Scroll through NEO’s website and you will realize that we have been honest in reporting the problems the world faces on a daily basis. The articles are straightforward: real issues, real people, and real insight.

While we are steadfast in our reporting, more and more journalists are being subject to the most severe form of censorship, some have taken to - self-censorship in order to avoid the wrath of the powers that be. Such arm twisting by the authorities is nothing but a frontal attack on any semblance of a free media.

It is even worse than that—people, in general, are so skeptical of anything written or reported by the mainstream news nowadays. Things have gotten to the point where they don't believe anything that the MSM says, however, the unfortunate part is that now the lines between mainstream and independent media has also started blurring, with more and more independent media also falling in step with the official government line.

I have a distant relative who now says that she refuses to watch or read any news from any source since it is all propaganda, and this feeling of discontent is becoming widespread.

Mark Twain once said, “If you don’t read the newspaper, you’re uninformed. If you read the newspaper, you’re mis-informed.” But the wise Mark Twain could also not imagine the dystopian world we live in today, where the only alternative is not to read anything and not to trust anything, as much of news has been turned into mindless entertainment.

We know what is happening to Julian Assange, and that is no longer real news, at least for most viewers and the MSM. His ordeal, first at his Embassy holdup after jumping bail, and then being turned over to UK authorities is just
the start of another horror story. Given his deteriorating health his stay at the prison is putting his life at risk, and even UN Human Rights experts have warned of his health complications.

All that is happening now was predicated by earlier writers. Hence it is time to revisit a bit of ominous literature, as it is not as if we were not warned about what to look forward to in the future.

"Brave New World" vs. "1984" - which won?

The BBC did an excellent adaptation of “Brave New World” many years ago. I don’t think it survived on tape (it was a few years before the VCRs became ubiquitous). I was able to find one that is close, with Aldous Huxley, an interview with Mike Wallace back in the late ’50s which describes the enemies of freedom in the United States.

My first reaction was that of surprise as all that was described seemed so true even in today’s context. He had been able to accurately describe how various bureaucracies, technology, and propaganda methods work in tandem to create a false narrative and distract the people from more real and pressing issues. From his description it becomes clear that the methods being used today to distract us are the same that Hitler used, only now they have become more effective.

To compare and contrast, George Orwell’s “1984”, and Alex Huxley’s “Brave New World”—they both predicted different visions of a dystopian future. What has emerged now is a combination of the two takes on what the future holds, or at least that is what the situation looks like as of now.

People say we are more Huxley than Orwell, but there are some Orwellian methods too, at least for journalists and whistleblowers. Orwell saw a world where fear was used whereas Huxley perceived a world where we will be manipulated in other ways—more effectively and willingly!

It is so very true that Truth has become Treason with the torture of Julian Assange. The powers to be would like us not to consider him a journalist. Truth has never been well received by governments who want to hide it, at any cost, even at the expense of fundamental principles of the founding fathers. But the situation is getting grim day-by-day now.

So, where does that leave us?

The lesson to others is clear: challenge the global US military empire and you will be destroyed.

Politicians are acting as bullies like George Orwell predicted... perhaps. Huxley's "Soma" drug is allegorical to how people are drugged by devices and perhaps some actual drugs.

In Enemies of Freedom Huxley is exposing how free choice, the rational side of man are bypassed - and how the democratic process is circumvented and efforts made to eliminate what would be informed and free choice. Huxley dives deep into the forces that are taking away freedom, including electronic devices, overpopulation, and materialism.

However, the greatest threat is over the organization of society and the lack of “thinking beings.” The system, including how education is allocated makes sure that those who question the most are afforded the least conducive environment for learning.

Madness in Method

But there are better ways, for instance, aversion conditioning is how “Brave New World” has prevailed over “1984.” Low levels of education, distractions caused by cellphones and mindless computer games, and various forms of modern-day “Soma” are all tools in the hands of governments to keep the minds of the and people distracted and to keep them calm and mindless. What Huxley feared was that there would be no reason to ban a book, for there would be only a few left who would want to read one, or at least have the inclination and time.

Younger folk have been manipulated into relinquishing virtually any right or privilege as long as they can still keep their video games and smartphones. “Brave New World” depicts a society that bears more than coincidental resemblance to our society today (watch CNN and Anderson Cooper to get a better idea).

But the “Powers That Be” would also prefer that we live in the “1984” society, and they are trying their best to plunge us into that darkness by attacking journalists who describe inconvenient truths.

Huxley summed it up best:
“By means of ever more effective methods of mind-manipulation, the democracies will change their nature; the quaint old forms—elections, parliaments, Supreme Courts and all the rest—will remain. ... Democracy and freedom will be the theme of every broadcast and editorial. ... Meanwhile, the ruling oligarchy and its highly trained elite of soldiers, policemen, thought-manufacturers and mind-manipulators will quietly run the show as they see fit.”

The comparison is made to radio and television fodder “new devices” and now all that he predicted – subliminal projections contained within films. Once you establish the utility of something that is known to work, you can be certain that the technology of it will steadily improve.

How can we preserve the integrity of humans in an age when we are being persuaded below the level of “choice and reason” – not only in how we think but even in our choices for political office. It is no longer a matter of making an intelligent choice for one’s self interests, but falling prey to the manipulations of [MSM] and the manipulations of consumers by Madison Avenue.

A democracy depends on the individual voter making an intelligent and rational choice for what he regards as his enlightened self-interest in any given circumstance. But attempts are being made to bypass that “rational choice” by appealing to unconscious forces below the surface – below the level of choice and reason.

But that is not happening anytime soon but at least we have a modern version of soma with PR, mind control and a new generation of prescription drugs. Soma can even compete with religion; it takes away bad experiences and makes us all happy and content.

All that was written as fiction is now a reality, even genetically engineered babies and a society driving by never-ending consumption. In the quest for the most modern devices, people have become hooked to a reality that does not exist.

It is this generation of low castes who are proven to be clueless and preoccupied with promiscuity that paints anyone who speaks in disapproval as intolerant. Society has been transformed into “a pre-ordained caste system ranging from a highly intelligent managerial class to a subgroup of dim-witted serfs programmed to love their menial work; and of soma, a drug that confers instant bliss with no side effects.”

That drug comes in many different forms – mostly ignorance and is distributed by the manipulated media and corrupt advertisers.

And let us also not forget why it is no longer even necessary to burn or restrict books. As we learned from the newest release, at the movies, of Ray Bradbury’s Fahrenheit 451 –very few among us are actually interested in reading book or truthful news anymore and fewer, in any case, have the critical thinking abilities to understand their true meaning.

“We are not born equal but must be made equal by the fire!”

*Henry Kamens, columnist, expert on Central Asia and Caucasus, exclusively for the online magazine “New Eastern Outlook”.*