, the carefully-crafted institutional inequality of the caste system presented in *Brave New World* accomplishes

the task of achieving global stability. Putting aside moral concerns about classifying and permanently impairing individuals on a global scale, the society functions marvelously. Interestingly, the trend at the time *Brave New World* was published was towards eugenics, the enhancement of the human race, rather than dysgenics. One of the goals of Nazi Germany particularly was to create an ideal Aryan race by selective reproduction; those considered undesirable or contrary to this image were persecuted, enslaved, and murdered (Tanner 459). This is an interesting contrast, for in Huxley's fiction, there is no effort to "purify" the human race; rather, the World State recognizes the utility of a designated working class, harnessing them to perform labor considered unsavory to the upper classes. In this way, Huxley's society achieves an impressive, albeit rather immoral, efficiency.

By contrast, in *1984*, social classes largely prevent societal efficiency. Classes are divided into three groups: the Inner Party, the well-off puppet masters of the world; the Outer Party, the working-class members of the Party; and the Proletarians, who comprise the majority of the population and are ruled by the Party, but have no say in decision making. Proletarians, or "proles," as they are colloquially known, rarely interact with party members and, as Winston notes, "there was a whole chain of separate departments dealing with proletarian literature, music, drama, and entertainment generally. Here were produced rubbishy newspapers containing almost nothing except sport, crime and astrology" (Orwell 55). This societal structure closely resembles that of Nazi Germany; a small, secretive group of individuals make the rules, a somewhat larger group of subordinate party members enforces these rules, and the majority, ordinary people, are subjugated according to the whims of those in charge. Big Brother, of course, is a character closely based on a combination of Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin, often portrayed in propaganda as powerful, invincible or even godlike, as both Hitler and Stalin were



thought to be. Inner Party members are Orwell's fictional equivalent of Germany's Reichsleiter, composed of eighteen individuals who alongside Hitler, were mainly responsible for governing the Nazi Party. The Outer Party can be equated to average citizens of Nazi Germany, who eagerly gobbled up propaganda and readily participated in state-sponsored party activities such as rallies, parades, and for children, youth organizations. Finally, the proles of *1984* are best reflected by the inhabitants of countries occupied by Germany; while they largely did not participate in Nazi Party affairs, they still lived under Nazi rule and were monitored constantly for dissent. Individuals deemed to pose a threat to Nazi rule were killed or sent to concentration camps. Similarly, as Lane Crothers, a professor of Humanities at Illinois State University observes, Orwell's novel "extends the logic of a malleable mass public to the point that it is no longer necessary to convince the mass to support the system at all. What the leaders of Oceania do, instead, is intimidate and re-educate a core of supporters who then administer the state without question" (Crothers 402). It is less important, in the eyes of both the fictional Party of *1984* and the real-life Nazi party, to completely indoctrinate the entire population. Instead, it is sufficient to rely on a smaller core of devout, incorruptible followers who eagerly swallow propaganda and work tirelessly for the party. Simply, then, the rest of the population remains in check either by fear and the threat of violence, as the Nazis preferred, or by occupying them with frivolous distractions, as the Party does.

Parallels between the Nazi regime and fictional Oceania do not stop there. Oceania has a version of the Gestapo, known as the Thought Police, who masquerade as regular citizens to uncover deviance within the populace; like the Gestapo, the Thought Police are universally feared by the populace, reinforcing Orwell's intent to demonstrate not even ordinary, law-abiding citizens are safe from scrutiny in an dystopian authoritarian future. The Spies, a youth

organization which teaches children to worship and obey Big Brother above all else, resembles Nazi Germany's Hitler Youth organizations. Additionally, as in Nazi Germany, people who spoke out against the government, or were even suspected of harboring anti-government sentiments, had a tendency to disappear. Winston explains, "It was always at night – the arrest invariably happened at night. The sudden jerk out of sleep, the rough hand shaking your shoulder, the lights glaring in your eyes, the ring of hard faces around the bed. In the vast majority of cases there was no trial, no report of the arrest. People simply disappeared, always during the night. Your name was removed from the registers, every record of everything you had ever done was wiped out, your one-time existence was denied and then forgotten. You were abolished, annihilated: VAPORIZED was the usual word" (Orwell 24). The imagery Orwell uses in this passage could just as easily describe the covert arrests and sudden disappearances of those who protested the new regime taking place under Nazi rule. With the destruction of all record of a person's existence, it was as if, in effect, they never *had* existed in the first place. Equally as terrifying as the prospect of being kidnapped, and, we can safely assumed, tortured before ultimate execution at the hands of the Party is the prospect of the complete denial of an entire human being's existence. Orwell's message here is that an institution with the level of technology and control over information that the Party possesses could effectively delete all evidence of dissenters on a whim, without any repercussions; after all, anyone who noticed the disappearance would surely face the same gruesome fate.

Both the Party in *1984* and the World State in *Brave New World* distort traditional family structures and discourage the formation of strong relationships between citizens, instead encouraging loyalty and love for society in general as a method of further controlling the populace. In *1984*, the erosion of traditional family structures and relationships is twofold. While

families do typically live together, their primary loyalty is not to each other, but to the Party, as has been instilled in them by copious amounts of propaganda. Winston laments, “it [is] almost normal for people over thirty to be frightened of their own children,” because children frequently turn their parents in to the police even for minor grievances against the party (Orwell 31). This is evocative of the expectation that citizens be completely loyal to the government in Nazi Germany; on at least one occasion, a child reported his parent to the authorities for referring to Hitler as a “crazed Nazi maniac” (Richens 16). In conventional family structures, children are typically taught to respect their parents, not to spy on them and inform upon them to the government. Instead, however, the Party severs familial ties and expects loyalty to the Party first, stripping family bonds of their meaning and ensuring a cultural climate in which no one, not even close relatives, can be trusted. The expectation of loyalty to the party above all else not only severs family ties, it also prevents the formation of strong relationships between any individuals or groups. Upon encountering a coworker, Syme, in the cafeteria, Winston stops short of referring to him as a friend, correcting himself, “Perhaps ‘friend’ was not exactly the right word. You did not have friends nowadays, you had comrades: but there were some comrades whose society was pleasanter than that of others” (Orwell 62). Even casual relationships and simple friendships become fraught with danger, for as we see from Winston’s own experiences, it is impossible to know the extent to which anyone fervently supports or secretly wishes to rebel against the Party. He completely misreads O’Brien, Julia, and the shopkeeper that turns out to be a member of the Thought Police, and ultimately faces the consequences.

In contrast, the World State of *Brave New World* actually encourages friendships and romantic relationships, provided they remain superficial. Unlike in *1984*, deviance from this trend is enforced not with the threat of violence, but by social ostracism. Those that trend toward

monogamy are frowned upon by their peers. In conversation with Fanny, Lenina reveals that she's been with one man for four months, and Fanny exclaims, "It's such horribly bad form to go on and on like this with one man" (Huxley 30). This trend, along with the motto "everybody belongs to everyone else," reinforced by hypnotic sleep training, serve to effectively prevent the formation of close bonds between people. Indeed, citizens of the World State do not even have familial bonds; due to the way in which humans are manufactured, rather than born naturally, the closest thing to a family that exists in *Brave New World* are Bokanovsky Groups, composed of all the clones, as many as 100, created from the same genetic material. However, the upper castes, Alphas and Betas, do not even have Bokanovsky Groups as a support network, as they are grown from unique genetic material, not cloned. There is nothing strictly preventing citizens of the World State from rejecting societal norms, but social stigma generally keeps them in line with the World State's intentions, a far more subtle, and therefore rather more insidious, form of control than that exercised in *1984*. Huxley's message here is that sophisticated conditioning methods for ruling the populace are equally (if not more) effective in establishing total control than liminal techniques. The World State takes a step beyond the surveillance between citizens exhibited in Nazi Germany and *1984*. In *Brave New World*, citizens act not only as informants for deviant behavior, but also as arbiters in the enforcement of societal norms. Failure to conform leads to social consequences, a convincing punishment that ensures no government action is typically necessary to discourage dissent.

In both the societies of *1984* and *Brave New World*, great emphasis is placed on preserving the current state of society. Both the Party and the World State have achieved stability, and wish to maintain it, so compelling citizens to act in ways that are minimally disruptive to the current state of the world is a priority. In the case of *Brave New World*, different

castes and different generations are conditioned according to the current needs of society. If, for example, a surplus of a certain commodity exists, the next generation will be conditioned to consume that commodity. As London's Hatchery Director explains to a group of students, "For example, there was the conscription of consumption... Every man, woman and child compelled to consume so much a year. In the interests of industry" (Huxley 35). In this way, material surpluses are effectively managed, and the population is kept happy – and more importantly, predictable. Because the World State knows how much of each resource will be consumed, there are never shortages of any commodity. It is for the same goal of stability that the World State still chooses to put the population to work despite the exist of sufficiently advanced technology capable of replacing manual labor. Keeping citizens occupied with work keeps them more engaged and happier, encouraging stability. Striving to maintain the status quo is a central tenet to the World State's philosophy; not *advancing* society, but simply maintaining it. It is vital to the preservation of both societies, and in fact any society, that everything remain as constant as possible. If no new ideas are developed, no new technologies invented, no unpredictable or disruptive events occur, a society may theoretically continue forever. To those in power, this is a rather enticing prospect, as it means they may maintain control indefinitely.

In 1984, O'Brien articulates the Party's true motivation for remaining in control of the populace to Wilson whilst torturing him: "The Party seeks power entirely for its own sake. We are not interested in the good of others; we are interested solely in power. Not wealth or luxury or long life or happiness: only power, pure power... We are different from all the oligarchies of the past, in that we know what we are doing. All the others, even those who resembled ourselves, were cowards and hypocrites. The German Nazis and the Russian Communists came very close to us in their methods, but they never had the courage to recognize their own motives. They

pretended, perhaps they even believed, that they had seized power unwillingly and for a limited time, and that just round the corner there lay a paradise where human beings would be free and equal. We are not like that. We know that no one ever seizes power with the intention of relinquishing it. Power is not a means, it is an end. One does not establish a dictatorship in order to safeguard a revolution; one makes the revolution in order to establish the dictatorship. . The object of power is power” (Orwell 332). O’Brien’s admission yields a profound insight into the nature of control in Orwell’s conception of a dystopian future. All pretense of acting in the best interests of humanity thrown aside, O’Brien admits what Orwell believes to be the true motivation of all authoritarian regimes: power for its own sake. O’Brien’s assertion suggests Nazi regime collapsed because it failed to acknowledge that its true motivation for seizing power was the acquisition of power itself. In contrast, Orwell insinuates, the Party can achieve true dominance and enjoy invincibility because it entertains absolutely no illusions about what it is doing. It ruthlessly and tenaciously clings to power, going to whatever lengths are necessary in order to maintain supremacy. Orwell suggests that once an authoritarian government with an unapologetic approach to seizing power for its own sake comes into existence in the real world, toppling such a regime will be nigh impossible.

Erosion of privacy is another key way in which the governments of *1984*, *Brave New World* and Nazi Germany establish control over their citizens. In *1984*, the omnipresence of the telescreen, a device placed in nearly every room of every building that records video and audio, acts not only as a device by which to monitor citizens for subversive behaviors, but as a constant reminder of Big Brother’s vast reach into the private lives of all individuals. Winston’s paranoia about writing in his diary stems largely from the telescreen on his wall, even though he admits, “There was of course no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment.

How often, or on what system, the Thought Police plugged in on any individual wire was guesswork. It was even conceivable that they watched everybody all the time. But at any rate they could plug in your wire whenever they wanted to” (Orwell 5). This constant state of paranoia, whether warranted or not, is often enough to keep people in line. Coupled with the reality that anyone, even a close family member, is likely to report even the smallest sign of subversion or disobedience to the Party, and it is no wonder Winston views revolution as impossible. Upon writing “If there is hope, it lies in the proles” in his secret, illegal diary, Winston reasons, “if there was hope, it MUST lie in the proles, because only there in those swarming disregarded masses, 85 per cent of the population of Oceania, could the force to destroy the Party ever be generated. The Party could not be overthrown from within. Its enemies, if it had any enemies, had no way of coming together or even of identifying one another” (Orwell 89). Even the simple act of attempting to identify likeminded individuals who wish to bring down the Party is an immensely risky endeavor, and because privacy barely exists in Oceania, justifying a meeting, particularly for the large number of people necessary to form a revolution, is virtually impossible. Not only is it difficult to find a room without a telescreen – as Winston laments, “It was like trying to make a move at chess when you were already mated. Whichever way you turned, the telescreen faced you” (Orwell 138) – as Florida State University Professor of Philosophy Heinz Luegenbiehl argues, it also become likely that a member of the Thought Police will infiltrate such an organization, or an ordinary citizen will report the assembly to the police. Luegenbiehl writes, “The telescreen is not an everpresent instrument of surveillance. It is a reminder that everpresent surveillance is a reality. It is people who are the true destroyers of privacy” (Luegenbiehl 297). Indeed, it is ultimately people, rather more than the telescreen, who finally catch Winston. While his capture is announced by a telescreen, the trust he places in

O'Brien and Mister Charrington actually lead to his capture, and the telescreen hidden in the room he and Julia rent simply notifies them of their capture. Orwell's message here – and Luegenbiehl concurs – is that technology is not the single driving factor that allows authoritarian governments to establish and maintain control. Commanding people en masse is equally important. Advanced technology is not the ultimate goal; rather, it is a tool by which to maintain control over the populace, therefore guaranteeing true power. Luegenbiehl asserts, “If there is no privacy, then the population can be controlled; perfect knowledge allows complete control” (Luegenbiehl 295). According to the revelations O'Brien makes to Winston whilst torturing him, every furtive action of defiance performed by Winston, since the very beginning of his and Julia's rebellion, was carefully monitored, catalogued, and most sinisterly, even anticipated. The Party has achieved such a complete removal of privacy that utter control over citizens can be assured, for any whisperings of revolution can easily be intercepted and dealt with accordingly.

Conversely, in *Brave New World*, rather than any surveillance apparatus, law or enforcement preventing privacy, it is instead social conditioning that guarantees the lives of citizens are constantly exposed – not to government scrutiny, but to the general public. Social pressure to conform to the rest of society and not be seen as an outcast prevents, for the most part, deviation from the norm. Lenina's interactions with Henry Foster reveal that she “should have found him funny for not wanting to talk of their most private affairs in public” (Huxley 43). Later on, Lenina ponders that Bernard Marx seems “Pretty harmless; but also pretty disquieting. That mania, to start with, for doing things in private. Which meant, in practice, not doing anything at all. For what was there that one could do in private?... Yes, what was there? Precious little” (Huxley 60). Indeed, according to the social conditioning she and the rest of the population of the World State have received, privacy is seen not only as unnecessary, but also strange and



anti-social. Of course, the worst thing for a person to be in this society is anti-social, and so even those who have been insufficiently conditioned to avoid privacy are pressured to conform. As Julia asserts to Winston in *1984*, ““Always yell with the crowd, that’s what I say. It’s the only way to be safe.”” (Orwell 153). The herd mentality enforced both in *1984* and *Brave New World* is a quite powerful social force that strictly punishes – both socially, and in some cases physically – any deviation from conformity and normalcy in citizens. Similarly, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union enforced societies in which the only way to be safe was to conform exactly and do as the government said. Those suspected of subversion or dissent, even minor offenses, were threatened, sent to labor camps, or murdered.

Perhaps the most effective (and most sinister) way in which the governments of *1984*, *Brave New World*, and Nazi Germany exert control over their citizens is in the flow and nature of information. Nazi Germany made heavy use of propaganda campaigns in order to inspire unshakable faith in Nazi leadership and ideals. As Adolf Hitler wrote in *Mein Kampf*, ““Propaganda tries to force a doctrine on the whole people... Propaganda works on the general public from the standpoint of an idea and makes them ripe for the victory of this idea”” (qtd. in “Nazi Propaganda”). In accordance with this philosophy, Hitler wasted no time at all in establishing a strict rhetoric of propaganda under his rule. In 1933, the Ministry of Propaganda and Public Enlightenment was formed, headed by Joseph Goebbels, who quickly became infamous for his ruthlessness and mastery of propaganda. Posters, pamphlets, and even films promoting Nazi ideas, vilifying groups deemed inferior, and encouraging loyalty to the government were distributed exhaustively, priming the public for policy changes. One goal of these propaganda campaigns, which ultimately was successful, was to desensitize Germans to the horrendous treatment minorities received, in order to lower the chance of resistance when

minority groups were later rounded up, incarcerated, tortured, and murdered. Aside from propaganda, censorship was an important tenet of Nazi control. Any written materials containing Western ideas, authored by individuals or groups deemed undesirable (for instance, Jews and gypsies), or that might in any way challenge Nazism, were burned in great spectacles. Publishers of newspapers that offered critical or dissenting opinions were threatened, tortured, vanished, or simply had their equipment seized, and the Nazis quickly expanded control over the press from less than 3% of Germany's newspapers to include virtually all of the country's 4700 publications ("The Press in the Third Reich"). Even film was subject to Nazi control; Leni Riefenstahl, a prominent actress and director, produced several films, most notably "Triumph of the Will," in support of the Nazi Party and national socialism in general ("Leni Riefenstahl"). By becoming utterly ubiquitous and carefully controlling the content permitted in all forms of media, entertainment, and information, the Nazi Party were free to weave their own narrative and indoctrinate the German public to Nazi ideas.

George Orwell and Aldous Huxley clearly draw inspiration from many of these techniques in *1984* and *Brave New World*. In particular, the burning of books containing information about the past, deemed by both Oceania and the World State to be a threat, is emphasized in each novel. Complete indoctrination by repetition of propaganda is another major theme that Huxley and Orwell draw inspiration from. In *Brave New World*, for instance, children are indoctrinated and socially conditioned to respond to the World State's control from birth. As Mustapha Mond explains to a new group of workers in the London hatchery, the World Controllers determined that as a form of controlling the populace, "force was no good;" rather, the Controllers opted for "the slower but infinitely surer methods of ectogenesis, neo-Pavlovian conditioning and hypnopaedia... Accompanied by a campaign against the Past; by the closing of

museums, the blowing up of historical monuments (luckily most of them had already been destroyed during the Nine Years' War); by the suppression of all books before A.F. 150" (Huxley 36). Obliterating physical evidence of the past, coupled with sleep hypnosis designed to condition citizens of the World State to care little for the past, effectively ensures that the regime changes and instability can never again repeat. Ideas with the capability to destabilize the world state are utterly buried, unable to resurface because all trace of them has been erased. Rather than analyzing the past and learning from mistakes, humanity's new approach, chosen by the World Controllers, is to delete the past completely. This of course means that science's progress has all but ceased in the World State, but as Mond ultimately explains to John, "Truth's a menace, science is a public danger," (Huxley 155) so it hardly matters to the World Controllers. The World State has achieved a level of stability and advancement that allows every member of the population to live comfortably – there is no need to pursue science further, and doing so could lead to undermining global stability, a risk deemed too great by the World Controllers to pursue.

The Party of *1984* embraces a similar philosophy of controlling the past, but takes the concept even further – rather than simply concealing it, they actually alter it at will. There is a distinction here that is important to acknowledge. The Party does not simply alter the *record* of the past; as far as citizens are concerned, the actual factual truth, not just the record, changes. Enabled by the concept of "doublethink," an ability to observe simultaneously contradictory facts and accept them both as true, this allows for major pieces of historical fact to drastically change at the whim of the Party with absolutely no resistance from the populace. Erika Gottlieb, Ph.D., who taught English Literature at Dawson in Montreal, asserts, "Doublethink is a form of controlled schizophrenia practised by a ruling class that no longer has a legitimate function... In Doublethink Orwell offers a multidimensional parody of the cerebral and psychological

dimensions of the corrupted consciousness practised [sic] in Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia" (Gottlieb 118). Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union ultimately had no justification for retaining power, and heavily exploited propaganda to convince the populace that authoritarian rule *was* necessary, which inspired Orwell's conception of "Doublethink." As previously discussed, the only reason for the Party to remain in power is because it wishes to, and "Doublethink" is a vital tool for the maintenance of control. Winston muses that "the past, though of its nature alterable, never had been altered. Whatever was true now was true from everlasting to everlasting. It was quite simple. All that was needed was an unending series of victories over your own memory. 'Reality control', they called it: in Newspeak, 'doublethink'" (Orwell 44). "Doublethink" is one of the most powerful tools the Party possesses, for it allows them to utterly control reality. The Party cannot be wrong or even lie, because whatever they say is the truth, has always been the truth, and will always be the truth, even if that truth happens to change. The Party even has a slogan dedicated to this realization: "'Who controls the past... controls the future: who controls the present controls the past'" (Orwell 44). Winston's job at the Ministry of Truth, in fact, is to operate a "Memory Hole," essentially a tube leading to a furnace wherein any evidence that may prove the Party's fallacy, or that the past has been altered, is destroyed. As one of many employees of the Records Department, Winston and his coworkers are extremely effective in eradicating bits of history that have ceased to be the Party's truth. In fact, it is only once in his life that Winston encounters concrete evidence of an alteration, and even then he quickly disposes of the offending photograph. With a total lack of physical evidence to refer to, the actual facts of the past become synonymous with the Party's word about the past. There is no way to disprove what the Party says happened, and no inclination to do so, thanks to the concept of "Doublethink." In this way, the Party establishes an unbreakable

chokehold on society that allows them to utterly control information and therefore the population. Propaganda, at this point, is not intended to convince anyone of the merits of the Party, but simply to remind the people that the Party is pervasive, all-encompassing, and omniscient. “Big Brother is Watching You” is not a threat, but a promise with two meanings; to the already-indoctrinated, an affirmation that their protector and idle sees them, cares for them, and will keep them safe. And to the enemies of the Party, it is an assurance that the Party sees through the compliant charade to the subversive behaviors underneath, and that it is only a matter of time before the jig is up. As Winston puts it, enemies of the Party, once discovered by the Thought Police, were simply “corpses waiting to be sent back to the grave” (Orwell 97).

Orwell’s *1984* and Huxley’s *Brave New World* are not meant to portend the end of society as we know it or to predict the rise of a tyrannical government set on oppressing the world’s population indefinitely. Written as a response to the societal and governmental trends observed by Orwell and Huxley during their lifetimes, each work demonstrates an absolute worst case for society. Rather, as *1984*’s subtitle, “A Cautionary Tale,” implies, these novels are meant to prompt thought and introspection, and encourage accountability for governments that seek to impinge upon the rights of citizens. George Orwell himself wrote that “[he did] not believe that the kind of society [he described] necessarily [would] arrive, but [he believed] (allowing of course for the fact that the book is a satire) that something resembling it could arrive” (qtd. in Connors 463). Huxley and Orwell wrote their respective novels not because they believed that such outcomes are inevitable, but because they hoped by doing so to prevent governments like the World State or the Party from ever coming into power. Indeed, Dmitry Halavach asserts that “the true measure of success of George Orwell’s *1984* is the degree to which it has shaped public thinking about the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany” (Halavach 103). The same can be said of

*Brave New World*, and by this measure, each novel is a success. Today, governments that act in ways that restrict privacy or seek to subjugate citizens draw widespread criticism and comparisons to *1984* or *Brave New World*. That both novels remain relevant in political discussions and popular culture acts as testament both to the validity of Huxley's and Orwell's fears and to the efficacy of their novels as warnings to ensure societies like those of *1984* and *Brave New World* never come to pass.

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