

ORWELL'S BASTERDS: *Nineteen Eighty Four* and NATIONAL SECURITY

When Orwell proclaimed that, as a phrase: “we hold these truths to be self-evident”, was untranslatable into **Newspeak**, he was wrong. At the least, as a metaphor the US’ inclination towards a domestic policy of increasing pursuit of the totalitarian- in the sense of the desire to control every aspect of- turns this concept into an exercise in the *facile*.

This isn’t strictly confined to the recent P.R.I.S.M. scandal either. Rather, it is an impulse of American security action and the progression of it. This embedded pulse which threads the majority of this type of American policy is that of social engineering. For those whose minds are set to skepticism, you might consider a quote taken from the once mayor of Chicago Richard Daley’s defense of the 1968 police beatings during the Democratic National Convention, “Gentlemen, get the thing straight once and for all- the policeman isn’t there to create disorder, the policeman is there to preserve disorder.” Whether or not it was a slip of the tongue, it would seem to be more revealing than intended.

So, the mention of the Orwellian was inevitable: as reports of mass surveillance come in, sales of ‘1984’ go out. And could there be a more interesting example of fiction become- if not fact, then very nearly reality? In its counterpart, “Brave New World”, the myopic Huxley predicted a world in where, as he put it in a letter to George Orwell- critiquing and thanking his junior and contemporary on his smash hit “1984”: “the lust for power can be just as completely satisfied by suggesting people into loving their servitude as by flogging and kicking them into obedience.” Conspiratorial and, paradoxically, powerful as the sentiment may sound, it does give credit where none is owed. Backroom deals and conspiracies are less common than extreme and complete incompetence. Still, there may be a powerful idea in the phrase...

Whether it is in the name of Huxley's "efficiency", post 9/11 security, or in our case: the efficiency of modern security, what needs to be watched with the most care is that which is done in the name of the good, often when no-one is watching.

Not content to deal with humanity as it is, both writers show the totalitarian as manipulating 'human nature' (that easily stretchable phrase). Well, this is how programs like P.R.I.S.M. work. Or, conceivably could work- if only we could be given all of the information so as to be sure.

It was after reading "1984" that Huxley criticized Orwell for his predictions regarding the proto-facism of European style "civilization". Yet, it's Orwell's dystopia that is the go to, not Huxley's. A world of fear mongering, Winston Smith and global war.

Snowden's revelation shouldn't surprise anyone who's been paying attention. His self important and delusional air doesn't do much for those who are interested in the questions his leak reveals either. But are we to lean over and quietly submit ourselves to the data recording which can be used, without our knowledge, for any purpose- without a fuss? All on their word that, after-all: *"it is only to be used for good purposes, and it's really important."*

This is an extension of the same type of intelligence measures pursued – abroad – by the CIA, notoriously and shamefully un-intelligently in the 60's and – at home – by Hoover's hounds at the FBI (Responsible, btw, for such important acts of national security as threatening the dangerous Dr. King and co. who had dared to demand the basic civil liberties that these would/have/ and will continue to gleefully destroy.) A reverend and black-man peacefully demands rights and he ends up with an unsatisfactory statue and a day in memorandum. Institutionalize blackmail and you've set a template for American security departments. In other words, security means tranquility. And if the NSA's secret ferreting away and hoarding of, by their own admission, information that mostly turns out to be unused, if this wasn't enough, what of the information that we are prodded to concede to Big Data research firms and the like? Am I to take it that these are not mundane breeches of personal identity- private and public.

This is decisively hypocritical behavior. The same administration that is willing to forbid all federal employees from downloading (viewing) the Wikileaks papers. The same govt. that would pass the Espionage Act- later the Seditious Act (later repealed), then proposals to harshen the punishment to include the death penalty- the same that would pass obscenity laws and prohibition laws and the same that would make it good buisness to tell *it's citizens* not only what their unalienable rights are, but would then redefine them to suit their needs.

So, amid the lectures on the bloated word “privacy”, shouldn’t we demand equal transparency? At the least-mutual exposure. If not, then why are we to assume the best of intentions?- whatever that phrase even means.

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