

# **Apple, Inc. 1984 Television Commercial**

## **False Individual Freedom in America Business World**

方盛俊 201300035

### **ABSTRACT**

The individual freedom in America comes from the Revolutionary War and American independence. In 1984, Apple Inc telecast a commercial called “1984”, which presents Apple as a innovator, challenger, a symbol of individual freedom. However, Epic company lawsuits against Apple and released a parody of Apple’s commercial, pointed out that Apple had become “Big Brother”, a dictator on the opposite of freedom. In fact, these big companies just take individual freedom as a excuse to make a profit.

### **KEYWORD**

American Culture  
Individual Freedom  
Apple, Inc.  
Epic, Inc.  
1984 Commercial

## **I . Introduction**

Individual freedom is one of the main America cultures and it is reflected in all aspects of America society. There are a lot of theses about the origin of individual freedom in America, for example Edward’s thesis (1999), but a little in its representation in modern society. It is necessary to explore the truth about the value of individual freedom in U.S. business. We choose Apple, Inc. as a typical example to analyze the value. We will get a conclusion in follow text, and the conclusion is that individual freedom is just a excuse to make a profit for some big companies in American sometimes.

## **II . Origin of Individual Freedom in America**

To discuss the origin of individual freedom in America, we must review the history of America. According to Gilman, D. C. (1905), in 1492, Columbus discover American continent, and it is the beginning of colonizing American continent. In 1760s, British mastered the main part of America colonies and imposed a series of taxes.

But America didn’t hope that the British controlled their own life, they think they needed individual freedom. Resistance began in 1773, the Boston Tea Party. After that, America people

form their own country, United States. The Revolutionary War is the origin of individual freedom in America.

### **III. 1984 Television Commercial of Apple, Inc.**

#### **A. Promotion of Macintosh**

“1984” was an American television commercial, in order to promote the Apple Macintosh personal computer. The commercial was telecast in the third quarter of Super Bowl XVIII, which is the most popular sporting event in America. As a matter of fact, “1984” was a very successful commercial, as Steve Jobs (1984) said, “Oh s--t, This is amazing”. Why the commercial met with success, and what relation it had with individual freedom? We must look back on the fiction with same name “1984”. The commercial is adapted from the science fiction.

#### **B. “1984”, A Fiction about Dystopia**

“1984”, or “*Nineteen Eighty-Four*”, is a dystopian social science fiction novel by the English novelist George Orwell (1949). The story takes place in an imagined future, a powerful political party took control of the whole country. The Party commanded the Thought Police to keep watch on everyone’s individuality and independent thinking. Big Brother, the leader of the party was a dictator, enjoy the feeling of power. The fiction reveals the possibility of losing personal freedom, which is the worst thing for Americans.

#### **C. Symbol of Individual Freedom**

In 1984, Apple Inc. presented itself as an innovator and challenger in public. Before Apple was established, the biggest computer company is IBM. International Business Machines, or IBM, is a leading American computer manufacturer and technology company. Before personal computer was invented by Apple, IBM occupied over 70 percentage share in computer market. In these time, the public thought that IBM was a monopoly enterprise, an existence as Big Brother in computer market. Of course, it’s just the view of Apple Inc. But Apple spread this view by “1984” commercial and presented itself as an innovator and challenger, or symbol of individual freedom so that it could sell Macintosh, its new product better. In the end of “1984” commercial (1984) , it reads: “*On January 24th, Apple Computer will introduce Macintosh. And you’ll see why 1984 won’t be like “1984.”*”

Is it true that Apple Inc. represents the challenger and freedom in front of “Big Brother” ? We can not know in 1984. But we can get a clue in these days.

### **IV. Epic’s Adapted Commercial Against Apple**

#### **A. Contradiction Between Epic and Apple**

Apple company has become the world's top market company with the highest market value in 2020s. Apple and its iPhone is very popular around the world. However, Apple’s App Store for

iOS devices takes a 30 percent revenue sharing cut, which is called “Apple Tax” by many developers.

Epic company think that Apple takes too much revenue sharing cut by App Store and it is a behaviour of monopoly company. Sweeney said that *"Apple has locked down and crippled the ecosystem by inventing an absolute monopoly on the distribution of software, on the monetization of software"*.

## **B. Parody of Apple “1984” Commercial**

To beat Apple back, Epic updated its game *Fortnite* with a new payment system, which enabled gamer purchased directly from Epic. Apple forbade *Fortnite* in App Store hours later, and Epic lawsuit Apple for antitrust immediately. Besides, Epic released a parody of apple “1984” commercial, called *“Nineteen Eighty-Fortnite”*. In this video, Apple became Big Brother, the one who control everyone. Epic company want to tell the public that Apple used to consider IBM as Big Brother, now Apple has become Big Brother too.

## **IV. Conclusion**

In fact, these big companies in America don’t care the true meaning of individual freedom, they just take individual freedom as a excuse to make a profit. Apple telecast the commercial “1984” just because the public believed that Apple is an innovator and challenger in front of IBM, and it can promote the selling of Macintosh, not really for individual freedom of the public. And then Epic opposed Apple just because Apple take too much revenue sharing cut from its game, not really for individual of the game players.

Individual freedom is not always true in America, at least in America business world.

## **References**

- Epic Games (2020). Epic Games Defies Apple with Nineteen Eighty-Fortnite Parody of Famous Ad and Legal Action. Retrieved from: <https://www.lbbonline.com/>
- Epic Games (2020). Fortnite maker: ‘Apple has locked down and crippled’ the App Store. Retrieved from: <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/07/24/epic-games-ceo-tim-sweeney-apple-crippled-app-store-with-30percent-cut.html>
- Edward, G., Douglas, B. and James, C. (1999). The Origins of American Individualism: Reconsidering the Historical Evidence. *The Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 24, 511-533.
- Finkle, Todd, A., Mallin, Michael L. (2010). STEVE JOBS AND APPLE, INC. *Journal of the International Academy for Case Studies*, 16(7), 31-40.
- George O. (1949). *1984*. 1<sup>st</sup> edn. England : Signet Classic.
- Gilman, D. C.; Peck, H. T.; Colby, F. M., eds. (1905). "Columbus, Diego. The youngest brother of Christopher Columbus" . New International Encyclopedia (1st ed.)
- Mac History (2012). 1984 Apple's Macintosh Commercial (HD) - YouTube. Retrieved from: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VtvjbmoDx-I&ab\\_channel=MacHistory](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VtvjbmoDx-I&ab_channel=MacHistory)