Interview

------George Orwell talking about 1984

I know it’s hard to believe, but I’m not mad.

As I’m old enough, I choose to tell no lies.

George Orwell, the author of 1984, was interviewed by me in 1986.

Yes, that’s true.

By the way, he was born in 1943, not 1903, and he wrote 1984, in the year of 1984, not 1948.

The record of our conversations is shown below.

“Mr. Orwell, we have all known that the country you created, I mean, Oceania……”

“I ‘created’ no country.”

“Oh! Can……can you say that again, please, Mr. Orwell?”

“I ‘created’ no country. Oceania is true. The country which bans my book from being read by the public is exactly the one I’m writing about.”

“Alright, Mr. Orwell……Let’s begin with a brief introduction of Oceania, in case our reader had no idea what the country was like……”

“I don’t think any of your readers would have no idea how it is, but anyway, I will use several sentences to describe it.

In this country, Big Brother is always watching you. He is watching you behind the telescreen , which is everywhere; he is watching you by using the eyes of Thought Police, which is everywhere, too; he is watching you even by using your families……”

“It’s horrible! Don’t you think so, Mr. Orwell?”

“It is NO horrible, because it is what’s happening right now. And I think I shall continue.

And as what our Winston Smith wrote in his diary, in this country,

WAR IS PEACE

FREEDOM IS SLAVERY

IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH

And……”

“I beg your pardon, Mr. Orwell, but what does it mean?”

“It means itself literally.”

“So in this country, everything can equal its opposition?”

“That is what doublethink is all about. As what our Winston Smith figured out,

‘To know and not to know, to be conscious of complete truthfulness while telling carefully constructed lies, to hold simultaneously two opinions which cancelled out, knowing them to be contradictory and believing both of them, to use logic against logic, to repudiate morality while laying claim to it, to believe that democracy was impossible and that the Party was the guardian of democracy, to forget whatever it was necessary to forget, then to draw it back into memory again at the moment when it was needed, and then promptly to forget it again: and above all, to apply the same process to the process itself. That was the ultimate subtlety: consciously to induce unconsciousness, and then, once again, to become unconscious of the act of hypnosis you had just performed. Even to understand the word ‘doublethink’ involved the use of doublethink.’”

“I’m sorry, but Mr. Orwell, I have been dizzy about the long, long definition.”

“That means you don’t have the ability to doublethink and you can never join the Party. You shall only be one of the proles.”

“What is the proles?”

“From its definition, we can see that they are out of the range of the Party. As what the Party told its members, the proles once was laborious workers in the factories run by capitalists. The Party claimed that the proles had been liberated form bondage by the Party, but at the same time, all members of the Party shall know that the proles shall not be viewed as equal. That is when doublethink is used. And as what Winston said,

‘Until they become conscious they will never rebel, and until after they have rebelled they cannot become conscious.’”

“I just couldn’t believe it!”

“Believe it or not, that’s what’s happening around me and you. I happened to notice this and I decided to write it down in case people like you can never do so.”

“Anyway……Can you tell us what you think of Winston Smith?”

“He is a poor guy struggling in the daze of history.

“We all know that in his childhood, there is no Big Brother. He could hardly remember what happened then but he was quite sure that what the Party said about that period was lies. He was struggling to get hold of a piece of truth, but he just couldn’t.

“As we know, Winston’s job was to ‘correct’ history. Every day, he sat behind a desk in Minitrue, changing the words in some old newspapers in order to catch up with what Big Brother just said. It is normal job for people in Oceania, but actually they’re all committing crimes from our prospective.

“And finally, Winston got to know what’s around him. He was quite sure that the Party shall not rule the country any longer because it banned people from having emotions and sense, and as well as good living conditions. He and his lover, Julia chose to join an organization which aimed to ‘DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER’.

“And the Thought Police came to arrest them both. The organization turned out to be a fake. And after that……”

I heard him screaming! Loudly! Very loudly!

Then he hanged off.

I’ve been looking for him since then.

I’ve been to places believed to be his homes, but found no one but an old lady named Julia Smith who always called her pigs and dogs “citizens” and an old man named O’Brien who always intended to force others to believe that ”2+2=5”.

And I eventually get to know that: things written in 1984 are all happening around us, and George Orwell might have failed in changing them.

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