
Big Brother in the Digital Age: Re-Reading Orwell's *1984* In The Twenty-First Century

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Abstract: George Orwell's *1984* remains one of the most influential literary explorations of surveillance, political manipulation, and authoritarian control. Although written in 1949, the novel continues to resonate in the twenty-first century, an era characterized by unprecedented technological advancement, digital connectivity, and data-driven governance. This article re-examines Orwell's dystopian vision in light of contemporary developments such as social media surveillance, big data analytics, artificial intelligence, algorithmic governance, and digital misinformation. Through a close reading of the novel alongside contemporary theoretical perspectives on surveillance and digital power, the study argues that Orwell's concept of Big Brother has evolved beyond state-centred observation into a complex network of governmental and corporate monitoring. The article demonstrates that many mechanisms of control depicted in *1984*—including constant surveillance, manipulation of truth, and regulation of thought—have found new expressions in digital environments. Ultimately, the paper contends that Orwell's work remains a crucial framework for understanding contemporary tensions between security, technology, privacy, and individual freedom.

Keywords: George Orwell; *1984*; Big Brother; Digital Surveillance; Social Media; Artificial Intelligence; Privacy; Power; Digital Age; Dystopia

I. INTRODUCTION

Few literary works have exerted as profound an influence on political and cultural discourse as George Orwell's *1984*. Published in 1949 in the aftermath of the Second World War and the rise of totalitarian regimes, the novel presents a dystopian society governed through surveillance, censorship, and psychological control. At the centre of Orwell's imagined world stands Big Brother, the omnipresent symbol of authority whose watchful gaze penetrates every aspect of citizens' lives.

More than seven decades after its publication, Orwell's novel continues to attract scholarly attention because many of its warnings appear increasingly relevant in contemporary society. Advances in digital technology have transformed communication, information sharing, and social interaction. Smartphones, social media platforms, facial recognition systems, and artificial intelligence have created environments in which personal data can be collected, analysed, and monetized on an unprecedented scale. Consequently, concerns about privacy, surveillance, and information manipulation have become central issues in public discourse.

This article investigates how Orwell's concept of Big Brother can be reinterpreted within the context of the digital age. By examining the intersections between Orwell's dystopian imagination and contemporary surveillance practices, the study seeks to demonstrate that *1984* remains an indispensable text for understanding modern forms of power and control. The article argues that while contemporary societies differ significantly from Orwell's fictional Oceania, technological developments have generated new mechanisms of surveillance that echo many of the novel's central concerns.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Orwell's *1984* and the Critique of Totalitarian Power

Since its publication in 1949, George Orwell's *1984* has been widely interpreted as a critique of totalitarianism, ideological domination, and the abuse of political power. Orwell's dystopian narrative depicts a society in which the ruling Party maintains authority through surveillance, censorship, historical revisionism, and psychological manipulation. At the centre of this system stands Big Brother, whose omnipresent image symbolizes the fusion of political authority and perpetual observation (Crick, 1980).

Early scholarship often situated *1984* within the historical context of fascism, Stalinism, and post-war anxieties concerning authoritarian governance. Critics argued that Orwell's primary concern was the capacity of modern states to monopolize truth and suppress individual freedom (Meyers, 2000). The novel's enduring significance, however, lies in its ability to transcend its immediate historical context and illuminate broader questions concerning power, knowledge, and social control.

A defining feature of Orwell's dystopia is the Party's ability to shape reality itself. Through the Ministry of Truth, historical records are continually altered to align with official ideology. As O'Brien famously declares, reality exists only through the Party's interpretation. This manipulation of truth demonstrates Orwell's recognition that political power extends beyond physical coercion into the control of language, memory, and knowledge (Meyers, 2000).

2.2 Surveillance and the Panoptic Society

Contemporary discussions of surveillance frequently draw upon Michel Foucault's theory of panopticism. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1977) employs Jeremy Bentham's architectural model of the Panopticon to explain how modern societies exercise power through visibility and self-regulation. Unlike traditional forms of sovereign power, disciplinary power functions by inducing individuals to internalize surveillance and monitor their own behavior.

Foucault's analysis provides an important framework for understanding the mechanisms of control depicted in *1984*. The telescreens installed throughout Oceania operate as panoptic devices that render citizens permanently visible. Because individuals never know when they are being watched, they behave as though surveillance is constant. The result is the production of compliant subjects who participate in their own regulation.

Several scholars have identified significant parallels between Orwell's dystopia and Foucauldian theories of discipline (Gleason, 1995; Haggerty, 2006). Both perspectives emphasize that effective systems of control rely not merely on force but on the internalization of authority. The significance of surveillance therefore lies not only in observation itself but in its capacity to shape consciousness and behavior.

2.3 From State Surveillance to Surveillance Society

While Orwell imagined surveillance primarily as a function of the state, contemporary scholars argue that monitoring practices have become increasingly decentralized and technologically sophisticated. Lyon (2007) contends that modern societies have evolved into "surveillance societies" in which data collection permeates everyday life. Surveillance is no longer confined to governmental institutions but extends across commercial, educational, and digital environments.

Lyon's work demonstrates that surveillance has become embedded within ordinary social practices. Activities such as online communication, financial transactions, transportation, and healthcare generate extensive data trails that can be collected and analysed. Consequently, surveillance has shifted from an exceptional political practice to a routine feature of contemporary existence.

Similarly, Haggerty and Ericson (2000) introduce the concept of the "surveillant assemblage" to describe the integration of diverse monitoring technologies into interconnected networks. Rather than relying on a single centralized authority, contemporary surveillance emerges from multiple institutions that continuously gather and process information. This model differs from Orwell's centralized Party structure but nevertheless reflects similar concerns regarding visibility, power, and control.

2.4 Surveillance Capitalism and Digital Power

Recent scholarship has emphasized the role of corporate actors in shaping contemporary surveillance practices. Zuboff (2019) argues that the digital economy has given rise to what she terms "surveillance capitalism," a system in which personal experiences are transformed into behavioural data that can be analysed, predicted, and commodified. According to Zuboff, technology companies accumulate vast quantities of user information and employ predictive algorithms to influence future behaviour.

This development represents a significant departure from Orwell's state-centred model of surveillance. Whereas Big Brother seeks political obedience, surveillance capitalism pursues economic profit through behavioural prediction and modification. Nevertheless, both systems depend upon asymmetrical access to information and the capacity to monitor individuals without their full awareness.

Zuboff's analysis has become particularly influential because it highlights the convergence of surveillance, technology, and economic power. The collection of personal data by digital platforms demonstrates that contemporary forms of observation often operate through voluntary participation rather than overt coercion. Users willingly disclose information in exchange for convenience, connectivity, and personalized services, thereby contributing to their own surveillance.

2.5 Digital Transparency and Self-Surveillance

The transformation of surveillance in the digital era has also attracted the attention of Byung-Chul Han. In *The Transparency Society*, Han (2015) argues that contemporary individuals increasingly participate in systems of self-disclosure through social media and digital communication platforms. Unlike Orwell's citizens, who are forced into visibility, modern subjects frequently expose themselves voluntarily.

Han contends that neoliberal societies promote transparency as a positive value while simultaneously eroding privacy. Individuals become both observers and observed, generating continuous streams of information about their identities, preferences, and activities. This dynamic complicates traditional understandings of surveillance by suggesting that contemporary control often operates through participation rather than repression.

The concept of self-surveillance extends Orwell's concerns into the digital age. While Big Brother's power depended upon coercive observation, contemporary digital environments encourage users to disclose information willingly. Nevertheless, the result remains the expansion of visibility and the reduction of private space.

2.6 Algorithmic Governance, Information Control, and Digital Truth

A central theme of *1984* is the manipulation of truth through institutional control over information. Contemporary scholars have identified comparable concerns in digital environments characterized by algorithmic filtering, misinformation, and data-driven communication systems.

Beer (2017) argues that algorithms increasingly influence how information is organized, prioritized, and distributed. Search engines, recommendation systems, and social media feeds determine what users encounter online, thereby shaping public knowledge and political discourse. Although these systems do not impose ideological conformity in the manner of Orwell's Party, they nevertheless influence the construction of social reality.

The proliferation of misinformation and disinformation has further intensified concerns regarding truth in the digital age. McIntyre (2018) observes that contemporary political culture is increasingly characterized by the erosion of shared factual standards. The emergence of so-called "post-truth" conditions has renewed scholarly interest in Orwell's depiction of historical revisionism and ideological manipulation.

Viewed collectively, these developments suggest that Orwell's insights remain highly relevant to contemporary debates concerning information control. Although the mechanisms have evolved from state propaganda to algorithmic mediation, questions regarding truth, authority, and knowledge continue to occupy a central position in modern societies.

2.7 Research Gap

Existing scholarship has extensively examined Orwell's critique of totalitarianism and contemporary analyses of digital surveillance. However, many studies treat these domains separately, focusing either on literary interpretation or technological critique. There remains a need for an interdisciplinary reassessment that situates Orwell's concept of Big Brother within contemporary discussions of surveillance capitalism, algorithmic governance, artificial intelligence, and digital self-monitoring.

This article addresses that gap by demonstrating that Orwell's dystopian framework remains a valuable analytical lens for understanding the evolving relationship between technology, power, and individual freedom in the twenty-first century.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored in Michel Foucault's theory of panopticism and Shoshana Zuboff's theory of surveillance capitalism. Together, these frameworks provide a comprehensive lens for examining the evolving forms of surveillance and control that connect George Orwell's *1984* to contemporary digital society.

3.1 Panopticism and Disciplinary Power

Michel Foucault's theory of panopticism, articulated in *Discipline and Punish* (1977), offers a valuable framework for understanding the mechanisms of surveillance depicted in Orwell's *1984*. Foucault adapts Jeremy Bentham's

architectural design of the Panopticon—a prison structure in which inmates can be observed without knowing when they are being watched—to explain how modern societies exercise disciplinary power.

According to Foucault (1977), surveillance functions most effectively when individuals internalize the possibility of constant observation and consequently regulate their own behaviour. Power is therefore not exercised solely through direct coercion but through the production of self-disciplining subjects. The awareness of being potentially visible at all times creates conformity, obedience, and social control.

This theoretical perspective illuminates Orwell's portrayal of Oceania. The telescreens installed in homes, workplaces, and public spaces operate as panoptic technologies that render citizens permanently visible. Because Party members can never be certain when they are being monitored, they engage in continuous self-surveillance. Winston Smith's fear of committing "thoughtcrime" demonstrates the extent to which surveillance has been internalized. The Party's power derives not merely from its capacity to observe but from its ability to shape behavior through the anticipation of observation.

Foucault's concept of disciplinary power thus provides a critical framework for understanding Big Brother as a symbol of omnipresent visibility and psychological control. It reveals that surveillance in *1984* functions not only as a technological apparatus but also as a mechanism for producing compliant subjects.

3.2 Surveillance Capitalism and Digital Monitoring

While Foucault's theory explains the disciplinary dimensions of surveillance, it does not fully account for the economic logic that underpins contemporary digital monitoring systems. To address this limitation, the study incorporates Shoshana Zuboff's theory of surveillance capitalism.

In *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*, Zuboff (2019) argues that digital corporations have developed a new economic model based on the extraction, analysis, and commercialization of personal data. User experiences, online interactions, browsing histories, geographical movements, and social behaviors are transformed into what she describes as "behavioural surplus"—data that can be used to predict and influence future actions.

Unlike Orwell's Big Brother, whose primary objective is political domination, surveillance capitalism is driven by economic interests. Nevertheless, both systems rely upon asymmetrical information relationships in which powerful institutions possess extensive knowledge about individuals while remaining largely opaque themselves. As a result, surveillance becomes a means of influencing behavior, shaping preferences, and directing decision-making processes.

Zuboff's theory is particularly relevant to the digital age because it demonstrates how surveillance has expanded beyond state institutions into the realm of corporate power. Social media platforms, search engines, e-commerce services, and mobile applications continuously collect and process personal information, creating forms of monitoring that often operate invisibly and with user consent.

3.3 Integrating Panopticism and Surveillance Capitalism

The combination of Foucault's panopticism and Zuboff's surveillance capitalism provides a multidimensional framework for re-reading *1984* in the twenty-first century. Foucault explains how surveillance disciplines individuals through visibility and self-regulation, while Zuboff reveals how digital technologies transform personal data into a source of economic and social power.

Together, these theories demonstrate that Orwell's concept of Big Brother has evolved rather than disappeared. In contemporary society, surveillance no longer functions exclusively through centralized state institutions. Instead, it operates through interconnected networks of governments, corporations, algorithms, and digital platforms. Citizens are monitored not only through coercive mechanisms but also through voluntary participation in digital environments.

This theoretical synthesis enables the study to examine how Orwell's dystopian warnings continue to resonate in an era characterized by social media, artificial intelligence, algorithmic governance, facial-recognition technologies, and large-scale data collection. By applying these complementary frameworks, the article argues that the logic of Big Brother persists in new forms, making *1984* an essential text for understanding the relationship between technology, power, and freedom in contemporary society.

IV. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Big Brother and the Panoptic Logic of Digital Surveillance

One of the most enduring features of George Orwell's *1984* is its depiction of surveillance as a mechanism of social and political control. The omnipresent figure of Big Brother symbolizes a system in which citizens are subjected to continuous observation, rendering privacy virtually non-existent. Through the telescreen, the Party monitors individual behaviour, suppresses dissent, and cultivates obedience. Orwell's dystopian vision illustrates how surveillance extends beyond physical observation to become a psychological instrument that shapes consciousness and behavior.

Viewed through Foucault's (1977) concept of panopticism, the surveillance apparatus in *1984* functions as a disciplinary technology. The effectiveness of the telescreen does not depend solely on its capacity to observe but on the citizens' awareness that they may be watched at any moment. This uncertainty compels individuals to regulate their own conduct, internalizing the authority of the Party. Winston Smith's constant fear of detection demonstrates how surveillance produces self-discipline and conformity. The Party's greatest achievement is not merely monitoring citizens but transforming them into active participants in their own regulation.

The contemporary digital environment reveals striking parallels with Orwell's dystopian society. Although democratic societies generally guarantee legal protections for privacy and freedom of expression, technological developments have expanded the capacity for monitoring human behavior on an unprecedented scale. Smartphones, social media platforms, biometric identification systems, GPS technologies, and internet-connected devices generate vast quantities of personal information. Individuals leave digital traces through everyday activities such as communication, shopping, transportation, and entertainment.

Unlike Orwell's telescreens, modern surveillance technologies are often integrated into devices that individuals willingly adopt. Yet the distinction between voluntary participation and coercive monitoring is increasingly complex. The collection of behavioural data enables governments and corporations to observe patterns of activity, preferences, and social interactions. Consequently, surveillance has become embedded within the ordinary routines of contemporary life.

The relevance of Orwell's vision lies not in a literal correspondence between Oceania and modern society but in the persistence of surveillance as a technique of power. While citizens of democratic societies are not typically subjected to the overt repression depicted in *1984*, the increasing normalization of digital monitoring raises important questions regarding privacy, autonomy, and the limits of observation. Orwell's warning remains significant because it highlights the relationship between visibility and power, a relationship that continues to shape contemporary technological systems.

4.2 From Big Brother to Big Data: Surveillance Capitalism and the Commercialization of Observation

A significant difference between Orwell's dystopia and contemporary society concerns the institutional foundations of surveillance. In *1984*, surveillance is centralized within the state. The Party monitors citizens primarily to maintain political dominance and ideological conformity. Observation serves the interests of authoritarian governance, ensuring obedience and eliminating opposition.

In contrast, surveillance in the twenty-first century increasingly operates through corporate infrastructures. Zuboff's (2019) concept of surveillance capitalism explains how personal information has become a valuable economic resource. Digital platforms collect extensive quantities of user data, including search histories, purchasing habits, online interactions, and geographical movements. These data are analysed to predict behavior, personalize content, and generate profit.

The transition from state surveillance to data-driven corporate surveillance represents a major transformation in the exercise of power. However, important continuities remain. Both Orwell's Party and contemporary digital corporations rely upon asymmetrical knowledge relationships. In each case, institutions accumulate detailed information about individuals while maintaining significant control over how that information is collected, interpreted, and utilized.

The contemporary user frequently participates in surveillance processes voluntarily. Social networking sites encourage individuals to disclose personal experiences, preferences, photographs, and opinions. Mobile applications routinely request access to location data, contacts, and behavioural information. While such practices often appear harmless or beneficial, they contribute to the creation of extensive digital profiles that can be used to influence consumer choices and social behavior.

This development complicates traditional understandings of power. Orwell imagined surveillance as a visible instrument of authoritarian domination. Contemporary surveillance, by contrast, often operates invisibly through convenience, personalization, and participation. Nevertheless, both systems demonstrate how information can become a source of power. In this sense, Big Brother has evolved from a political figure into a broader network of technological and economic institutions capable of monitoring and influencing human behavior.

4.3 The Ministry of Truth and the Digital Construction of Reality

Among the most disturbing aspects of *1984* is the Party's systematic manipulation of truth. Through the Ministry of Truth, historical records are continuously revised to align with official narratives. Facts become fluid, and reality is determined not by objective evidence but by political authority. The Party's famous slogan, "Who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past," encapsulates Orwell's concern with the relationship between power and knowledge.

The digital age presents new challenges that echo these concerns. Contemporary societies possess unprecedented access to information, yet they also confront increasing difficulties in distinguishing accurate information from misinformation and disinformation. Social media platforms facilitate the rapid circulation of content, allowing both factual and misleading narratives to spread across global audiences within moments.

The rise of algorithmic content distribution further complicates the production of knowledge. Algorithms determine which information users encounter, shaping public discourse and influencing perceptions of reality. While these systems are designed primarily to maximize engagement, they can inadvertently amplify sensational, polarizing, or misleading content. As Beer (2017) observes, algorithms increasingly function as cultural and political actors that organize access to information.

The phenomenon commonly described as the "post-truth" condition reflects many of Orwell's concerns regarding epistemological instability. McIntyre (2018) argues that contemporary political environments are increasingly characterized by the weakening of shared standards of evidence and truth. Although democratic societies differ fundamentally from Orwell's totalitarian regime, the manipulation of information remains a powerful tool for influencing public opinion and political behavior.

Orwell's depiction of historical revisionism therefore retains remarkable contemporary relevance. The Ministry of Truth may not exist in literal form, yet digital technologies have created new mechanisms through which information can be filtered, distorted, amplified, or suppressed. The struggle over truth remains central to modern political and cultural life, confirming the enduring significance of Orwell's insights.

4.4 Thought Control, Algorithms, and the Shaping of Human Consciousness

Beyond physical surveillance and information management, *1984* explores the possibility of controlling thought itself. The Party seeks not merely to regulate behavior but to eliminate the capacity for independent thinking. Through Newspeak, ideological indoctrination, and the criminalization of dissent, the regime attempts to narrow the boundaries of thought and imagination.

Contemporary societies generally uphold freedom of expression and intellectual pluralism. Nevertheless, emerging digital technologies have introduced new forms of influence that affect how individuals encounter and interpret information. Recommendation systems, personalized news feeds, and algorithmic filtering mechanisms shape the informational environments within which people form opinions and make decisions.

These systems do not impose beliefs through direct coercion. Rather, they operate by structuring exposure to information. Users are frequently presented with content that aligns with previous preferences and behaviors, creating conditions that may reinforce existing assumptions and reduce engagement with alternative perspectives. The resulting informational fragmentation can contribute to ideological polarization and the formation of digital echo chambers.

From a Foucauldian perspective, this development illustrates how power operates through subtle mechanisms that guide conduct rather than overtly dictate it. Individuals perceive themselves as exercising freedom while simultaneously navigating environments structured by algorithmic logic. The influence of these systems is often invisible, making their effects difficult to recognize and evaluate.

Orwell's concept of thought control thus acquires renewed significance in the digital age. While contemporary technologies do not replicate the coercive mechanisms of the Party, they reveal how power can shape consciousness indirectly through the organization and distribution of information. The challenge is no longer simply protecting individuals from censorship but ensuring the conditions necessary for critical reflection, intellectual autonomy, and democratic deliberation.

4.5 Re-reading Orwell in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

The rapid development of artificial intelligence has introduced new dimensions to debates concerning surveillance, power, and human freedom. AI systems possess the capacity to process vast quantities of data, identify behavioural patterns, and generate predictions about future actions. These capabilities have transformed sectors ranging from healthcare and education to governance and security.

From the perspective of *1984*, artificial intelligence represents both an opportunity and a potential risk. On one hand, AI technologies offer significant social benefits, including increased efficiency, improved decision-making,

and enhanced public services. On the other hand, they expand the technical capacity for monitoring, classification, and behavioural prediction.

Facial-recognition technologies, predictive analytics, and automated surveillance systems illustrate how observation is becoming increasingly sophisticated and comprehensive. Such developments raise ethical questions regarding consent, accountability, transparency, and civil liberties. They also invite renewed reflection on Orwell's warning about the concentration of informational power.

Although Orwell could not have anticipated the technological complexities of the twenty-first century, his broader concerns remain highly relevant. The fundamental issue is not technology itself but the manner in which technological systems are embedded within structures of power. Artificial intelligence has intensified the capacity to collect, analyze, and act upon personal information, making the questions raised by *1984* more urgent than ever.

The continued relevance of Orwell's novel lies in its capacity to illuminate these enduring tensions. By exposing the dangers associated with unchecked surveillance, manipulated truth, and concentrated authority, *1984* provides a critical framework for evaluating contemporary technological developments. Re-reading the novel in the age of artificial intelligence reveals that the struggle between freedom and control remains one of the defining challenges of modern society.

V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

George Orwell's *1984* has long been recognized as one of the most influential literary explorations of surveillance, authoritarianism, and political control. More than seven decades after its publication, the novel continues to offer a remarkably relevant framework for understanding the complex relationship between technology, power, and individual freedom. This study has argued that Orwell's concept of Big Brother remains a powerful interpretive lens through which contemporary digital societies can be examined. While the technological and political realities of the twenty-first century differ significantly from the totalitarian regime depicted in Oceania, the fundamental concerns that animate Orwell's narrative—surveillance, information control, behavioural regulation, and the concentration of power—persist in new and increasingly sophisticated forms.

By drawing upon Michel Foucault's theory of panopticism and Shoshana Zuboff's theory of surveillance capitalism, this article has demonstrated that the logic of surveillance has evolved beyond the centralized structures envisioned by Orwell. In *1984*, surveillance functions primarily as a mechanism of political domination exercised by the state. Through telescreens, the Thought Police, and the omnipresent image of Big Brother, the Party establishes a system in which visibility becomes a tool of discipline and obedience. Citizens internalize the possibility of observation and consequently regulate their own behavior. Foucault's concept of panopticism provides a useful framework for understanding this process, revealing how power operates not only through coercion but also through the production of self-monitoring subjects.

The analysis has shown that similar dynamics can be observed within contemporary digital environments. Smartphones, social media platforms, biometric technologies, location-tracking systems, and networked devices have created unprecedented capacities for collecting and analyzing personal information. However, unlike Orwell's dystopian state, modern surveillance frequently operates through dispersed technological infrastructures involving governments, corporations, and digital platforms. Surveillance has become embedded within ordinary social practices, transforming everyday activities into sources of data generation and behavioural observation. Consequently, the panoptic principle identified by Foucault remains highly relevant, though it now functions within decentralized and technologically mediated systems rather than exclusively through state institutions.

The study has further demonstrated that contemporary surveillance is inseparable from economic interests. Zuboff's concept of surveillance capitalism reveals how personal data have become valuable commodities within the digital economy. Individuals voluntarily disclose information through online interactions, social networking platforms, and digital services, thereby contributing to extensive systems of behavioural monitoring. This development represents a significant transformation of Orwell's original model. Whereas Big Brother sought political conformity, contemporary surveillance systems often pursue commercial objectives through prediction, personalization, and behavioural influence. Yet despite these differences, both forms of surveillance rely upon asymmetrical distributions of knowledge and power. Institutions capable of collecting and interpreting data gain significant influence over individuals who possess limited awareness of how their information is being utilized.

Another central finding of this study concerns the continuing relevance of Orwell's insights regarding truth and information control. The Ministry of Truth serves in *1984* as a symbol of the political manipulation of reality, illustrating how authority can be maintained through the control of historical narratives and public knowledge. Although contemporary societies generally support pluralistic information environments, the rise of algorithmic filtering, misinformation, disinformation, and digital propaganda has generated new challenges to the integrity of public discourse. Information is increasingly mediated by algorithms that determine visibility, prioritize engagement, and shape patterns of consumption. In this context, Orwell's concerns regarding the relationship between power and truth acquire renewed significance. The digital age has not eliminated struggles over reality; rather, it has transformed the mechanisms through which such struggles are conducted.

The article has also highlighted the growing importance of artificial intelligence in discussions of surveillance and social control. AI-driven systems possess unprecedented capacities for prediction, classification, and behavioural analysis. These technologies enhance efficiency and innovation but simultaneously raise profound ethical and political questions concerning privacy, autonomy, transparency, and accountability. From the perspective of *1984*, artificial intelligence can be understood as part of a broader historical trajectory in which technological advancements expand the possibilities of observation and governance. Orwell could not have foreseen the specific technologies that characterize the contemporary digital landscape, yet his broader warning about the dangers of concentrated informational power remains strikingly prescient.

The principal contribution of this study lies in its interdisciplinary re-examination of Orwell's *1984* through the combined lenses of surveillance theory and digital culture studies. Rather than treating the novel solely as a historical critique of twentieth-century totalitarianism, the article has demonstrated its continuing value as a conceptual framework for understanding contemporary forms of digital power. By integrating literary analysis with the theoretical insights of Foucault and Zuboff, the study bridges the gap between Orwell scholarship and current debates on surveillance, datafication, and algorithmic governance. In doing so, it expands existing interpretations of *1984* beyond conventional political readings and situates the novel within broader discussions concerning the social consequences of technological transformation.

Ultimately, the enduring relevance of *1984* lies not in its ability to predict specific technological developments but in its profound understanding of the relationship between knowledge and power. Orwell recognized that systems of domination depend upon the capacity to observe, classify, and influence human behavior. The digital age has altered the mechanisms through which these processes operate, but it has not diminished their significance. If anything, contemporary technologies have intensified the urgency of the questions Orwell posed regarding privacy, freedom, truth, and human agency.

As societies continue to navigate the opportunities and challenges presented by artificial intelligence, big data, and digital communication technologies, *1984* remains an indispensable text for critical reflection. Re-reading Orwell in the twenty-first century reveals that Big Brother has not disappeared; rather, it has been reconfigured within complex networks of technological, political, and economic power. Recognizing these transformations is essential for preserving democratic values and ensuring that technological progress remains compatible with

human freedom and dignity. In this sense, Orwell's dystopian warning continues to serve not merely as a literary artefact of the past but as a vital intellectual resource for understanding the present and imagining the future.

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