

I have always found it easier to write about things that relate to me, and I used this contest to write about my family heritage. I enjoy running cross country and making music with the piano and saxophone. In the future, I plan to become successful studying engineering.

L E V E L T H R E E



Joseph Taylor, Age 16, Grade 10
Saugus High School
Saugus, CA

Dear Mr. Orwell,

I recently read your book *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and I'd like to tell you that I enjoyed it. However, since you're dead, you probably won't receive this letter, and if you do, you won't be able to read it. Nevertheless, mere death shall not stand in my way. As you are no doubt unaware (due to your death), *Nineteen Eighty-Four* has become a symbol of our society, and an ominous warning of our future. If you were alive, I'm certain that you'd be very rich. Hopefully your lineage can benefit from the mastery of literature that you had achieved.

It takes a lot to scare me when I read a book. Some books are page-turners, but few have actually frightened me. I think the world of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* succeeds brilliantly in this regard. Oceania is not a living, breathing world. It is the opposite. It combines everything that could possibly go wrong in society into one whirling torrent of absolutism. After I finished reading the book, I realized that my own thoughts were no longer safe. I now walk my world scared of yours. Even television commercials worry me. What is it that they really want? If a cereal company touts their product as *perfect*, when they inevitably refine it, are they not soiling the perfection? And when such (un)perfection is achieved through the blatant copying of competitors, who in turn advertise their cereal as the *best*, does that make the first cereal the *best*, and in turn *perfect*, and is it possible to be *perfect*, without being the *best*? When a company claims two of their cereals to be the *best*, are they canceling out their own statements, leaving our minds stalled, and ready to be controlled? I believe that a logo reading *Kellogg's Empire* would be more accurate, and all of the little kids would be dying to try *Communism Crunch*.

Apple Computer scares me, too. I'm into technology on a basic level, so please bear with me. Apple has long used Motorola processors in their computers, and claimed in their own advertising how much better they were than Intel's processors, which competing PC's use(d). Well, Apple switched to Intel processors last year. Now they speak of the freedoms that Intel offers them, and how much better Apple's products are thanks to the new processor. The problem is, their products *are* better

now. But if they switched back to Motorola, would Motorola's processors suddenly become better? I'm scared to note how easily Apple convinces people, like me, to accept a complete reversal of philosophy. Was Apple truly suffering with the old Motorola chips? Are they any better now? Ultimately, it boils down to the fact that neither really matters. Apple can twist the facts any way they want, but their products will always stay the same.

I'm scared, Mr. Orwell. The world is slowly encasing me. It's not just the cereal, and it's not the computers. Everyone, everywhere, is enveloped in this state of subjectivity. I finally realize how powerless the individual is against the *greater good*, or *Big Brother*. Few people escape the monotony, and those that gain power find themselves not controlled by *Big Brother*, but instead by tradition and stereotype. Looking at history throughout the ages reveals shocking truths about human nature. Historians can observe different civilizations from an armchair, thinking about how much better we are than our past. We've conquered racism. There's no more slavery; women can vote. World War II was pretty bad, sure, but we've progressed a lot since then. Just when we start to reflect on our greatness, a genocide occurs in Rwanda. Mr. Orwell, if you only could have seen it! Eight hundred thousand people died at the hands of racism in its purest form. Everything we thought we had fixed. All those problems we thought we had taken care of. I guess we haven't progressed as much as we thought. Robespierre convinced France to destroy itself in the late 1700's. That was *after* the American Revolution. That was before America went into civil war over rights of those that look different from us. That was before World War II, when millions of people were killed because of what they looked like, and who their family was. It was before Rwanda showed us how little we've progressed from there. At the dawn of the new Millennium, thousands of people were killed because of their culture; their lifestyle. In the world of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, your creation, there was no racism. *The Party* realized the idiocy behind it. If we are indeed becoming an Orwellian society (named in your honor), along with the advent of mental slavery, restraining of human reason, and the reverent obedience to *Big Brother*, maybe we'd finally see the sun set on one of humanity's oldest flaws. If there's an argument for New World Order, that's it.

Besides writing, Joseph Taylor enjoys playing trumpet in his high school marching band, and is nearing completion of his Eagle Scout. He loves being around people and speaking in public, and is known for an off-the-wall sense of humor. Joseph spends a lot of time worrying about the future, and is currently trying to find a way to change the world while still doing what he loves.