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**A Dialogue on Ideology and Utopia in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) and Boualem Sansal's *2084 La fin du monde* (2015).**

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## **Dedications**

To all those who have touched the pages of my educational journey.

## Abstract

The present dissertation sets out to analyse the dialogue between George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) and Boualem Sansal's *2084 La fin du monde* (2015). It investigates the portrayed dystopias and the idea of totalitarianism. To examine this point, this dissertation brings into focus the utopian evolution into dystopia. This paper also seeks to examine the influence of the authors' backgrounds on the creation of their totalitarian worlds and the dialogue that exists between their texts. To reach these aims, this paper has relied on Karl Mannheim's *Ideology and Utopia* and Mikhail Bakhtin's conception of "dialogism." This analysis tries to demonstrate that although both writers come from different areas and lived in different periods, they share the same concerns and reflect the same issue that characterized their time. Both have portrayed the rise of harsh totalitarian governments that seem to threaten modern societies.

Key words: Totalitarianism, Islamism, Power, oppression, Islam, struggle, War, Freedom, manipulation, domination.



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## I. General Introduction

The 20th century, despite its immense achievements, witnessed the world's most chaotic and disastrous chain of events that announced unprecedented changes. World War I, World War II, the Cold War, nuclear power, space exploration, globalization, etc., brought the largest transformation in the world's order. These changes left the world in disillusionment and doubt. However, these unprecedented changes were not unique to 20th century. George Santayana affirms that those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it.<sup>1</sup> The 21st century appears to repeat the previous catastrophic scenario. Haunted by the horrors of the previous century, the new era is marked by tragic events: terrorist attacks, the Afghan war, the Iraq war, upheavals in Arab countries, and most importantly the birth of the Islamic State (ISIS) which is considered a terrorist organization.

In such an uncertain, insecure world, the idea of a utopian society preoccupies the human imagination. By definition, Utopia means “no place”; an imagined place or state of things in which everything is perfect<sup>2</sup>. A lot has been written about the notion of Utopia after Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516). However, the traditional utopia that represents a perfect futuristic system has disappeared because of the disastrous influence of the twentieth-century totalitarianism and genocidal wars. People realised that utopian aspirations give birth to oppressive and tyrannical

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<sup>1</sup> 'Emailing Klein James a Process Safety Pra | Safety | Reliability Engineering'. Accessed 14 December 2020. <https://www.scribd.com/document/424896924/Emailing-Klein-James-a-Process-Safety-Pra>.

<sup>2</sup> 'Utopia - Oxford Reference'. Accessed 14 December 2020. <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803115009560>.

systems. Mario Puzo explains that any man determined to dominate others has no other choice than cruelty<sup>3</sup>. The will to achieve utopia entails a risk of sinking into totalitarianism. Utopia is a planned society; planned societies are considered to be disastrous; that is why utopias contain dystopias<sup>4</sup>. History tells us of many attempts to establish utopias. Communism, for example, started as an ideology with a utopian aspiration but which turned into an oppressive system. Islamic fundamentalist groups, such as the Taliban in Afghanistan, aspired to establish a perfect Islamic state, but they ended up spreading terror.

This appalling reality of the world has preoccupied the mind of important figures. Writers from different periods and parts of the world devoted their talent to the task of transmitting the reality of a world characterised by dictatorial and oppressive systems. Literature is in part a product of sociological and political factors.<sup>5</sup> It is a mighty weapon for expressing political views and ideologies. Writers such as George Orwell and Boualem Sansal sought to picture the evolution of utopian aspiration into totalitarian systems. These writers set out to fight the rise of different types of extremism by describing the present situation or by imagining an optimistic or pessimistic future. The dystopian genre serves as an effective means to analyse and examine the fears engendered by the political transformations that contributed to the transition from utopia to dystopia.

This research analyses George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1948) and Boualem Sansal's *2084 la fin du monde* (2015) as representatives of the evolution of the dystopian literary genre. The choice of these two literary works is not random; it is inspired by the fact

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<sup>3</sup> hess, jean luc. *Ces Psicopathes Qui Nous Gouvernent*, 2018.

<sup>4</sup> A Golden Age for Dystopian Fiction | The New Yorker'. Accessed 23 November 2020. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/06/05/a-golden-age-for-dystopian-fiction>

<sup>5</sup> Lindberg, John D. "Literature and Politics." *The Bulletin of the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association* 22, no. 4 (1968): 163-67. Accessed July 16, 2020. doi:10.2307/1346587.

that they are two works of anticipation, dystopic possible futures, and a warning from two writers belonging to two distinct backgrounds. Each era has its demons that inspired the writers. Nazism and socialism of the 20th century largely inspired Orwell's *1948*. The religious, especially Islamist, totalitarianism of the 21st century inspired Sansal's *2084*. Both Orwell and Sansal pictured dystopian totalitarian countries and doomed revolts by dissatisfied heroes.

## II-Review of the Literature:

Few twentieth-century novels have been as provocative as George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Besides being a classic of the 20th century in the *Anticipation Literature: A Handbook for Hard Times*, it is a cautionary tale, even a prophecy of systematic abuse of power taken to the end of the line<sup>6</sup>. Orwell's masterpiece has become the subject numerous studies. Jeffrey Meyers is convinced that Orwell "is more widely read than perhaps any other serious writer of the twentieth century" *A Reader's Guide to George Orwell*, 1975<sup>7</sup>. Aldous Huxley wrote to Orwell saying, "The nightmare of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is destined to modulate into the nightmare of 106 Critical Insights a world having more resemblances to that which I imagined in *Brave New World*"<sup>8</sup>.

*1984* suggests that the totalitarianism of the future will surpass even the most brutal methods of the past. Indeed, it is the perfect guide to the dictatorship fantasy imagined by A.Hitler, J.Stalin, Mao ,and F.Franco. It is seen as a real dictionary of dictatorship, a pure and perfect manual to dictators' desire. Carl E. Rollyson in *Critical Survey of Long Fiction* states, "As a fantasy set in the future the novel has terrified readers for more than thirty years"<sup>9</sup>. Orwell denounces totalitarian societies by presenting Oceania according to Stalinist USSR, Maoist China, North Korea, and Angkar Cambodia.

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You Probably Didn't Read the Most Telling Part of Orwell's "1984"—the Appendix — Quartz'. Accessed 14 December 2020. <http://web.archive.org/web/20201121065634/https://qz.com/95696/you-probably-didnt-read-the-most-telling-part-of-orwells-1984-the-appendix>

<sup>7</sup> Analysis of George Orwell's Novels | Literary Theory and Criticism'. Accessed 14 December 2020. <https://literariness.org/2019/05/27/analysis-of-george-orwells-novels/>.

<sup>8</sup> Saunders, Loraine. 'George Orwell's Critical Reception'. *George Orwell*, n.d., 22.

<sup>9</sup> Analysis of George Orwell's Novels | Literary Theory and Criticism'. Accessed 14 December 2020. <https://literariness.org/2019/05/27/analysis-of-george-orwells-novels>

The author offers a nightmarish vision of a totalitarian world. The novel was produced in a period of extremely tough times and murky days because of WWII and the Cold War. Orwell as a spectator at the front of the scene witnessed the appearance of new conflicting political ideologies, communism and capitalism, and the world's major conflicts. Bystander of oppression and injustice, Orwell, throughout his career, was obsessed with political hypocrisy and with unmasking the truth he imagined a parody of the condition of post-war England. Geoffrey Wheatcroft writes that Orwell's books are no more than "projections of his own self-pity." Milan Kundera describes *1984* as "political thought disguised as a novel."<sup>10</sup> It directly reflects Orwell's legitimate anxieties concerning the future of the world. The brilliance of the novel is Orwell's timelessness. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is about many issues and its readers' concerns dictate which one is paramount at any point in history<sup>11</sup>. During the cold war, it was a book about totalitarianism. In the 1980s, it became a warning about technology, too. Today, it is most of all a defence of truth<sup>12</sup>.

G.C. Thornley and Gwyneth Roberts argue that "This book (*1984*) describes a future world where every word and action is seen and controlled by the state." Indeed, the totality of Orwell's writings communicate worries of losing individual freedom in a tyrannical autocratic world. In a world where any resistance is unsuccessful, the protagonist's attempt to escape totalitarian collectivism ends in failure. This total control is to evolve into a form of a panopticon. Anthony Burgess judges *1984* as "an apocalyptic codex of our worst fears."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> 'Analysis of George Orwell's Novels | Literary Theory and Criticism'. Accessed 14 December 2020. <https://literariness.org/2019/05/27/analysis-of-george-orwells-novels>

<sup>11</sup><http://web.archive.org/web/20201027210344/https://miscellaneousdetails.com/tag/george-orwell/>

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/profile/dorianlynskey>

*2084 la fin du monde* (2015) ingeniously imposed itself in the literary realm as an inevitable modern revolutionary dystopia. It has not reached the popularity of Orwell's novel, but it was widely read in France. Sansal, with his ability to use fiction as a vector for daring to voice what people would never venture to allude to, managed to transport the reader to a world dominated by a new form of totalitarianism: religious fundamentalism. Sansal's *2084 la fin du monde* conceptualises a pan-Islamist totalitarian state. The publication the novel has somewhat coincided with terror attacks in France; for this, it has been read as an apocalyptic prophecy of the November 13, 2015 attacks in the *Stade de France* and *Bataclan* in Paris. This explains why the reception of the novel was enthusiastic in France than anywhere else.

Michel Houellebecq states at the publication of Sansal's novel that "2084 must be read, it is very interesting and well written, I myself did not finish to write about this topic".<sup>14</sup> *Express* magazine, a French news magazine that stands in the political centre in the French media landscape, praises the novel, declaring, "Fable, parable, pamphlet, a whole novel about a dictatorship without a story carried by a phantasmagorical feather, *2084* stuns the reader"<sup>15</sup>.

Michel Abescat considers the novel a warning and states "the fable is powerful, the humour devastating, the subject chilling. *2084* is an extraordinary book, a warning sent by the author to those who, according to him, underestimate the Islamist danger." Indeed, the production of the book is mainly inspired by the current reality of the world of the early 21st century. Sansal observed the rise of Islamist radicals sowing terror and driving the world toward chaos. Therefore, He constructed fiction that questions the conflict rooted in totalitarian

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<sup>14</sup> LExpress.fr. '2084, le roman qui imagine l'islamisme au pouvoir en Europe', 20 August 2015. [https://www.lexpress.fr/culture/livre/2084-le-roman-qui-imaginer-l-islamisme-au-pouvoir-en-europe\\_1708114.html](https://www.lexpress.fr/culture/livre/2084-le-roman-qui-imaginer-l-islamisme-au-pouvoir-en-europe_1708114.html).

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*

ideology. Through the Abistan, he has imagined the last stage of totalitarian fanaticism where an imaginary Islamist state. emerges victorious from the conflict with the West. The novel is seen as a warning to Western societies and secular democracies in general.

Sansal exposes his opinion against Algerian power or religious fundamentalism freely. For this, he has been widely criticised in his home country. In this regard, he declares in an interview that “the intellectuals, academics, humanities teachers, journalists who remain in Algeria do not appreciate me; for in the layer produced by the system, nationalism remains in the line”. Asked about religion, he states,

“Religion seems very dangerous to me because of its brutal totalitarian side. Islam has become a terrifying law which only enacts prohibitions, banishes doubts, and whose zealots are increasingly violent. He would need to find his spirituality, his primary strength. We must liberate, decolonize, socialise Islam.”<sup>16</sup>

He adds, “religion might make us love God, but there is nothing stronger than religion to make us despise man and hate humankind”<sup>17</sup>.

### **III) Working Hypotheses:**

Orwell’s *1984* and Sansal’s *2084* immerse the reader into a totalitarian world that has erased and then rewritten history. Individuals are crushed and annihilated by a supreme autocracy. They pushed the worries and traumas of their times to the climax. The apparent difference between the two novels is the nature of power. From what has been stated in the literature review, it is clear that the selected novels have stirred hot discussions and criticism. They have been interpreted and studied from different angles aiming to shed light on specific

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<sup>16</sup> L’invité. Boualem SANSAL : ‘L’ Europe Est Cernée Par l’islamisme’, 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= Qk4QEHCS90>.

<sup>17</sup> Sansal *2084*.

ambiguities for a better understanding. Yet, to the best of my knowledge, none of these studies and interpretations have focused on the elements I aspire to study. Although Orwell and Sansal belong to different cultural and geographical backgrounds, they share a common objective: expose the reality of totalitarianism.

These anticipation novels appear to be a switch between the real and the imaginary. They, in a certain manner, first tell stories, then allow the authors to establish a specific link with their time, and finally show their futuristic innovative and pioneering visions for the path of humanity. Hence, this dissertation is a comparative study of Orwell's *1984* and Sansal's *2084*. My aim is to study to show how the two authors imagined their novels' worlds according to their socio-political context, display the manoeuvres of autocratic regimes that manage to 'puppet' the masses and the way utopias may eventually evolve into dystopias. To reach this aim, I will resort to Karl Mannheim's *Ideology and Utopia*, mainly the chapter "*Ideology and Utopia*", as a theoretical framework to guide my analysis. This research will also make reference to Bakhtin's theory of 'dialogue'. The choice of Mannheim's theoretical framework is motivated by my aim to reveal how the social, historical and political contexts of the authors influence their writings. As regards, Bakhtin's theory, it is chosen because *2084* is a retelling of *1984*. Therefore, the two novels are in dialogue.

Literature must be interpreted through its historical context. Literary texts are by-products of a specific time and place. The Italian sociologist Umberto Eco stipulates that "no narrative world could be autonomous from the real world." Authors often knit links with literary texts and cultural products. In Other words, ideologies evolve according to a social environment that gives birth to literature. Karl Mannheim's *Ideology and Utopia* deals with the construction of knowledge in a given society. His principal goal is to determine how people interpret events. As a matter of facts, he determines the link between specific thinking and social reality. In short, he highlights the role of ideology in the representation of the surrounding world. For Mannheim,

thinking is dependent of the social context and conditioned by its existence. He states, “the thought of every group is seen as arising out of its life conditions.” Thus, for a better understanding of some outlooks and ideas, literary texts must be interpreted according to the socio-historical context in which they evolved. In *Ideology and Utopia*, religion also occupies an important place. Mannheim is particularly interested in the evolution of utopia into dystopia and the influence of an author’s text on his/her text. Therefore, Mannheim’s ideas fit the objective of this research.

#### **IV- Methodological Outline:**

In addition to general introduction, methods and materials, results, and conclusion, the discussion section of this dissertation is divided into three chapters. The first chapter contains some background on the selected novels and an analysis of their principal aspects. This chapter also highlights the contexts that inspired these novels: totalitarian ideologies and the rise of Islamic fundamentalism. The second chapter deals with the portrayal of dystopia as a critical warning highlighting major totalitarian elements. The third chapter analyses the frontier between reality and fiction in the context of the modern world thought of every group is seen as arising out of its life conditions..

#### **Endnotes:**

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## Method and Materials:

### 1- Methods

#### A- Karl Mannheim’s *Ideology and Utopia*

To accomplish the previously mentioned aims, the materials chosen for the study are George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Boualem Sansal's *2084 La fin du monde*. As for the theoretical basis of the discussion, I will draw upon the theory of "the Sociology of Knowledge" as expounded in Karl Mannheim's *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge* (1929). This research will also resort to Bakhtin's conception of dialogism.

The term "the sociology of knowledge" was coined by Max Scheler. However, this theory was introduced to the world and was established as a scientific enterprise by Karl Mannheim (1893-1947) in his book *Ideology and Utopia An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge* (1949).<sup>18</sup>

One of Karl Mannheim's concerns is the definition of ideology, utopia, and counter utopia (dystopia). He defines them according to various social groups and their world view. These world standpoints are used as approaches against social oppression. Indeed, it is thanks to these world views that the idea of the interconnection of individuals, social milieu, and system of thought was born. The analysis of a certain philosophy can give hints concerning the social group in which specific world view flourished. Generally, social subjects are conditioned in their thinking by their social environment.

Mannheim studies the close link between thought and social strata<sup>19</sup>. Thus, the principal aim of his work is to analyse the interdependence of a world view and the social stratum in which it developed. He associates ideology with the ruling elite of any given society who possess the ability to control the social condition. For him, "ideology" refers to the tendency of

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<sup>18</sup> George Ritzer and Barry Smart, *Handbook of Social Theory* (London: SAGE Publications, 2003), 100.

<sup>19</sup> Encyclopedia Britannica. 'Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge | Work by Mannheim'. Accessed 14 December 2020. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Ideology-and-Utopia-An-Introduction-to-the-Sociology-of-Knowledge>.

the ruling group to obscure the real condition of society, and thereby stabilize it.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, he sees ideology as an intentional obscuring of facts and a tool that masks the social reality to keep control. He advances that individual beliefs are constructed according to the social stratum to which they belong. In short, Mannheim believes that “ideas are products of their times and the social statuses of their proponents”

As regards Utopia, Mannheim links it to ideology. In a certain manner, it stands as a response to the ideological outlook. In his view, Utopia is a futuristic vision of an ideal society controlled by the elite groups that bear enlightened world views and stand against the established social order. In other words, it is the fantasy of the oppressed and marginalised social groups looking for better social conditions. The purpose of utopian thought, in short, is to justify and force transformations in society. By doing so, the oppressed groups suggest that the dominant order is inequitable so it needs change. Mannheim argues that “The representatives of a given order will label as utopian all conceptions of existence which from their point of view can in principle never be realized.”<sup>21</sup>

The sociology of knowledge attempts to shed light on the way new outlooks are born out of implanted orders and how these new insights contribute to the creation of idealised social spheres or social orders. Consequently, these battling and divergent world views result in quarrels between the social strata. Mannheim perceives these two concepts as being born out of a power struggle. On one side, there is a group that aims to maintain power and ideological thought. On the other side, there is a minority in quest for power with an aim to expose the drawbacks of the existing order. And this is the Utopian outlook.

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<sup>20</sup> Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, 40

<sup>21</sup> *ibid* 176-177.

The quest for utopia is rooted in human's eternal dissatisfaction with things as they are. The imagination and pursuit of grand visions boost individuals to make transitions in society. This utopian impulse appears to be a desire to go beyond the imposed limits to prove the deficiency and oppressiveness of the established system and convince people of the necessity of a potential change. However, when the will to achieve a certain utopian order succeeds in a given society, those thoughts evolve into an oppressive Ideology. But social agents are divergent, and someone's ideals can be perceived as inappropriate or incorrect by others. Thus, the new stratum in position of power persecutes the population to prevent any opposition. In this manner, 'utopia' evolves into dystopia: one person's freedom fighter is another's oppressor, one person's utopia is another's dystopia. In other words, rather than being the negation of utopia, dystopia may paradoxically be its essence<sup>22</sup>.

Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines dystopia as an imaginary place where people lead dehumanized and often fearful lives. Indeed, it is a state where human willingness has been completely erased or corrupted by the authoritative impositions. Social subjects live under total control, terror, and oppression and face different forms of dehumanization. It is the negative side of the pseudo 'ideal' society. Judging that it is more appropriate, Mannheim uses the term 'Anti-utopia' to refer to dystopia. Dystopia is popularly supposed to be an inverted negative version of Utopia,<sup>23</sup> the hidden side of the pseudo 'ideal' society. Masses lose control of their lives, individualism and private life are reduced, and priority is for public life.

Clearly, 'ideology' and 'Utopia' are discourse instruments deployed by competing social groups to maintain or change unequal relations of power. Ideology represents the outlook

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<sup>22</sup> Vieira, Fátima. *Dystopia(n) Matters: On the Page, on Screen, on Stage*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

of the ruling elite while utopia represents the world view of the class or group that aspires to control society<sup>24</sup>.

By applying Mannheim's ideas, the aim of this research is to show that both Orwell's *1984* and Sanal's *2084* make allusions to their respective societies. This research also tries to reveal how these dystopias may construct alternatives to the present world.

### **B- Bakhtin's 'dialogism'**

To analyse the dialogic nature of *1984* and *2048*, I have decided to borrow some concepts from the theoretical guidelines of Bakhtin's "The Dialogic Imagination." In *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art* (1929), Bakhtin develops his concept of "dialogism." Based on the study of Dostoevsky's novels, Bakhtin argues that dialogue is fundamental in literary language. Dialogism is concerned with his approach to intertextuality, a work that exists in a constant dialogue with another one in context.

The concept of "dialogism" has been the subject of different interpretations. In literature, it was associated with the structure and context of the novel. The novel differs from other literary genres in its discourse, and Bakhtin came to the conclusion that a novel is "a diversity of social speech types...and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized." In his *Dialogic Imagination* (1982), he states that the novel is "the sole genre that continues to develop, that is as yet uncompleted [...] studying the novel [...] is like studying languages that are not only alive but still young." This means that the novel is a work that is in constant progress and never dies. Bakhtin sees dialogism as characterizing the entire social world. Clearly, his view of the novel is dependent upon his view of the 'dialogic' nature of language.

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<sup>24</sup>Hacène Benmechiche, 'Utopia and Dystopia in Brave New World and Nineteen Eighty-Four' (diss., University of Tizi Ouzou: English Department, 2008), 28.,

Bakhtin is attracted by discourse in the novel. He analyses the discourse according to the relationship that exists between the text and reality and he situates the text within history and society. For him, all discourse is a dialogue with previous discourse. His aim is to analyze the discourse not only at the semantic level but also at the social level. Bakhtin explains that “any two utterances if juxtaposed on a semantic plane end up in a dialogic relation.”

Bakhtin reached dialogism through heteroglossia. Due to the heteroglot nature of languages, there are constant dialogues between them. Yet, dialogism does not concern languages alone. Dialogism is based on the dialogue between social agents and the social, text and context, and text and text. Bakhtin’s emphasis is on the dialogic relations that exist between words and texts. Dialogism is the dialogue of texts and writers from different generations and backgrounds. He argues that monologic texts do not exist, stating, “there are not nor can there be any pure texts.” Indeed, literature is always in dialogue with other works, and for Bakhtin “texts become alive only when in contact with other texts” and “only at the point of this contact between texts does a light flash, illuminating both the posterior and anterior, joining a given text to a dialogue.”

Dialogic works are objective; all utterances are said in response to other statements. In short, in addition to the existence of dialogues between characters and narrator, there exist dialogues between a novel and other novels. The dialogic relation occurs by a slight and simple reference to other literary works. Writers, as readers of texts, are influenced by the texts they read. Writers are engaged with their predecessors either deliberately or accidentally. A novel is made from various styles and voices assembled and structured. Texts cannot exist alone as self-contained. Thus, no literary text or movement should be studied in a vacuum.

## **2- Materials:**

### ***A- Nineteen Eighty Four by George Orwell ( 1949):***

In this novel, the world is divided into three warring regions Eurasia, Eastasia, and Oceania. The latter under the dictatorship of the tyrannical leader, Big Brother, is sectioned into three social classes: the Inner Party, the Outer Party, and the Proles. The novel shows a world where totalitarianism and manipulation prevail, the ruling party resorts to manipulation and surveillance to silence the masses. They promote fear and paranoia to worship the supreme leader Big Brother. To limit the scope of people's thoughts, the Party constantly supervises and observes the intimacy and the thoughts of the people. The party has also created a language with less vocabulary called 'Newspeak.' In addition, the Party constantly distorts history.

Winston Smith, the protagonist, is a member of the Outer Party who works for a branch responsible for the dissemination of fake information. As the novel unfolds, Smith develops hate and rebellious impulses against the party. He first holds a diary, falls in love with Julia, and develops secret ties with O'Brien, who he trusted to be a member of the Brotherhood. However, O'Brien's actions are merely a plot against Smith and Julia. As a result of the information they have shared with O'Brien, Winston and Julia are brainwashed and tortured confronted with their worst fears to conform to the standards of Big Brother.

***B- 2084 La fin du monde (2015):***

*2084, The End of the World* by Boualem Sansal tells the story of Ati in his quest for the truth about Abistan, the world where he lives. The Abistan, a theocratic empire, is ruled by the invisible and yet omnipresent leader Abi, nicknamed Bigaye. It is a frightening and strange closed world pictured in an apocalyptic setting. The world of Ati is dominated by the dictatorship of a religion founded by the prophet Abi, a fanatic system that holds all the power of the whole country. They subjected the entire planetary population to their laws in the name of their God Yolah. In this world, no free expression or divergent thinking is tolerated. This system is based on amnesia and submission to the one god.

In this novel, any personal thought is banned and a permanent surveillance system allows to identify any divergence. Thinking is reduced by the instauration of a limited single language “Abilang”. The population must submit to the religious norms of Abistan at the risk of being killed. After meeting Nas, an archaeologist, he reveals the discovery of a mysterious ancient village capable of challenging the religion of the Empire. Ati begins to glimpse the ‘Mystery of freedom’ and commences a perilous journey in the company of his friend Koa. Their goal is to find out the truth about religion in a country where the system of the Apparatus has denied all inhabitants the right to live and reach a frontier they have heard about to free themselves from the religious coercion of Abistan.

#### **Endnotes:**

- George Ritzer and Barry Smart, *Handbook of Social Theory* (London: SAGE Publications, 2003), 100.
- Encyclopedia Britannica. ‘Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge | Work by Mannheim’. Accessed 14 December 2020. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Ideology-and-Utopia-An-Introduction-to-the-Sociology-of-Knowledge>.
- Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, 40
- *ibid* 176-177.
- Vieira, Fátima. *Dystopia(n) Matters: On the Page, on Screen, on Stage*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013.
- *Ibid*.
- Hacène Benmechiche, ‘Utopia and Dystopia in Brave New World and Nineteen Eighty-Four’ (diss., University of Tizi Ouzou: English Department, 2008), 28.,

## **Results:**

The study of Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Sansal's *2084 La fin du monde* has revealed that these texts display several similarities. This paper has resorted to Mannheim's *Ideology and Utopia* to examine how the selected texts reveal their authors' pessimistic visions of the future. It has also resorted to Bakhtin's *dialogism* to analyze the permanent dialogue and parallels in Orwell's and Sansal's texts and the author's belief in the negative downturn of the world. The analysis of the texts has revealed that the selected texts share similar themes despite coming from different cultural and geographical backgrounds. The study has also revealed that the difference in the authors' backgrounds has led them to perceive the totalitarian threat differently.

Both Orwell and Sansal believe that Utopias turn into dystopias when the greed for power precedes the wellbeing of people. They both criticize the dictatorial government systems that seek to exercise control on their subject physically and mentally with every possible means. Once in power, these leaders serve but their personal interests.

The study has also drawn attention to the modern world's current situation to request and reinterpret current events that seem to go in the author's fiction. Orwell and Sansal see that warning the masses is their duty which they succeeded to fulfill. Besides revealing some of events of their societies, both authors have predicted many current events.

## **Chapter ONE: From George Orwell To Boualem Sansal**

Although Orwell and Sansal belong to different historical, cultural and geographical backgrounds, both were inspired by totalitarianism: Orwell by Communist totalitarianism and Sansal by religious totalitarianism. This chapter is a discussion of the contexts that inspired the novels and their titles. It also compares the main characters of the novels.

### **1- The Life of Orwell and Sansal**

#### **A- George Orwell**

Orwell is a prominent British writer and essayist whose works have drawn much attention and criticism. His personal experiences had a considerable influence on his writing. Alex Woloch notes that Orwell is one of the greatest anti-communist and anti-totalitarian writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century<sup>25</sup> although his political view is often confusing. One can understand his fiction and discern his political position with a sight on the circumstances that shaped his life.

Arthur Eric Blair was born in 1903 in India. In England, he benefited from a scholarship to study in Eton College. There, he met Aldous Huxley whose writings were of a significant influence on him. Orwell abandoned his studies to serve in the Imperial Police in India for five years (1922-1928). This profession allowed him to observe the Indians' growing dislike of British Imperialism and the latter's abuse of the locals. Orwell resigned from the Imperial Police and came back to Britain determined to fulfil his ambition to write, using his penname George

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<sup>25</sup> University, Stanford. 'Stanford Professor Uncovers Roots of George Orwell's Political Language'. Stanford News (blog), 16 February 2016. <https://news.stanford.edu/2016/02/16/orwell-alex-woloch-021516/>.

Orwell. This experience in India inspired his first novel *Burmese Days* (1934), anti-imperialist writing that describes corruption.

In the 1920s, during economic deprivation that spread poverty, he observed the living conditions in England and lived as a tramp in Paris. This resulted in *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937), a description of a hellish vision of a broken Britain. After his investigation and emersion in the social strata and tramping, Orwell developed a growing interest in politics and socialism in particular. In the preface of the Ukrainian edition of *Animal Farm*, he writes, “I became pro-socialist more out of disgust with the way the poorer sections of the industrial workers were oppressed and neglected than out of any theoretical admiration for a planned society.”<sup>26</sup>

In 1936, Orwell went to Spain to report the civil war and became involved in the fight for the republican cause. He returned in disillusion both with Communist tactics and the attitude of the English socialists. There he realized the barbaric and undemocratic methods of communist Russia. He also realised that socialist ideals were to expand into totalitarianism. This disappointment resulted in *Homage to Catalonia* (1938), an account of the Spanish Civil War.

Orwell experienced first-hand colonial and working-class poverty, imperialist oppression, fascist brutality, communist duplicity, and World War II and its aftermath. He went from a naïve socialist to anti-totalitarian Russophobe. Two crucial events described him as a politically committed writer; the first being his intimate contact with industrial depression and the second being the Spanish civil war. Orwell’s love for England and English patriotism, his interest and commitment in politics and literature, his humanism and egalitarianism, his hatred

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<sup>26</sup> The World from PRX. ‘Orwell’s “Animal Farm” and Ukrainian Refugees’. Accessed 14 September 2021. <https://www.pri.org/stories/2012-04-03/orwells-animal-farm-and-ukrainian-refugees>.

of totalitarianism and his pleading for democratic socialism have shaped the “Orwellian” identity.<sup>27</sup>

## **B- Boualem Sansal**

Born in 1949, Sansal is an Algerian writer censored in his country due to his critical position against the authorities. Besides having a doctorate in economy, he is an engineer and a teacher and an. He also worked in the Algerian ministry of industry. As an independent thinker troubled by the 1990s events in Algeria he devoted his writings mainly to denounce the dangers of extremism. Sansal is the laureate of several literary prizes in France, including Grand prix du roman in 2015 for *2084 La fin du monde*.

Sansal’s works are often censored. He was threatened, blackmailed, and insulted due to his critical positions against Islamism and the Algerian government, but he refused exile. Concerning these threats, he declared, ‘when I publish a book, it rains in my mail box, I receive three to four per day.’ “return to the French,” “you do not deserve to live,” “filthy Jew” are some daily formulas he receives<sup>28</sup>.

In 1972, Sansal settled in Boumerdes which was then opened to partnerships with the west . Nevertheless, in 1986, Algeria summoned some intellectuals from the Arabo-Muslim world. They brought Islamisation with them, letting place to Arabization, a policy he fiercely criticized. Having embraced the French culture as a student, he states, “In three months we moved from All French to All Arabic .... we found ourselves in mental dyslexia”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Malcolm Bradbury, *The Modern British Novel 1878-2001*, (London: Penguin books, revised edition, 2001), 281.

<sup>28</sup> ‘Boualem Sansal : Le Kamikaze’. Accessed 26 August 2021.  
<https://bibliobs.nouvelobs.com/romans/20150911.OBS5690/boualem-sansal-le-kamikaze.html>.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid*

During the Black decade of the 1990s, he found himself alienated, and his life turned upside-down. After the birth of his daughter from his Czech wife, the Algerian school imposed a particular Islamisation programme for children born from mixed marriages, about Islamisation. He was obliged to send his family to Prague to protect them from threatening Islamist. This was the end of his marriage. His second wife also saw her life affected by her husband's intellectual activity. In the preface of "Quarto" a collection of his work, he writes, "my personal and family life have been ravaged by Islamists."<sup>30</sup> As a worker in the Ministry of Industry, he states, "we were proud of being intellectuals, occupying important positions, but we were silenced by 17 years old Islamic caïds."<sup>31</sup>

It was under such a critical condition that he became a writer. His literary success pushes Sansal to write outspokenly. His pamphleteering accents punctuate his work; he mainly focuses on the under-cover rise of Islamism disguised as free expression and hyper tolerant leftism. He attacks everyone: the President Bouteflika, religious people, capitulated intellectuals, and the Algeria society. It cost him his position in the Ministry.

Sansal is not a committed writer but a citizen whose desire for commitment has transmuted him into a novelist when the situation is needed. The Algerian Civil War appears to be a trigger for his writing. He uses literature to counter the ideology in power. Indeed, through his novels he portrays a society paralyzed by a mistrust that isolates individuals, preventing the emergence of any social dialogue. His primary purpose is to fight against religious

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<sup>30</sup> ibid

<sup>31</sup> Ibid

fundamentalism and denounce the Algerian power. He warns that “the border between Islamism and Nazism is thin.”<sup>32</sup>

## **2- Historical context of the novels:**

A context refers to everything outside of the text. Often, texts are interpreted according to their context. Instead of considering the text and the society as two different entities. Mannheim argues that society is present inside the text. This suggests studying society through the text and decoding the personal and social unconscious of the text. This study focuses on the social context. It considers the social, political, historical circumstances of writing. Whatever the period of the creation, the writer’s surroundings and environment have been proved to influence the author. It is essential to recognise that under the pen of every author, there stands an inspiration from the world that surrounds him/her, a philosophy and a political position toward the government and the system in place.

### **A- Nineteen Eighty-Four:**

*Nineteen Eighty-Four* was written in critical times. He describes the political scene and totalitarian states of the 20th century. Indeed, the 20th-century events offered Gorge Orwell a vast array of material for his novel. Indeed, it was written in Orwell’s most challenging times of his life. Apart from political upheavals, he suffered from tuberculosis.

Shortly after the Second World War (1939-1945) had ended, the Cold War started to capture the world’s politics. During this time, there was much fear for governmental control and totalitarian regimes. The atrocities and horrors of the Second World War traumatised and shocked the world and spread pessimism and despair. The aftermath of this war, however, did

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<sup>32</sup> franceinfo. Boualem Sansal : ‘Il Faut Tout Mettre Sur La Table : Le Terrorisme, l’islamisme Mais Aussi l’islam’, 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INYPBO3eII>.

not bring an end to totalitarian rule. Countries still suffered under the hand of burgeoning dictatorial systems. The Second World War was followed by the Cold War, a period characterised by intense ideological struggles and shifts in power. Communism that meant to correct the ills of capitalism failed as a result of the horrors of Nazism and the purges of Stalinism. Within this context, Orwell plunged himself into writing *1984* as a warning of the dangers of authoritarianism and as a rebuke of Communist oligarchs.

### **B- 2084, La fin du monde :**

2084 *La fin du monde*, was published during the Arab Spring revolutions that coincided with the proclamation of the jihadist armed Organization (ISIS) of the reestablishment of the caliphate on Iraqi and Syrian territories that it controls. These conditions created political, social and ideological tensions in the MENA region. The Arab Spring is an umbrella term to cover the wave of pro-democracy protests in the MENA region beginning in 2010. It began in Tunisia and spread quickly across most of the Arab republics. People stood against their government's brutal and authoritarian forces. Some leaders of the countries concerned accepted to release power while others resisted.

This period witnessed the spread of different Islamic political parties and extremist, jihadist groups. Historians of the Islamic State confirm that the group emerged out of Al-Qaeda in Iraq as a response to the U.S invasion of 2003. During the summer of 2014. This terrorist organization Islamic proclaimed the birth the caliphate in Syria and Iraq. This group took advantage of the region's instability during the upheavals of the Arab Spring to expanded its territory. It became the primary source of conflicts affecting the Middle East. Besides ruling an Islamic State, it wanted to control Muslims worldwide and aspired to establish itself as a universal guide.

ISIS expanded its theatre of operations beyond the Middle East and targeted France that was active in Syria against it. ISIS claimed responsibility for several attacks in Europe, including the coordinated attacks in Paris referred to by the BBC as “the worst peacetime atrocity in decades”<sup>33</sup>

These events echo the events preceding the Black Decade in Algeria. After embracing the ideology of The Islamic Salvation Front (F.I.S), people became victims of this extremist political party. The Black Decade is considered as one of the violent wars in the Arab world, a fierce civil war between the government and the Islamist insurgents. For about a decade - between 1992 and 2000- Algeria became a laboratory for Islamic terrorism under the influence of Saudi Wahabism. The country and its civilians suffered from extremism, radicalism, torture, and assassinations. Within this national and international context, Sansal, caricatured the Algerian society and issued a warning for Western societies concerning the dangers of religious radicalism.

### **3- The titles of the novels**

Texts have always been the centre of interest of research. However, the study of the title, as an element of the paratext, is essential. Hoek leo argues that “one must start the study of a text by the study of its title”<sup>34</sup> .According to Hachett, the title is “a statement used to name the text that evokes the content”<sup>35</sup> (my translation). The title constitutes the beginning of an

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<sup>33</sup> ‘Paris Attacks: France Remembers Night of Terror amid Jihadist Threat - BBC News’ Accessed 15 August 2021. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-54924051>

<sup>34</sup> Hoek, Leo H. La marque du titre: Dispositifs sémiotiques d’une pratique textuelle. Walter de Gruyter, 2011.

<sup>35</sup> Hachett, éd, 2005, p.1613, cité par Abdessemed, S in la sémiotique du titre, thèse de Magister.

analysis. The choice of a title is never arbitrary. It is chosen to give clues to the reader without revealing the plot to him. In the selected novels of this research, the first thing that attracts the reader's attention is the link between the two titles: *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *2084 La fin du monde*.

### **A- Nineteen Eighty-Four:**

George Orwell imagined several different titles for his work: *The Last Man in Europe*, 1980, 1982, and others. Finally, he used *Nineteen-Eighty-Four*, somehow as a reference to Jack London's book *The Iron Heel* (1908). It has long been recognized as one of the ideal sources for 1984<sup>36</sup> because it predicted the rise of fascism and because Orwell was so familiar with the novel. There are several other suggestions concerning this title as Orwell was never sure that it was 1984:

“To begin with, he did not know with any certainty that this was 1984. It must be round about that date, since he was fairly sure that his age was thirty-nine, and he believed that he had been born in 1944 or 1945; but it was never possible nowadays to pin down any date within a year or two.”<sup>37</sup>

It is supposed that 1984 is the simple inversion of the last two number of the year where Orwell completed his book 1948. For Walwa Boek, “when Orwell was writing the book in 1948, he reversed the last two digits arrive at the year ‘1984’<sup>38</sup>. This can work as an allusion to the universe of Orwell that states:

“War is peace  
Freedom is slavery  
Ignorance is strength”<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Richards, David W. ‘Orwell’s 1984: His Choice of the Date’. *The Explicator* 35, no. 1 (1 October 1976): 8–8. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00144940.1976.9939205>

<sup>37</sup> Orwell, 1984 13

<sup>38</sup> Walwa, Boek. *Study Guides to Modern Novels George Orwell Nineteen Eighty four Memo Serie*.

<sup>39</sup> Orwell, 1984 6

In a world of “doublethink”, *1984 is 1948*. It is suggested that the title is linked to the betrayal of the principles of the revolution, specifically Stalin’s betrayal of the revolution acting as tyrant ordering execution, repression of dissidents, and imposing challenging conditions of living. Orwell considers that the original principles of Socialism had been corrupted by the USSR. He writes,

“One does not establish a dictatorship in order to safeguard a revolution; one makes the revolution in order to establish the dictatorship. . . . The object of torture is torture. The object of power is power. Now do you begin to understand me?”<sup>40</sup>

Orwell illustrates the betrayal of the Russian Revolution (1917) through the accusations Goldstein made against the established totalitarian system of Big Brother who refers to Stalin: “he [Goldstein] was abusing Big Brother, he was denouncing the dictatorship of the Party [...] he was crying hysterically that the revolution had been betrayed.”<sup>41</sup>

Richard Blair, the son of Orwell, thinks that his father named his book as a tribute to Eileen Blair, the wife of Orwell. He states that Eileen wrote and published a poem when she left school and named it “*1984 End Of A Century*,” fifteen years before the publication of *1984*. As Eileen wrote this poem, she was engulfed by news of the growing horrors of governments nearby, those led by Hitler and Mussolini. The poem foreshadows Orwell’s vision expressed in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, except that Eileen envisioned an optimistic future. She imagined that the world would right itself<sup>42</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 14

<sup>42</sup> The Orwell Society. “End of the Century, 1984”, 22 June 2019. <https://orwellsociety.com/end-of-the-century-1984/>.

## B- 2084 La fin du monde

One of the most obvious dialogic elements in Orwell's and Sansal's novels is the latter's use of the same numbering of Orwell's novel for his title. He foreshadows a hundred-year dystopia with an unclear meaning, creating a complementarity between the texts and the title. Through this title we can understand that the author wants to denounce a dictatorial system as Orwell did with Nazism and Communism in *1984*. Sansal writes,

“The world of Bigaye I described in these pages does not exist and has no reason to exist just as the world of Big Brother imagined by Orwell.”<sup>43</sup>

“One date stood out, although no one knew how or why, it had penetrated minds and appeared on all the commemorative signs erected near the ruins: 2084. Was it something to do with the war? Perhaps. Nowhere was it specified whether it corresponded to a beginning, an end, or a particular episode during the conflict. People imagined one thing, then another, more subtle, to do with the holiness of their life. Numerology became a national pastime, there were additions subtractions, multiplications, they did everything it was possible to do with the numbers 2, 0, 8, 4. At one time the notion was adopted that 2084 was simply the year of Abi's birth, or of his illumination by divine light which occurred when he was on the threshold of his fiftieth year<sup>44</sup>”.

In these two passages, the narrator draws attention to the importance of the date. It may mark the victory of the prophet Abi against his enemies, or it celebrates either his birth or the commemoration of his illumination. He suggests that this date refers to the foundation of the Abistan or the breaking with the old world, supported by the sub-title *La fin du monde*. This expression alludes to the religious field as it suggests a hostile takeover of power by religion. It has neither coherent nor proper history. The author himself confirms that it is a re-writing, precisely a sequel to *1984*. He confirms,

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<sup>43</sup> Sansal, 2084

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.,21

“When the sanatorium was built, many many years ago a cartouche etched in the stone above the barrel vault of the fortress’s monument portal indicated a date, if it was indeed a date, between two fading, cabalistic sign: 1984.”<sup>45</sup>

In the TV show “La grande librairie”, Sansal declares, “It has no signification, inhabitant of the Abistan themselves do not know what it means, it’s a date, born we don’t know how [...] they don’t know that is a date [...] but is still here, their memory has been erased.”<sup>46</sup> In another interview, he explains the purpose of 2084, saying “if it was 3084 we move away from anticipation and we enter science-fiction”<sup>47</sup>.

## **4- Reception of the novels**

### **A- Nineteen Eighty-Four**

Orwell was already an imminent literary reference when *1984* was published. Reviewers were pleasantly surprised by the book. It was read widely, and there was a critical frenzy surrounding what it meant. It engendered responses across a wide perspective, and a critical storm followed publication.

The novel has been read and interpreted as a pure prophecy, as a disguised attack on the nature of global politics of the 1940s, specifically Communism; others have read it as a pessimistic and alarming dystopian satire of Enlightenment ideals and modern humanity. Feminists argue that the novel shows the patriarchal order bonding Winston to O'Brien and Big

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 27

<sup>46</sup> BUSNEL François, Grande librairie, Émission télévisée avec Boualem Sansal. Ajoutée le 2 nov 2015.

<sup>47</sup> La Grande Librairie. Mathias Enard, Yasmina Khadra, B.Sansal et M. Amis - 24 Septembre 2015 La Grande Librairie #LGLf5, 2016 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ODfL86iTmn8>

Brother. For Frankfurt School, it reveals a new “managerial industrialism, man builds machines to reverse their respective roles, and according to post-modernist critics, it’s a historical possibility, not a modernist paranoia.” Conservatives and liberals, especially in the United States, gratefully seized it as a stick with which to beat the Soviet Union and the red scare.

## **B- 2084 La fin du monde**

2015 was a good year for Sansal with the publication of *2084 La fin du monde*, top of best-sellers lists and named the best book of the year by the magazine “Lire”. It has been covered by most of the French media. It was among the selections for the major literary awards Goncourt, Renaudot, Interallié, Femina, Médicis, and Grand Prix du roman de l'Académie française. The obvious hint at Orwell’s *1984* offered him an immense advantage. With this adaptation, he has become a new Orwell.

With the emergence of a self-proclaimed Islamic state and a wave of terrorist attacks in Europe, the French media spontaneously turned to French-speaking Algerian intellectuals. Hence, the publication of *2084*, which precedes the attacks of November 13 by three months, fuelled the phenomenon. Sansal's notoriety was propelled due to the prophetic nature of his work. It was well-received in Europe, especially in France. The novel is exclusively considered a prediction and warning. In Algeria, however, Sansal was considered a traitor, especially after his visit to Israel. He was accused of supporting the Islamophobic West and was described as “the man of an extremist, xenophobic France.”

## **5- From Winston Smith to Ati:**

Orwell and Sansal, embodied their anti-totalitarian philosophy according to their ideological inclinations. Both of them used their characters, Winston Smith for Orwell and Ati for Sansal, as mouthpieces. They gave their characters significant identities. One can find that the main characters of the two novels are very similar. Sansal states, “the incredulous and

disgusted Winston of 1984 finds in 2084 his alter ego in the person of Ati, unable to stick to his assigned limits.”<sup>48</sup>

In *1984*, Winston Smith was Orwell’s helpless mouthpiece, frail and thin suffering of varicose ulcer. The same goes for Ati in *2084*; an ordinary man who lives in the Abistan and cared for in an isolated sanatorium for tuberculosis. Winston Smith and Ati share physical and psychological traits. Winston was “thirty-nine and has a varicose ulcer above his right ankle”<sup>49</sup>. Concerning Ati in *2084*, Sansal writes, “and yet it was the mountain that cured him. He had arrived at the sanatorium in calamitous state, tuberculosis was bleeding him dry.”<sup>50</sup>

For Sansal, Ati is no different from the Orwellian hero. During his journey, Ati questions individuals and seeks answers to appease his confusion. As a result, his doubts grow in his mind. Both characters are oppressed: Winston by the party of Big Brother and Ati by the prophet of Yollah. The oppressors in both novels have eyes everywhere. Despite these omnipresent eyes, the main characters in both novels share the same desire for revolt against totalitarianism. Orwell writes,

“What most afflicted him with the sense of nightmare was that he had never clearly understood why the huge imposture was undertaken. The immediate advantages of falsifying the past were obvious, but the ultimate motive was mysterious. He took up his pen again and wrote: I understand HOW: I do not understand WHY. He wondered, as he had many times wondered before he himself was a lunatic.”<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Quand Boualem Sansal se mesure à George Orwell: après «1984», voici «2084». Le Temps, 11 September 2015. <https://www.letemps.ch/culture/boualem-sansal-se-mesure-george-orwell-apres-1984-voici-2084>.

<sup>49</sup> Orwell, 1984, 14

<sup>50</sup> Sansal, 2084 La fin du monde

<sup>51</sup> Orwell, 1984,78

As regards Sansal, he writes, “Ati nurtured a passion for those long-distance adventurers, [...],but then he would get carried away by his enthusiasm and begin to question them avidly, like a child, firing off a battery of "whys" and "hows." And yet he was always left unsatisfied. He adds, “and it was there, at the heart of the drama, in the depths of solitude, that he had had the extraordinary vision of another, permanently inaccessible, world.”<sup>52</sup>

Looking further in the novels, we see indeed similarities between the dictatorship of Big Brother in *1984* and the terror imposed by the religious doctrine of the prophet Abi in *2084*. Both the inhabitants of Oceania and the Abistan pledge allegiance to their respective leaders. For example, in Oceania, each household must have the portrait of Big Brother; and in the Abistani Empire, every believer must have the photo of the eye that represents the prophet Abi. In Orwell's novel, the character Julia, the companion of Winston Smith, helps materialize his revolt and embark on a struggle against the power of Big Brother. The reader finds in Sansal's novel the character Koa who represents the main support for Ati. The Mockbis, and the terrible Vs Occupy the role of the thought police.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has delved deeply into the profound influence of socio-political contexts on the works of both Orwell and Sansal. It becomes evident that their respective backgrounds, laden with the shadows of totalitarianism, played an instrumental role in shaping the narratives and thematic concerns of their novels. Orwell's and Sansal's writings are not merely works of fiction; they are poignant reflections of the realities they either lived through or were deeply affected by. The menacing shadow of totalitarian regimes, with their suppressive tactics and the obliteration of individual freedoms, has left an indelible imprint on both "Nineteen Eighty-four"

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<sup>52</sup> Sansal, 2084 *La fin du monde*,44

and "2084 La fin du monde". These masterpieces serve as literary testimonies to the eras of intense political turmoil that the authors were intricately intertwined with. As we transition to the subsequent chapter, we will delve into a more granular analysis, exploring the specific manifestations and intricacies of totalitarianism as vividly depicted in both "1984" and "2084". This exploration promises to provide readers with a deeper understanding of the mechanics of these dystopian societies and the chilling realities they warn against.

## Endnotes

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## Chapter Two: The Evolution of Totalitarianism from *Nineteen Eighty-Four* to *2084 La fin du monde*

According to the dictionary of sociology, totalitarianism is “a system of centralized government in which the state has total authority over society and manipulates all aspects of culture including the arts, in order to control the private lives and morality of its citizens.”<sup>53</sup> This form of tyranny was a 20th-century development that was instituted to serve the goal of transforming society according to socialist principles.<sup>54</sup> The twentieth century was marked by the rise of regimes based on totalitarian principles. Three main countries which were under this dominant power: Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia.

The impact of *1984* was so intense that it paved the way for other dystopias. Sansal created the *1984* of modern times more than half a century later. Both authors describe almost two similar worlds. They summed up the fears of two different generations of ultimate dictatorship. Therefore, this chapter is an attempt to study the manifestation of totalitarianism in both novels.

In Orwell’s text, by the year 1984, was a year when the proles of Airstrip One live in desperate conditions. Hunger, disease, and filth have become the social norm. The urban areas of Airstrip One lie in ruins with rubble, decay, and crumbling shells of wrecked buildings. In the meantime, the Inner Party, at the top level of Oceanian society, enjoys the highest standard

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<sup>53</sup> Bell, Kenton. ‘Totalitarianism Definition | Open Education Sociology Dictionary’, 9 April 2013. <https://sociologydictionary.org/totalitarianism/>.

<sup>54</sup> ‘Totalitarianism - Students | Britannica Kids | Homework Help’. Accessed 4 September 2021. <https://kids.britannica.com/students/article/totalitarianism/277396>.

of living. Orwell pictures a world divided into three totalitarian super states that were rigidly hierarchical and in complete control of information and expression.

Sansal's totalitarian system in *2084* is conceived as a successor to Orwell's *1984*. Sansal is warning our time about the next stage in our semi-Orwellian world. In the *Abstain*, there is a vast territory of sixty unexplored provinces, an enclave where Abistanis are imprisoned in their neighbourhood, a devastated post-apocalyptic world, dull and dark. The peoples of the North (Europe and the United States) vanished. Islamism triumphed. This empire is dominated by a doctrine contained in the "Gkabal"<sup>55</sup>, subject to Begaye, the eye which pursues you everywhere. His system is based on submission to the one god with the privileged at the centre while the rest of the society is poor and isolated.

Both Orwell's and Sansal's texts tackle a common theme: totalitarianism with a leader whom the people must worship. The European dystopia where people feared seeing their land disappear, their history erased to enter an era of decline, abandoning its values and culture. This fearful dystopia mutated from a political dictatorship to a religious one. Religion has replaced politics that even Oceania has not been able to resist. In this regard, Sansal writes,

"He would find out that the only country that has resisted the forces of Abistan, because they were governed by a mad dictator called Big Brother who had thrown his entire nuclear arsenal into the battle, was Angsoc, or Angsok, but in the end it too had fallen and they had drowned in their own blood."<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Religion of the Abistan

<sup>56</sup> Sansal, *2084 La fin du monde*, 174

## 1- Perversion of language:

*Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *2084 La fin du monde* place great emphasis on language as an element in developing totalitarian power. Indeed, it is an effective tool for the propagation of any thought, belief, or ideology. In this regard, Jean-Jacques Courtine argues that

Power must thus become master of language since language is the living memory of man and offers him a space for inner resistance. Language constitutes a screen between the totalitarian gaze and the human body, it offers the shelter of its shadow, it veils the harsh light needed to read bodies. Language threatens the totalitarian enterprise.<sup>57</sup>

Orwell introduces Angsoc's "Newspeak"<sup>58</sup> that prevents people from thinking independently and expressing ideas seen as divergent by the Party. For example, words such as 'freedom' have been erased. While in *1984*, 'Newspeak' coexists with "old speak", in Abistan, the old language has been completely erased and replaced by *Abilang*. In this regard, Sansal states:

Every totalitarian system invents a language because it is through language that we can control the mind; we need Languages that are extremely narrow, very condensed. To dream, you need a certain vocabulary; when a language disappears, men can no longer think.<sup>59</sup>

This supremacy over language is a means of reducing the creative scope of language to prevent the proletariat from thinking freely. With an imposed language, people cannot discuss problems and ideas or think outside the box; their critical reasoning is limited. A reduced vocabulary makes the population sensitive to manipulation. Orwell writes, "don't you see that

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<sup>57</sup> A Brave New Language: Orwell's Invention of "Newspeak" in 1984 on JSTOR'. Accessed 4 September 2021. [https://www.jstor.org/stable/3684756?seq=1#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/3684756?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents)

<sup>58</sup> Newspeak is the fictional language of Oceania

<sup>59</sup> Emission, votre rendez-vous littéraire de France 5, *Mathias Enard, Boualem Sansal, Yasmina Khadra, martin amis*, La grande librairie, 24 septembre 2015

the whole aim of *Newspeak* is to narrow the range of thought? In the end we shall make thought crime literally impossible because there will be no word in which to express it.”<sup>60</sup>

Similarly, Sansal reflects on language and takes the idea of language restriction. He thinks that totalitarian systems invent a language for the total control of people’s creativity and independent thinking. He justifies this by the idea that a totalitarian system may control the mind and the imagination through language. Whenever language is restricted and condensed, it prevents the mind from "escaping" and thinking. He writes, “a very beautiful, rich, evocative language. As it had a tendency toward poetry and rhetoric, it was eradicated from Abistan, “Abilang” was a better choice, since it demands duty and strict obedience.”<sup>61</sup> Just like *Newspeak*, The “Abilang” reduces language to the simplest expressions. They impose it to change people’s consciousness so that only Yölah and Abi, his Prophet, remain the sole custodians of truth. Sansal writes,

According to the law all inhabitants must speak abilang, the sacred tongue Yölah taught Abi in order to unite the believers as one nation; all other languages were the product of contingency, and they were pointless, they divided mankind, shut them off into the particular corrupted their souls through invention and falsehood<sup>62</sup>

Several references to *Newspeak* and its principles are used in the creation of “Abilang”. Both languages are emptied of meaning. “Newspeak” is renamed the “Abilang” with which the past is rewritten and all memory is erased. This passage confirms the link between Sansal's *2084* and Orwell's *1984*:

Its conception was inspired by Newspeak, from Angsoc. When we occupied that country, our then leaders discovered that its extraordinary political system was founded not only on weapons but also on the phenomenal power of its language, Newspeak, a language that was invented in a laboratory and which had the power to crush all will and curiosity in the speaker *1894*.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Orwell, *1984*, 53

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*,187

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*,44

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*,189

In addition to deleting and transforming words, the system establishes short slogans: “Big Brother is watching you” in *1984* and “Bigeye is watching you” in *2084* which are easy to remember. People are requested to repeat them constantly. Thus, by repetition, the thought of the human mind is subdued and ends up accepting to the imposed ideology. In this context, Orwell writes, “the citizens of Oceania are indoctrinated with the slogan “Big Brother is watching you” constantly as posters of the sentence are set up in public areas, but their true identity has never been revealed. Besides, they create abbreviations and lexical compositions. To restrict language, Oceania associates two or more terms to describe one that makes it confusing. Furthermore, they use euphony and euphemism. For example, “joycamp” is used to refer to prison camps in *1984* and “Jobé” in *2084* is used to refer to the departure for the sacred pilgrimage than can cost life.

## **2- Surveillance as means of control:**

In addition to the control of language, Orwell and Sansal portray a terrifying totalitarian world where civil liberties and individual freedom have been confiscated by surveillance. They show a system of control for bodies and spaces with the advanced technology of surveillance and centralized geography of power that refers to robust control. Orwell’s Big brother and Sansal’s Bigaye are the supreme representative leaders of the system. Cult personalities inspire nurturing obedience, fear, terror and omnipotence using different surveillance mechanisms. The citizens of Oceania are under their constant surveillance by cameras, hidden microphones, “thought police” “the Vs”, two-way television screens, and fellow citizens “spies” in every corner to report any divergent behaviour. The notion of privacy or individuality vanished. Orwell writes,

Even from the coin the eyes pursued you. On coins, on stamps, on the covers of books, on banners, on posters, and on the wrapping of a cigarette packet- everywhere. Always the eyes watching you and the voice enveloping you. Asleep or awake, working or eating,

indoors or out of doors, in the bath or in bed- no escape. Nothing was your own except the few cubic centimetres inside your skull.<sup>64</sup>

In 2084, the citizens of Abistan go through similar surveillance. Sansal notes that “surveillance never stopped”<sup>65</sup> and that “the Square of Supreme Faith was under high surveillance, with cameras everywhere and legions of guards and hyper attentive spies, what else did they expect, the site was hypersensitive.”<sup>66</sup> Any detected divergent behaviour is punished with “one hundred lashes to the lower back with a stick, and more for repeat offenders.”<sup>67</sup>

The systems portrayed in Orwell’s and Sansal’s texts use elements of panopticism. The panoptic model can serve as an ideological system when the aim is to produce particular behaviour with minimum effort. Jeremy Bentham introduced the Panopticon in as a prison model where the inmates are under constant surveillance by guards and unable to communicate with one another. However, the guards of the Panopticon are not seen by the inmates, and they are therefore unaware by whom and when they are being watched. These ideas of a Panopticon model were expanded by philosopher Michel Foucault in 1975 in *Discipline and Punish*. He argues that the Panoptic system “automatizes and dis-individualizes power.” The inhabitant of Oceania and The Abistan believe that they are constantly watched, and, therefore, unable to express unwanted behaviour. In 1984, Orwell notes,

There was of course no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment. How often, or on what system, the Thought Police plugged in on any individual wire was guesswork. It was even conceivable that they watched everybody all the time. But at any rate they could plug into your wire whenever they wanted to. You had to live-did live, from habit that became instinct- in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard, and, except in darkness, every movement scrutinized.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid

<sup>65</sup> Sansal, 2084.,145

<sup>66</sup> Sansal, 2084 ,138

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.,145

<sup>68</sup> Orwell, 1984,

In Abistan, Abi's giant portrait everywhere makes people feel they are watched all the time and everywhere. Sansla writes,

Abi's giant portrait was on every wall from one end of the country to the other...at its centre was a magic eye, pointed like a diamond, endowed with consciousness that could pierce armor planting<sup>69</sup>

The aim of enforcing these surveillance techniques is to detect and prevent citizen from divergent behaviours that can threaten the system. If such behaviour is detected it leads to severe punishment such as torture or even death.

The system goes further than possessing people's minds. They also target emotional lives and intimate emotions, forbidden in Oceania and absent in the Abistan. They deviate all possible emotion to love the leaders and hate the enemy

### **3- Obliteration of the past**

Surveillance seems to be insufficient to satisfy the ruling party's lust for total control. They also resort to manipulation. One of the most common and effective methods to controls the masses is manipulation. Big Brother and Bigaye perfectly master the art of manipulating their subjects. The obliteration of the past is one of these methods. Manipulating memory is an effective way for the Totalitarian systems to achieve their power-thirsty goals. In both novels, memory and the past are constantly altered to fit the system's needs and ideology. The manipulation of memory is a common phenomenon in totalitarian systems.

Winston Smith and Ati receive orders from the Ministry of Truth and "minivrai" to alter the past by rewriting the content histories. They destroy, correct, and replace the original

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.,18 19

copies of every documentation which might conceivably hold any political or ideological significance. In return, people are not allowed to possess any historical archive. Orwell notes that

every record has been destroyed or falsified, every book rewritten, every picture has been repainted, every statue and street building has been renamed, every date has been altered. And the process is continuing day by day and minute by minute. History has stopped. Nothing exists except an endless present in which the Party is always right.

The events exist only in their unreliable memories. Hence, they end up believing the assumptions of the leading part. In this context, Orwell writes, “he, Winston Smith, knew that Oceania had been in alliance with Eurasia as short a time as four years ago. But where did that knowledge exist? Only in his own consciousness, which in any case must soon be annihilated.”<sup>70</sup> By rewriting the events of the past and controlling the narration of history, the ruling party can maintain their position of authority. Orwell writes “who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past.” In *2084*, Sansal writes,

You don't know what a museum is, since there aren't any in Abistan. That's the way our country is, it was born with the absurd idea that everything that existed before the advent of the *Gkabal* was false and pernicious and had to be destroyed, erased, forgotten, just like the Other, if he did not submit to the *Gkabal*. The museum, in a way, is the rejection of this madness, my revolt against it. The world exists, with or without the *Gkabal*; to deny it or destroy it does not eliminate it—on the contrary, its absence makes its memory even stronger, more present, and in the long run pernicious, as it happens, because it can lead to idealizing that past, making it sacred.<sup>71</sup>

If everyone accepts the lie which the Party has imposed and all records contain the same version, the lie passes into history and becomes truth. The process of altering past facts and

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<sup>70</sup> Orwell, *1984*,

<sup>71</sup> *ibid*

erasing memories is a central step in reaching total domination. In Oceania and the Abistan there is no authentic history, no past except that dictated by Big Brother and Yollah.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has illuminated the profound parallels in the representation of totalitarianism by Orwell and Sansal, even as they engage with distinct types of these oppressive regimes. The universality of the oppressive tools and tactics — constant surveillance, linguistic control, and the distortion of history — reveals the shared essence of totalitarian systems across varied contexts and times.

Orwell's and Sansal's dystopian visions, though separated by geographical and cultural boundaries, converge on the fundamental principles that govern such regimes. The omnipresent surveillance in these societies is not just about physical observation but extends to a psychological invasion, ensuring that the citizens are perpetually under the watchful eyes of the state. The art of language, which traditionally serves as a means of expression and identity, is subverted into a tool of control. By altering and restricting language, these regimes limit the scope of thought, making rebellion — both in action and in mind — nearly impossible. Moreover, by manipulating past events and rewriting history, they effectively obliterate any reference point for dissent or alternative thought, ensuring that the populace remains ensnared in a present that is continuously molded by the state.

These eerie similarities underscore a universal truth about the nature of totalitarianism. Regardless of the specific ideological mask it wears, its core mechanics remain consistent: dehumanize the individual, control the narrative, and perpetuate an omnipotent state apparatus.

Through the works of both authors, readers are offered a haunting glimpse into the inner workings of such systems, serving as a reminder of the perils of unchecked power and the importance of safeguarding individual freedoms.

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## **Chapter Three: The Frontier between Reality and Fiction**

The anticipation novel is a fundamental genre of science fiction. It perceives, envisions, and imagines the future downturns of the world. Some aspects of the novels are inspired by specific eras and events mixed with the authors' perception of the future. They demonstrate coming events that can be a positive or negative transformation of the world that can sink into terrifying obscurantism or celebrate a happy ending. This makes the novels either utopias or dystopias.

In *1984* and *2084*, the worlds of Oceania and the Abistan are not dystopias but utopias that went very wrong. They are worlds dominated by totalitarianism, where people are reduced to a bestial state. This chapter is an attempt to examine Orwell's and Sansal's hint at the reality of their societies and the world.

### **1- *Nineteen Eighty-four* and *2084 La fin du monde* as Possible worlds:**

Orwell's *1984* and Sansal's *2084* have been read as prophesies. They give an image of a future where surveillance and the loss of independent thinking are the norm. Nowadays, many people are going back to these novels to draw parallels between current real-life events and those written in the stories. This section will review some current events that Orwell's and Sansal's texts may have hinted at.

#### **A- *Nineteen Eighty-four***

The previous chapter has shown that *1984* offers an overview of life in a totalitarian system. In the 1940s, many have seen Hitler's, Stalin's, and Mussolini's regimes as the archetypal totalitarian states. In the 21st century, however, a new form of authoritarian government has emerged. Instead of inaugurating "new orders," such regimes simulate

democracy by holding elections that favour them and resorting to bribery and the censorship of the media.

Lately, the number of dictatorships has been decreasing. However, there are still no less than fifty dictators in power today. Some of them are Kim Jong-Un in North Korea, Pierre Nkurunziz in Burundi, Bashar Al-Assad in Syria, Ali Khamenei in Iran, Ramzan Kadyrov in Tchetchenie, and Alexander Lukashenko in Belarus. Similar to Orwell's Oceania, citizens are stripped of their voice in these dictatorships. There is permanent control over the media and a strict prohibition of the criticism of the leader whose giant portraits, just like Big Brother, are in every corner. The dictators impose an omnipresent surveillance system through technologies and secret armies besides slogans, propaganda, and patriotic courses to control their subjects. In such a state, people are often persecuted and human rights abused. In short, leaders have absolute control, and people's rights are suppressed.

North Korea, for instance, is seen by many as a true contemporary picture of Oceania. North Korea's Worker's Party is the longest-standing party in power, governing for the last 75 years. Its rule is considered to be some of the most repressive globally, marked by torture, forced labor, camps, and infringement of human rights. The country is heavily focused on the country's nuclear weapons program over the well-being of the citizens. Forty percent of the nation, which is about 24 million people, lives below the poverty line. Hwang Jang Yop states that

North Korea is currently a society where respect for human rights has yet to exist. Human rights cannot co-exist with absolutism of the Great Leader. Only the Great Leader has absolute human rights; all others are simply his vassals. An individual's fate and human rights belong not to the individual but to the Great Leader.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> 'The Problems of Human Rights in North Korea'. Accessed 13 September 2021. [http://www2.law.columbia.edu/course\\_00S\\_L9436\\_001/North%20Korea%20materials/hwang%20jang3.html](http://www2.law.columbia.edu/course_00S_L9436_001/North%20Korea%20materials/hwang%20jang3.html).

Although dictatorships are not as common now as they were in the past, the regimes of the world's current dictators are still brutal and repressive. The world's most oppressed countries suffer under the autocratic rule of these current dictators, and there is still much progress to be made.

## **B- 2084 La fin du monde:**

Sansal's *1984* shows an Islamist nation which has succeeded to defeat the world. In this light, it is essential to draw attention to the current threat posed by the expansionist projects of the democratic and religious-inspired Turkish party: the AKP (Justice and Development Party). In a meeting with religious officials, the Turkish president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, declared, "Turkey, with its cultural wealth, accretion of history and geographical location, has hosted diverse faiths in peace for centuries, and is the only country that can lead the Muslim world."<sup>73</sup> Erdoğan is seen to have Caliphate ambitions to seize the leadership of the Muslim MENA region, assuming the succession of the glorious Ottoman Empire. He also envisions Turkey's role to be a global one.

Turkish propaganda based on religious sentimentality succeeded in indoctrinating and conditioning a large part of the Arab world to accept the Turkish expansionist foreign policy and support the idea of the revival of the Ottoman Empire. Erdoğan is clearly seen by many Turks as a moral leader of the Islamic world in the mould of the Ottoman Caliphs<sup>74</sup>. Lately,

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<sup>73</sup> 'Erdoğan: Turkey Is the Only Country That Can Lead the Muslim World'. Accessed 10 September 2021. <https://www.yenisafak.com/en/world/erdogan-turkey-is-the-only-country-that-can-lead-the-muslim-world-3463638>.

<sup>74</sup> openDemocracy. 'Turkey's New Caliph: Understanding Erdoğan's Hegemony'. Accessed 10 September 2021. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/turkeys-new-caliph-understanding-erdogs-hegemony/>.

Turkey has shown a positive image of a democratic Muslim state. It then gained esteem from Muslims living under dictatorships.

These sympathies influenced people's belief in Erdoğan's policies. Motivated by this "faith" to participate in the emergence of a new Ottoman caliphate, some Syrians welcomed the Turkish army into their homes and even participated with them in the massacre of their fellow citizens: the Kurds. Other Syrians have been recruited as mercenaries and sent to Libya to fight General Aftar and get revenge on his allies: Russia and France.

In addition to Turkey, the Taliban in Afghanistan may play a huge role in the spread of an extremist Islamic ideology in the future. As soon as the American troops started withdrawing from Afghanistan in August 2021, ending a 20-year presence there, the Taliban reclaimed power. The Taliban, as a religious movement, emerged in the early 1990s after the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from the country to overthrow the warring Mujahidin. The Taliban spread Islamic law and terror, banned television, music, and cinema, and denied school for girls aged ten and over. After 20 years, the movement seized power again. In ten days, Afghanistan fell into their hand. They secured total control of Kabul and claimed to want peace and an inclusive government compatible with Islamic law. However, many Afghans are sceptical, and observers are worried after scenes of panic and desperation in Kabul's International Airport. Thousands of Afghans have been trying to leave the country since the fall of the government. The Taliban, however, reassured Afghans and promised that women would have access to work and education under certain conditions and the media would enjoy freedom with limits. They started repainting the walls erasing a part of the past, and spreading the new slogan, "the old regime has fallen, independence belongs to us."

From the two cases mentioned in this section, the question is to be asked about the future of the world with such Islamist threats: can such ideologies adapt to the modern world and treat

their opponents fairly or fall into dictatorships and authoritarianism? In Turkey, being a journalist is complex. The president even tried to block access to some social media. The Afghan case raises international fear with Taliban rule. The *Hill* magazine writes,

The exit “comes with grave risks, and at a steep cost to global democratic and anti-terrorist objectives.” They claim the withdrawal means “the inevitable spread of terrorism in the Middle East, threats to Ukraine’s eastern front, and most of all Beijing’s undemocratic actions in Taiwan”<sup>75</sup>

## **2- *Nineteen Eighty-four* and *2084 La fin du monde* as mirrors of their respective societies:**

### **A- 1984 as the mirror of England**

The inspiration of *1984* may be seen to be England. As previously mentioned, Winston Smith has more than a little of Orwell in him. The Oceanian society of 1984 resembles London with its big posters all over the city and pictures of a person resembling Big Brother. London embodies all the things Orwell despised in his surroundings: the monotony of industrial England, the food rationing, and government control during wartime. People were short of cigarettes and razor blades in post-war London. The government offered the small quantities if these products to a privileged few while the masses were left without any supply. This is similar

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<sup>75</sup> Allott, Daniel. ‘Does US Withdrawal from Afghanistan Really Put the World at Risk?’ Text. TheHill, 8 September 2021. <https://thehill.com/opinion/national-security/571332-does-us-withdrawal-from-afghanistan-really-put-the-world-at-risk>.

to what Winston describes in the novel. In addition, newspapers were full of irrelevant content such as sport, astrology, and novelettes. The Ministry of Truth represents London's wartime Ministry of Information or the BBC where Orwell worked during the wartime period. In fact, even Room 101 is seen as a representation of the basement of the BBC which was the headquarter of propaganda.

It is clearly shown in the novel that government workers should be capable of "doublethink", the power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them to alter the past records to suit the Party's purpose. Somehow, doublethink was already taking place in Western societies. Orwell mainly satirizes the British Labour Party of his days that governed England after WWII. The name of Winston refers to Winston Churchill, the wartime Prime Minister of England., Winston Smith, is required to be conscious of the truth, so that he can act effectively, and also unconscious of it, so that he can sidestep guilt. He must therefore master doublethink, Imperialists were particularly prone to such intentionally delusional thought processes, Orwell observed in the 1945 essay that alluded to the Bengal famine. 'A British Tory will defend self-determination in Europe and oppose it in India with no feeling of inconsistency.'<sup>76</sup>

For instance, Churchill declared that British rule had civilized India. In defiance of considerable evidence, he held to the faith that imperial rule had given Indians effective governance than they were not capable of achieving for themselves failing to mention the famine.

Orwell is skeptical of technological progress, especially television which was becoming popular after World War II, and which would eventually be a dominant force in Western culture. Orwell recognized the enormous potential of this communication tool. He imagined

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<sup>76</sup> Himal Southasian. 'Doublethinking Famine', 29 January 2011. <https://www.himalmag.com/doublethinking-famine/>.

that television will not merely be a broadcaster of propaganda but also a means to spy on people on the other side of the screen. Nowadays, this mission is accomplished, not by TV sets, but by other technological means, such as smartphones.

## **B- 2084 as the mirror of Algeria**

Analyzing the systems mentioned above, we may consider that subjects of dictatorships develop Stockholm syndrome forged in fear and extreme dependence. Victims of totalitarian regimes feel intense gratitude toward their oppressors even for the slightest humane gesture or act of kindness, such as not beating them or simply allowing them live. They never blame their aggressor because they ‘believe’ their leader to be always right. They have never experienced anything else, so living under a dictatorship is not jarring or shocking to them. Dictatorships only seem extreme and unethical to people who have not lived through them.

*2084* is a novel that functions as a magnifying mirror of Algeria. The author writes about his global vision of Islamism, focusing on some aspects and ills of the Algerian society. To create the Abilang, he draws his inspiration for the Arabic language. For example, *Yolah* may be drawn from Allah (Islamic God) or Mollah (Muslim scholar); *Abistan* is composed of the suffix ‘stan’ that means a country in reference to the pernicious cradle of terrorism, Pakistan and Afghanistan; *Abi* the paternal figure; *Gkabul* acceptance and submission; and other like *Chitan*, *Qodsabad Abirat*, *Rab*, *Kiiba*, *Makrouf*, *Chabir*, *Nadir*, *Burni*, *Siam*, *Moussim*, etc.

Sansal named the inhabitant of the Abistian ghetto “Hors” that can be understood as free men. One can compare the ‘Hors’ who refused the system of Bigaye to the Amazigh people who have always refused the Algerian system. Both the ‘Hors’ and the Amazigh people resisted through culture and language. Sansal pictured the uncertainties and speculation around President Boutaflika’s absence in the image of a commander, the venerable Duc that

disappeared for a while. He writes, ‘there was no sign of him in the *nadirs* was he alive, was he dead’<sup>77</sup>

*The Nadirs* are a perfect caricature of the Algerian television and newspapers which are the official relays of power and which appear to be pure instruments of propaganda. Sansal shows that national television and newspapers serve as a relay for the official ideology of the country.

Sansal uses his character Koa to show his opposition to some practices on the system. He states about the negative effects of public education on an individual. In essence, the passage seems to critique an education system that produces individuals who are easily manipulated and unthinkingly obedient, rather than fostering true understanding, critical thinking, and individuality.

But before long he began to feel ill at ease; already a school he realized that public education was a calamity, the source of all calamities, such an insidious thing, as unstoppable and implacable a death. With true enthusiasm on his part, education turned him into : -compulsive, vicious little confessor, prepared to swallow dark fairy tale and schoolgirl legends whole, and recite fantastical stanzas, obtuse slogan and offensive curses.<sup>78</sup>

Sansal accuses the Algerian school and the policy of Arabisation of raising an ignorant young Algerian generation with Islamist indoctrination. Indeed, education has played a significant role in the spread of an intolerant, misogynistic, anti-Western Islam. They have shaped Algeria into a dictatorship that is as much socialist as religious.

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<sup>77</sup> Sansal, 2084 161

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 180

### **3- The dream of freedom**

Both *1984* and *2084* show characters who strive for freedom. This dream of freedom, in fact, has always marked real-life societies.

#### ***A- Nineteen Eighty-four***

Winston Smith's journey to freedom tries to carve out a little world of liberty in Oceania's repressive society. He first commits a 'thought crime', writing down his thoughts of rebellion: "DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER" in his forbidden diary. Shortly after, he comes across Julia, and together they rebel against the Party. He investigates the past. Then he engages in a love affair with Julia and they create their utopic Golden Country and succumb to the forbidden sexual relationship as an act of rebellion. His absolute nonconformity starts when he encounters Julia. He rents a room in Mr. Charrington's antique shop for their secret meetings and they subsequently start meeting O'Brien, an influential member of the Inner Party, who pretends to have connections with the Brotherhood. Smith and Julia soon get caught and are severely punished at the Ministry of Love.

During his quest for freedom, Winston faces several conflicts. First, he confronts the struggle between repressing his true thoughts and feeling or writing them in his diary. This conflict is created by his fear of being caught by the Thought Police. Another conflict is the authenticity of Julia's message and O'Brien's invitation.

#### ***B- 2084 La fin du monde***

In the Abistan, where freedom does not exist, Ati starts his journey by questioning his society and glimpses the "mystery of freedom." A dream of liberty inspires Ati, and he becomes part of himself. It begins in the sanatorium during his isolation, where he has time to think. The

mysterious disappearances of caravans and their escorts near the hospital, in addition to the rumors about the existence of a mythical frontier outside the Abstain, make Ati curious. This curiosity becomes an obsession. Sansal writes, “one night he had heard himself murmuring beneath his blanket, the sounds emerged of their own will, [...] he resisted and then he let it go and intend to his words [...] “free...dom...free...dom...dom...free...dom [...] it was a cry inside.”<sup>79</sup>

The first signs are mysterious, and nothing explains why an ordinary person may be led by such impulse. He committed a thought crime and feared repercussions. This impulse then turns into a compelling demand. Ati and Koa experience their shared desire to discover a sense of freedom. They want to find answers to the many questions. They feverishly ask themselves about the “mystery of freedom.”<sup>80</sup> Indeed, they discover the existence of the past era where men were still free. However, at the end of their journey, freedom seems to be like an inaccessible dream, the time where people who were still free have revolted. Koa is killed because he participated in a quest to find a place where liberty could have survived, and Ati disappears in the mountain of the Sin with his secret ambition. Ati and Winston are victims of this unattainable dream.

Nowadays, one may see many societies who are dreaming of freedom throughout the world. In recent years, there have been many freedom movements in the world. However, just like Ati and Winston who paid for their dream of freedom, these real-life freedom attempts brought chaos for many people and countries. In Algeria, for example, hundreds of activists in the 2019 Algerian protest movement were imprisoned without charges and no one knows what conditions they may have gone through in prison. Syria, for example, has paid a huge price for

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid, 37-38

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 33

its opposition to its oppressive ruler Bashar Al Assad. The country has plunged into a vicious civil war since the beginning of the pro-democracy movement in 2011. North Koreans attempt to escape from the country despite of punishment for any act of rebellion to flee the hash dictatorship.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has embarked on a meticulous exploration of how Orwell and Sansal, through their masterful works, offer introspections on their respective societal landscapes — both past and projected future. These novels, while being intricate tapestries of fiction, are grounded in the authors' lived realities and the socio-political climates of their times.

Orwell's "1984" is commonly interpreted as a biting critique of the overreaches of Communism, particularly with reference to Stalinist Russia. However, it would be an oversimplification to confine the novel to just this viewpoint. Delving deeper, one discerns Orwell's nuanced reflections on the subtler undercurrents of his own English society. Themes like the erosion of privacy, the manipulation of language and history, and the dominance of bureaucracy bear uncanny resemblances to some of the societal shifts Orwell witnessed in his homeland. His portrayal of Airstrip One, a province in the superstate of Oceania, can be seen as an extrapolation of the darker facets of mid-20th century Britain.

Similarly, Sansal's "2084" is more than just a futuristic tale. It is imbued with his observations of Algerian society, especially in its depiction of a theocratic regime that suppresses dissent, freedom of thought, and individual liberties. The subtle and overt critiques of the Algerian government, its religious zeal, and its suppressive tactics are palpable. Sansal's narrative, while echoing Orwell's dystopian techniques, brings forth concerns intrinsic to his cultural and political context.

What makes both these novels timeless and globally resonant is their uncanny ability to reflect realities beyond their specific cultural or political contexts. Events and themes from "1984" and "2084" find echoes in the contemporary global landscape, be it the increasing surveillance mechanisms, the manipulation of information, or the rising tides of authoritarianism. Their dystopian futures serve as cautionary tales, urging readers to recognize the slippery slope that contemporary societies might be on, and to act before the fiction becomes a tangible reality.

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## **General conclusion**

The present research delves deeply into the intricate realm of totalitarian threats as depicted in dystopian literature, particularly focusing on liberal perspectives. It compares and contrasts two monumental works from distinct cultural backgrounds - "Nineteen Eighty-four" penned by the celebrated English author, George Orwell, and "2084 La fin du monde" by the esteemed Algerian writer, Boualem Sansal. This comparative study reveals the inherent dialogic elements interwoven in both texts, shedding light on the literary conversation between Orwell and Sansal.

What becomes evident through this examination is the profound use of the dystopian narrative as a tool to challenge ideologies that were once glorified as utopian dreams. Orwell acknowledged his indebtedness to the dystopian genre, particularly citing Yevgeny Zamyatin's "We" as a pivotal influence. Similarly, Sansal's novel is unmistakably and overtly reminiscent of Orwell's groundbreaking work, underscoring the intertextual dynamics at play. Both authors vividly project their liberal leanings through the journeys and struggles of their central characters - Winston in Orwell's narrative and Ati in Sansal's tale. Additionally, their narratives are distinctively molded and enriched by their personal cultural experiences and backgrounds.

Upon immersing oneself in these novels, readers traverse two eerily similar yet distinctive dystopian universes. They encounter the omnipotent surveillance of Big Brother and the equally menacing presence of Bigaye, the linguistic manipulations of Newspeak and Abilang, and the spirited rebellions of both Winston and Ati. These two novels serve as a chilling mirror to the reader, reflecting the dystopian extremes of potential totalitarian regimes that find alarming resonances in today's world.

Structurally, this analysis is neatly compartmentalized into three pivotal chapters. The initial chapter establishes the undeniable influence of the authors' personal environments and literary exposures on their masterpieces. The subsequent chapter delves into the strikingly parallel totalitarian landscapes portrayed in both novels, emphasizing their relevance despite the chronological disparities. Finally, the third chapter extrapolates the eerie similarities these fictional worlds share with our contemporary reality. It's worth noting, however, that Sansal's portrayal of dystopia, while compelling, appears more exaggerated when juxtaposed with the subtleties in Orwell's depiction.

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