

The Future Has Caught Up With Us

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John Derbyshire is the sole remaining adult writing for National Review. In a recent issue he noted that Aldous Huxley's novel, *Brave New World*, first published in 1932, now reads like contemporary news. Huxley's fearsome predictions of a 26th century world have all come true six centuries early—in vitro fertilization, genetically modified crops, stem-cell research, promiscuous recreational sex, the demise of marriage and families, and the epidemic use of prescription and illegal drugs to escape from anxiety, frustration and disappointment.

Alas, Franz Kafka's novel, *The Trial*, published in 1925 and George Orwell's novel, *1984*, published in 1949, also have been turned into period pieces by the practices of the Bush Regime.

In Kafka's novel, Josef K. is arrested for reasons never given, tried for an unspecified crime, and executed.

The Trial is the model for the Bush Regime's Military Tribunals, which permit execution on the basis of hearsay, secret evidence unknown to the defendant, or confession extracted by torture.

For the past five years, the Bush Regime has held people in secret prisons without warrants, charges, or access to an attorney. Most detainees have been tortured and abused. Bush's real world victims suffer from more disorientation and hopelessness than Kafka's character, Josef K.

In Orwell's *1984*, people are subjected to relentless spying. A state or alleged state of war is used to maintain total control over everyone. Lies have replaced truth, and the media serves as propagandist for the Ministry of Truth. The meaning of words, such as "freedom" has been perverted. The attitude of *1984*'s all powerful government is "you are with us or against us."

In the United States, each member elected to the House and Senate takes an oath to uphold the US Constitution, as does the president and vice president. Yet the Bush Regime drafted and Congress passed the Military Commissions Act, a constitutional monstrosity that denies the protection of law to everyone declared, without evidence, by the executive branch to be a suspected terrorist or enemy combatant.

The Military Commissions Act became law in "the land of the free" in 2006. The Act strips detainees of protections provided by the Geneva Conventions. The Act declares that no person "subject to trial by military commission under this chapter may invoke the Geneva Conventions as a source of rights."

The Act also denies detainees the protections of the US Constitution and Bill of Rights: “No court, justice, or judge shall have jurisdiction to hear or consider an application for a writ of habeas corpus filed by or on behalf of” a detainee. Some language in the Act refers to detainees as “aliens,” but, ominously, other language does not limit the Act’s applicability to “aliens.”

In Orwell’s novel, Winston Smith commits a thought crime, is arrested by the Thought Police, and imprisoned in the Ministry of Love. Winston’s dearth of rights under Big Brother are comparable to the absence of rights of detainees under the Military Commissions Act

This dangerous legislation is the product of the same regime that resurrected the medieval practice of torture of prisoners and that has consistently lied about the reasons for the wars it has initiated.

Scholars, such as Philip Cooper of Portland State University, warn that the Bush Regime is using presidential signing statements to replace constitutional checks and balances with elevated executive powers associated with the unitary executive theory.

The unitary executive theory is a way to turn the US president into Big Brother. Already Bush is replacing Congress as the arbiter of law and the judiciary as the arbiter of rights. The media enable his usurpation, and the people, distracted by war and “terrorism,” have their various forms of soma.

Amazing but true—three novels of the early 20th century predicted present day America.

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