Herby He (Eight O’clock)

The story describes a society in which people’s information is insecure and that people are guided by all forms of media without realizing it. The main character, Nada, is the only person who can see the real world that others can’t--a world governed by aliens, a world in which humanity must conform with the aliens. With this ability, Nada can see the underlying messages sent in posters and TVs. One example of the messages is “ Work eight hours, play eight hours, slept eight hours.”Due to his special capability, Nada received a call from the government that says he will die tomorrow. In a society where every individual’s information is secretly acquired through different mean by a strong central head, Nada’s specialty is soon exposed, and he is “sentenced” to death.

Though we are living in a world without aliens and intimidating punishments for knowing the truth, the way individual information is collected and manipulated in Nada’s society is comparable to our present-day society. In the story, the government, which controls all the information, can immediately tell Nada is different from other people by utilizing all the data collected. Nada’s personal information is somehow exposed and recorded by someone who has bigger power. In the movie They Live, the fact that the main character can see the real world is acknowledged by one alien and is soon spread among all the aliens. In real life, our information, even the most subliminal bit, is recorded without our realization. The gather of personal data is especially common ever since the popularity of media and the internet grew drastically. People often feel anonymous on the internet, however, every word you search, website you clicked in, any information such as an email provided, is collected by the website to form a comprehensive potential customer profile which is either used to put on advertisement that you will be interested in or used to alter the content on the website to suit your preference so you have a greater chance of spending money; either way, our information is collected for others’ profit. The exposure of personal information is unpreventable since people now rely on the internet for communication and many other important services such as entertainment and learning. The CEO of Baidu, Google in China, once said that “People would sacrifice privacy for convenience.” I believe, with all the enormous benefits the internet provides, sacrificing some personal information does not seems to bother. Many people worry that with their personal information in others’ control, their address and phone number will be exposed and used for evil purposes. However, this won’t happen if people organize their personal information responsibly and only provide it to trust-worthy or well-known companies, since big companies can better secure users’ privacy because they can’t afford to lose customers due to information leakage scandal. Moreover, most websites collect user information merely because they want to make money, they don’t care about where a user lives or his/her phone number--the only information valuable is your preference so they can provide corresponding content. What’s more, most information sorting processes is controlled by machine and computer programs, so no human is involved. Some people might worry that the government is monitoring everyone constantly. Although this might most likely be true, the government won't have enough time and resources to spend on every normal people like you and me. The government only cares about people that are abnormally suspicious and are violating the laws. Though exposing our personal data is unpreventable, the least we can do is to only provide information when necessary and eliminate history regularly so that we can get the best of the media without putting ourselves at risk.