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**Psychological Manipulation and Thoughtcrime  
in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and  
Patricia McCormick's *Never Fall Down***

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a  
**Master degree in English Language, Literature and Civilization**

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## Abstract

The present dissertation explores psychological manipulation and Thoughtcrime in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Patricia McCormick's *Never Fall Down*. It focuses on the practices of dictatorial regimes as to manipulate and acquire total control over the population using different means to reach their goals. Through our study of the means of propaganda and by connecting them to the manipulation of the psyche in both novels, we endeavored to understand the main process through which the government trick and manipulate its citizens using propaganda in order to make them absorb its ideology. We also studied the main aspects of Thoughtcrime in both Orwell's Oceania and the Khmer Rouge's Democratic Kampuchea and how it is punished. In questioning the ability of the two regimes in keeping permanent power whatever the cost, we used Marxist literary theory relying on the concepts of the superstructure and the base and the ideology of Foucault and Althusser to answer this question. This theory helped enormously understand the political atmosphere and the relation between the dominant and the dominated in both novels.

**Keywords:** psychological manipulation, Thoughtcrime, punishment, control, totalitarianism

## **Dedication**

My deepest feelings of gratitude go to my lovely parents, whose words of encouragement and persistence taught me to never back down and pursue my dreams. My precious brothers and sisters: Nadia, Halim, Lamia, Leila, Rafik for their constant support, insight and love, Amel in particular who acted like a second mother to me and devoted her time to educate me. She is the epitome of strength and tenacity, my source of inspiration.

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# **General Introduction**

The twentieth century was a period of great transformations and turmoil. Europe as well as the rest of the world has known a convulsive political change. Europe was in the process of “inventing and reinventing itself” (Mazower 20). Many great empires collapsed as was the case of the Ottoman and Austria-Hungarian empires, and gave way to the birth of new republics such as Turkey, Austria and Hungary. Nationalism spread all over the continent and great revolutions broke out. The most important revolution that changed the course of history was the Bolschevik Revolution of 1917 in Russia. As a result, Communism was born followed by two rival ideologies, which included Wilson’s Liberal Democracy and Fascism. Different countries succumbed to dictatorships and totalitarianism such as Spain, Germany and Italy. Nazism led to the breaking out of the Second World War, which left Europe with great damages.

Indeed, in just one half of a century two world wars triggered off and a war of ideologies or the Cold War prevailed from the end of the Second World War in 1945 to the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989. Therefore, for the most part, democracy had always been threatened not only in Europe but also in all parts of the world, since the conflict between Capitalism and Communism spread all over the globe: from Europe to Africa, and from America to Asia making the Third World the scene of the war of ideologies. During the confrontation, tense crises broke out including the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961 and the Cuban Missile Crises in 1962. From 1975 to 1985, the United States of America and the Soviet Union supported a policy of détente.

Even after the fall of the different European empires and the decolonization in Africa, Asia and Latin America, different countries from these continents, which thought themselves independent, found themselves under cruel totalitarian regimes. Such countries as Burma, Uganda and Cambodia suffered or are still suffering from the cruelties of a dictatorial government.



It is obvious that during this whole century, a literature prevailed to denounce oppression and the miserable conditions people were experiencing at that time. Modernism and Postmodernism, for instance, are two twentieth-century literary currents in which were grouped different writers that were disillusioned by the atrocities of the two World Wars, the Great Depression, and the Cold War. Those writers were overwhelmed with anger, loneliness, disgust and disillusionment. They wanted to escape reality, to change the world that seemed to be falling apart. Authors like D.H. Lawrence, Ernest Hemingway, Albert Camus and Ezra Pound expressed their resentment of the war and the corrupt political system they were living under and denounced its abuse and falsehood.

George Orwell was certainly one of those authors who described well twentieth-century corruption and terrorism in his writings. Born Eric Arthur Blair on June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1903 in Motihari, India, he was an English novelist, essayist and critic, and was mainly concerned with political writings. His revolt against imperialism and the dictatorial system led him to leave his position in the Indian Imperial Police in 1928, and live with the low class in the dreary streets of London. He also spent a period working in restaurants and hotels in Paris. His experiences there enriched his literary career and earned him a great reputation. His masterpiece *Animal Farm* (1945) is a satire in a form of a fable based on the Revolution in Russia and Stalinism. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), however, was a warning against the dangers of an extreme totalitarian regime in the future 40 years, i.e. in the year 1984. It recounts the story of Winston Smith who one day decides to revolt secretly against the Party whose governmental system is based on the manipulation of the people and the distortion of truth and history. During his rebellion, he falls in love with a woman, Julia, who has the same hatred for the Party as himself. In the end, they are arrested by the Thought Police and are subjects to extreme kinds of torture. This led to his being mentally and physically broken and surrenders to the monstrous idea that the Party

will always be there perpetuated in the figure of Big Brother; a figure he mostly hated but in the end he submits to it.

George Orwell did not live to see what was going to happen in the years coming, since he died of tuberculosis at the age of 47 in 1950, only a year after the publication of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Although his worries did not materialize, many dictators took hold of many countries around the world, especially in the Third World during the Cold War.

Patricia McCormick, a contemporary American journalist and writer, portrayed one of these harsh dictatorships in her novel *Never Fall Down* (2012). *Never Fall Down* is based on a real story of a young Cambodian boy named Arn Chorn who survives the atrocities of the Khmer Rouge regime during the 1970s. The author travelled between America and Cambodia, and tried to retrace the events of Arn's story during and after the Khmer Rouge's reign. She successfully transmitted Arn's stay in the camps in a beautiful distinct language, through his own voice. The Khmer Rouge left deep scars in the hearts and minds of the Cambodians. Though its rule did not last long (between 1975 and 1979), it succeeded in turning the lives of a whole population into a terrible, horrifying nightmare. People were forced to live and work in camps for very long hours, families were torn apart and millions of people were horribly killed.

In both novels, the two regimes have recourse to psychological manipulation using different means to take control and spread their influence. They tried to control human feelings and emotions such as happiness, sadness, and love, extinguished trust, and spread suspicion among the population. They eradicated faith and religious monuments leaving the population with nothing else than hollow and emptiness as their only companions. To what extent are these two dictatorships able to control the mind? Did both succeed in that? It is thus very important to show the very use of psychological manipulation to keep on

ruling and holding power as long as possible without the interference of anyone suspected of threatening the system.

In reading Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and McCormick's *Never Fall Down*, we came to the conclusion that these two works could be compared with one another. The first is from a British perspective imagining a perfect extreme totalitarian system. The second is a true story of a Cambodian regime written with the pen of an American journalist.

Applying the rules of mind control of Orwell's Oceania on the Khmer Rouge governmental system is a challenge we are ready to take. First, we are going to concentrate on how both systems adhere to the control of each individual through the control of the mind, therefore his life. In addition, the concept of "Thoughtcrime" is recurrent in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Thoughtcrime in the novel is considered a terrible offence that can be the cause of your death. We will examine this concept in *Never Fall Down* in order to prove that even the Khmer Rouge used this kind of technique to break the minds of people. Finally, we will focus on the two figures that portray both governments in both novels: Big Brother in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Angka in *Never Fall Down*. Moreover, we will show how the two governments use propaganda to keep the inhabitants under constant surveillance and control. Overall, our prior goal is to highlight the extent to which the manipulation of the psyche is used under both regimes and how it works.

In our analysis of both novels, we are going to refer to different works and critical essays that dealt with the novels. However, concerning *Never Fall Down*, there are no critical analysis of the book, since it is recent. Therefore, we are going to focus on writings about the Khmer Rouge as a political system.

Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-four* has been studied and approached from different perspectives depending on the aims. For instance, Associate Professor Micheal Yeo in his

article entitled *Propaganda and Surveillance in George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four: Two Sides of the Same Coin*, published in the Global Media Journal- Canadian Edition (2010), attempts at studying the use of propaganda and surveillance in controlling both people's behaviours and thoughts and how it is taken to extreme limits. He examines in what way both of them work in tandem. In the end, he comments on the relevance of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* to life in societies in which propaganda and surveillance are parts.

In Philip Bounds' *Orwell and Marxism: The Political and Cultural Thinking of George Orwell* (2009), chapter 5, entitled *The Totalitarian Future*, gives an account of the communist influence on Orwell's understanding of totalitarianism. Bounds focuses mainly on *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in which Orwell's vision of totalitarianism is well portrayed.

The American theorist, Douglas Kellner, in his turn, compares and contrasts between George Orwell's and Herbert Marcuse's visions of totalitarianism in his paper: *From 1984 to One-Dimensional Man: Critical Reflections on Orwell and Marcuse* (1984). Since both works provide sharp critiques of the political mechanisms, which practice socio-political domination and oppression, Kellner suggests that they should be read historically and contextually. He compares and contrasts between Orwell's dialectics of disaster and Marcuse's dialectic of domination and liberation.

Erika Gottlieb's *The Demonic World of Oceania: The Mystical Adulation of the 'Sacred' Leader*, published in Bloom's *Modern Critical Interpretations: George Orwell's 1984* (2007), compares the figure of Big Brother to a god that must be worshipped by his disciples. She highlights the transformation of a human figure to a god-like leader who rules through hate instead of love.

In his essay, *The Heresy of Common Sense: The Prohibition of Decency in Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Anthony Stewart compares Winston Smith to characters from

Orwell's other works such as *Animal Farm* in terms of decency. He demonstrates that the way Orwell's characters cope decently with others depends upon their capacities to adopt a double perspective. He presents these characters as only focusing on their own interests to the exclusion of others while Winston is seen as the only decent character in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* even in comparison to these protagonists in Orwell's novels.

Concerning our study of *Never Fall Down*, we will take into consideration historical and sociological works that were concerned with the study of Cambodia since the coming into power of the communist regime of the Khmer Rouge. We will be referring to some of these works in our analysis of psychological manipulation and Thoughtcrime.

In Daniel Bultmann's *Irrigating a Socialist Utopia: Disciplinary Space and Population under the Khmer Rouge, 1975-1979* (2012), we are introduced to the socialist community of the Khmer Rouge and the ways followed to construct a "utopia" of their own, by transforming the population into "new people" under the slogan "To build a new society, there must be new people". Bultmann explains the procedures followed by the regime to change the people into Socialist loyalists through "thought reform". Thus, keeping them under total control.

Historian Ben Kiernan in his article, entitled *External and Indigenous Sources of Khmer Rouge Ideology*, published in the book *The Third Indochina War: Conflict between China, Vietnam and Cambodia, 1972-79* (2006), explores the contrasting conceptual models that led to the emergence of the "idiosyncratic, genocidal state" of Kampuchea during the Pol Pot's regime. He tries to explain the origins of its ideology and identifies its different components, which he compares to Maoist China and the ancient civilization of Sparta.

Associate Professor Hinton, in his turn, analyzes the origins of the Cambodian genocide in his book *Why Did They Kill?: Cambodia in the Shadow of Genocide* (2005). He focuses on the period between 1975 and 1978 during the Khmer Rouge's tyrannical rule and plunges deeper in the cultural forms incorporated into the dictator's genocidal ideology.

Paul R. Bartrop, Professor of history and specialist of genocide studies at Florida Gulf Coast University, has collected first-hand accounts, diaries, oral testimonies and more of victims and witnesses of genocides in his book, *Encountering Genocide: Personal Accounts from Victims, Perpetrators and Witnesses* (2014). He explores the worse mass murders committed in 10 countries during 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries like the Killing Fields in Cambodia. These accounts highlight the horror and trauma experienced by the inhabitants of a dictatorship like Democratic Kampuchea.

Since Marxist critics view literature within a socio-historical context, and that literature is inseparable from history and society, it will be helpful to espouse a Marxian approach in the present research. Marxism might be defined as a cultural theory that includes a set of economic, political and social ideas that came into prominence in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century through the publication of Karl Marx's and Friedrich Engels' *The Communist Manifesto*. It focuses on the representation of class distinctions in literature and class conflict, and is more concerned with the social and political elements of a text than the aesthetic. In our study of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Never Fall Down*, we will focus on the conflict between the base and the superstructure, in other words, the ruling party and its oppression of the population through manipulation and thought control. We shall also seek help from such works as Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, and Louis Althusser's *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* in order to demonstrate how the leading powers resort to punishing the base for the sake of keeping its interests safe.

To implement this orientation on our present research, we shall rely on a three-chapter outline. The first chapter will be divided into two sections. The first one will deal with the definitions of psychological manipulation and Thoughtcrime. As for the second section, it will be devoted to the historical background of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Never Fall Down*. This will include the biographies of both George Orwell and Patricia McCormick. We will go through their education, literary careers, major works and awards. Moreover, we will give brief summaries of both novels in which there will be gathered the major events of the stories. Finally, these two works will be put in context, as we will be interested in the Europe of the twentieth century.

The second chapter will be concerned with the analysis of the two novels in terms of psychological manipulation. We will shed light on the impact of political propaganda on the minds of the population, especially the protagonists, under a dictatorial government. We will analyze the different means used by the two governments to transmit their beliefs and manipulate people.

In the third and last chapter, we will discuss the concept of Thoughtcrime. We will concentrate on the main aspects of punishments and the fates of Thoughtcriminals under a harsh dictatorial system.

In the conclusion, we shall examine the extent to which George Orwell and Patricia McCormick succeeded in transmitting, to the reader, the different facets of psychological manipulation and Thoughtcrime as represented, respectively, in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Never Fall Down*. This will shed more light on the two totalitarian regimes' use of atrocious and inhuman means to control the minds and even the lives of the dominated populace.

## **Chapter One:**

# **The Definition of the Concepts and the Historical Background of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Never Fall Down***



## **Introduction:**

This first chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section will be concerned with the definition of both psychological manipulation and Thoughtcrime. We will rely mainly on a Marxist point of view when defining them. In order to study the occurrence of the two concepts in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Never Fall Down*, we need to know about the context of the novels. Thus, the second section will be dealing with the historical background of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Never Fall Down*. We will introduce George Orwell and Patricia McCormick to the reader by presenting their biographies and their literary achievements. A brief summary will also be given for each novel to have a clear insight into the main events of the stories. Moreover, we need to relate both novels to their historical context. Thus, we will describe the major events that characterized Orwell's Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century as well as Cambodia of the Khmer Rouge reign (1975-1979).

### **I. Definition of the Concepts :**

#### **1. Psychological Manipulation :**

Since the beginning of history, there existed two parties: the one dominant and the one dominated. It has always been an extreme necessity for the dominating one to continue ruling and holding power over the dominated or the weak.

In a Marxist context, these two parties are referred to as **the Superstructure** and **the Base**. The superstructure forms the ruling power. It owns all the means of production and plays the role of the oppressor that subjugates the base. The latter, which represents the working class or the society as a whole, finds itself absorbed and lost inside the ruling ideology which it cannot overstep. Because, as Marx and Engels claimed in *The German Ideology*, "[t]he ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class

which is the ruling material force in society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force” (21), the people are made to accept an unfavorable system that oppresses them. The ruler is thus compelled to represent his ideas and interests as the only true and valid ones that must be accepted by the society. This is made explicit through the manipulation of the psyche using different means especially propaganda to ensure control of the populace.

In defining psychological manipulation, we can divide the phrase into two parts: psychological and manipulation. The adjective is related to psychology therefore everything that has to do with the psyche or the mind. As for manipulation, it can be related to brainwashing, which is “a method of changing an individual’s attitudes or allegiances through the use of drugs, torture, or psychological techniques; any form of indoctrination” (*Picturesque Expressions: A Thematic Dictionary*). When associating the word with totalitarianism, it becomes to mean the tactics of conversion used by dictators to create an imbalance of power, and exploit the citizens to serve their purpose. This is mainly seen in Hitler’s Germany as he propagated about the importance of exterminating the Jews whose role, he distorted, was primordial in the breakdown of the German economy.

In a more Foucauldian understanding of manipulation, discipline, as described in Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish*, is seen as a powerful agency used to govern people’s lives “to produce subjected and practiced bodies, docile bodies” that can be “manipulated, shaped and trained for the benefits of the state” (136). Foucault argues that power relations, which make of the “body” or the man their permanent slave, keep influencing him through his constant exposition to the rules of the autocracy. This “body” then, needs “discipline” or education in order to make of him an obedient slave.

The French Marxist philosopher, Louis Althusser, has developed the same idea some years before, when publishing his *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*. According to him, the idea of social function and ideological practice is imposed on people through disciplinary mechanisms with the purpose of taming them physically and mentally. The **Ideological State Apparatuses** establishes order through the rule of the dominant class, and by imposing its ideology instead of using repression and violence. The state has mainly recourse to education and the church in its indoctrination of the population.

Many methods are used for the sake of manipulating the psyche especially in politics. We can cite the media and television, since they participate in influencing the votes of the audience through their broadcasted shows and magazines during the elections. Other methods may include fear, language, perpetual war and the like. Thus, the use of these means proved to be very efficient in the process of manipulation in many countries under dictatorial rule, such as North Korea, which instill their ideology inside the minds of their subjects.

## **2. Thoughtcrime :**

An Orwellian concept, the term thoughtcrime came into prominence after the publication of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949). In the novel, this invented Newspeak word (also called "crimethink") refers to the criminal act of thinking or holding beliefs different from or against the ruling ideology. The slightest thought that is contrary to what the authorities are claiming to be right is deemed illegal. Because expressing one's thoughts and ideas is a sign of individualism, therefore a threat to the Party, the latter uses every means of surveillance in order to protect its interests and avoid any rebellion. Here comes the role of the Thought Police who is ordered to keep a constant surveillance on every member of the Outer Party for every single twitch of an eye or a sudden absence of

mind. In order to clean heterodox thoughts from thoughtcriminals, the Thought Police subject them to “crimestop”, which is the ability to erase any unorthodox belief from the mind. This rehabilitation ranges from work camps to torture to even death.

Although we owe much to George Orwell for the ‘invention’ of the word, it existed long before in a different period. Publisher Mack Farren, in the introduction to his book *Who’s Watching You: The Chilling Truth about the State*, tells about the history of surveillance since the beginning of time. He relates the emergence of the concept of “Thoughtcrime” to the period of the Crusades with the new ideas that came out from them. The Catholic Church, threatened by opposing factions, sought to maintain its control of the masses not only through the dictates of behaviour but also through the control of their thoughts (8). Heresy may be described as being the result of thoughtcrime. Many people suspected of heresy were burnt at the stake for holding different beliefs.

In today’s use, this concept refers to the fact of holding controversial thoughts that are offending or socially banned. It can also be related to the representation of any form of individualism especially in a time of war or totalitarianism. For instance during Maoist China as well as in Kim Jong II’s North Korea, people were prevented from expressing political opinions and claiming their rights. Jerrold Post, director of political psychology program at George Washington University, states that “controlling information and controlling dissent are part of what goes into maintaining a totalitarian state” (DNEWS). Thus, the dictator must control public opinion to keep power. This is what is actually happening in the Arab countries if we refer to Khadhafi’s totalitarian rule in Libya or Assad’s Syria as bloody revolutions broke in there to denounce a corrupt, deceitful system. The long-term leadership of Khadhafi, which lasted more than 40 years (since 1969) or the twenty years of Islam Karimov, the only president of Uzbekistan who died lately, emphasizes the injustice and the silence imposed on the people of both countries. It

demonstrates the extreme deceit of the ruler to keep his bureaucracy going on without the interference of the populace.

The concept of Thoughtcrime will be further developed in the third chapter, as we will explore the penalty for committing a thoughtcrime in Orwell's Oceania on the one hand and in Cambodia during the Khmer Rouge reign, on the other hand. As for the following section, we will introduce the historical background of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Never Fall Down*, their summaries together with the biographies of George Orwell and Patricia McCormick.

## **II. Historical background of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Never Fall Down*:**

### **1. *Nineteen Eighty-Four*:**

#### **1.1. Biography of George Orwell:**

##### **a) Early life and Education:**

Eric Arthur Blair, pen-named George Orwell, was born on June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1903 in Motihari, Bengal, British India. He was the son of Richard Blair, a sub-deputy agent in the Indian Civil Service and, Ida Limouzin, daughter of a successful French timber businessman in Burma. He had two sisters: Marjorie and Avril. In 1904, his family moved to England and settled in the village of Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire. It was in England that he was to pursue his education.

In 1911, at the age of eight, he entered St. Cyprian preparatory school in Sussex. His experiences there were to shape his views on the bitter reality of the English class system. Later in 1917, he won a scholarship to Eton where he was to stay until his graduation in 1921. He did poorly in his studies by contrast to his years in St. Cyprian, thinking it "a rat race up the social ladder" (Edward Quinn 6). Again, a reference to the class system to which Orwell did not fit in.

After leaving Eton, Orwell did not apply to any university. Instead, he decided to follow the path of his father by joining the Indian Imperial Police, and work as assistant district superintendent in Burma beginning from 1922. During five whole years, he was to discover the true and disgusting face of British imperialism, and to see the miseries the Burmese were experiencing under colonial rule. This made him feel ashamed and reluctant of being part of a corrupt system, therefore it pushed him to resign definitely from the Indian Civil Service in 1928 and pursue his boyhood dream of becoming a writer.

#### **b) Literary Career:**

Orwell's literary career truly began when he went to live among the poor and the outcast in the dreary streets of London, and when he worked in hotels and restaurants in Paris. It was in Paris that he met a group of young writers and artists disillusioned like himself, called the **Lost Generation**. During his stay there, he was able to write articles and two novels. Publishers rejected the latter, and Orwell in his anger and desperation destroyed them (*Encyclopedia of World Biography*). *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933) was published under the pen name George Orwell for the first time. It was the beginning of an Orwellian era that was to shape Orwell as a writer.

Once back in London he took a position as a teacher in a boy's preparatory school in Hayes, Middlesex. His novel, *A Clergyman's Daughter* (1935), makes reference to those days at the school. As for *Burmese Days* (1934), and his essay, *Shooting an Elephant* (1936), they were based on his experiences in Burma. In October 1934, he worked as a clerk in a bookshop in North London, an experience he was to describe in his novel *Keep the Aspidochelone Flying* (1936). In June 1936, he married Eileen O'Shaughnessy, a writer and a journalist. Both adopted a son, Richard, in 1944.

His first socialist novel was *The Road to Wigan Pier*, and was published in 1937. It was a critique of the English class system and English Socialism. It marked Orwell as a political writer. In the same year, Orwell participated in the Spanish Civil War as a correspondent for the Independent Labour Party (ILP) and fought with the Republicans. He was shot in his throat and was forced to flee Spain. *Homage to Catalonia* (1938) recounts his Spanish adventures.

*Coming Up for Air* was completed in April 1939. Shortly after its publication, his father died at the age of 82. His collection of essays entitled *Inside the Whale* was published in 1940. He also published Letters from London in Partisan Review. He worked as a producer, writer and reporter for the BBC's Eastern Service. He was also a literary editor for the Tribune beginning from 1943.

Between 1943 and 1944, he completed *Animal Farm*, which was published in 1945 just few months before the death of his wife, Eileen. Two years later, he was diagnosed with Tuberculosis, which would leave him weak and frail for the rest of his life. Meanwhile, he devoted himself to the writing of *The Last Man of Europe*, which would change for *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. It was published in the USA by Brace and Harcourt in 1949 (Shelden 20). In the fall of the same year, he married Sonia Brownell, editor at the Horizon.

George Orwell died on January 21<sup>st</sup>, 1950 at the age of 47. During his short life, he achieved a great reputation as a political writer and was one of the most influential figures of the twentieth century. Even after his death, he continues to influence new generations of writers and many of his newspeak words such as "Big brother" from *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are widely used today.

## **1.2. Summary of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*:**

Considered as the crowning achievement of George Orwell's literary career, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a futuristic, dystopic novel set in the year 1984, nearly 40 years after its actual publication, in a world divided into three super states: Oceania, Eurasia and Eastasia. The story takes place in Airstrip One (fictitious London), in Oceania (mainly composed of actual Britain, North and South America, Australia, and South Africa).

Winston Smith lives in a society where the Party is the supreme ruler through the figure of Big Brother, where people are kept under constant surveillance through the telescreen, where truth is nothing but illusion, and where the slightest thought is forbidden. He works in the Ministry of truth, and is responsible for falsifying information for the Party. Secretly, he keeps a diary in which he expresses his thoughts about the government and the memories of his past. Later, he meets Julia with whom he undergoes a love affair, and whom he meets from time to time in a room he hired in the proles' area.

Winston together with Julia, decide to rebel against the Party, and ally themselves with O'Brien. The latter gives them the Brotherhood's manifesto written by its leader, the so-called Goldstein. However, what was an alliance against the government was in fact a trap set to catch the couple. They are arrested and taken to room 101, where they are subjugated to extreme torture and faced their greatest fears.

After weeks of resistance, Winston experiences a psychological breakdown under the hands of O'Brien, and finally submits to the Party's totalitarian control. He now loves Big Brother, a figure he mostly hated.

The novel ends with an appendix, which explains the principles of Newspeak, the official language of Oceania. Despite the Party's efforts to perfect it and adjust it to the ideological practices of INGSOC (an acronym that stands for English Socialism and refers



to the Party), that aim at limiting thought, the final emergence of Newspeak as the only lingua franca would not take place until 2050. The process will take time because of the difficult task of transcribing certain literary texts into the new language and the destruction of the original versions.

### **1.3. Historical Background of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*:**

*Nineteen Eighty-Four* was published in 1949, just four years after the end of the Second World War. A thrilling, dystopian novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* explores an extreme totalitarian system in the thirty years that would come. It is obvious that what Orwell describes in his work is inspired from his experiences in a troubled half century.

Indeed, the beginning of the twentieth century was not that hopeful. With the rise of imperialism and the spread of nationalism, European powers were in constant conflicts, and to make matters worse, they made alliances, which were one of the main causes of the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. After four years during which both the Central Powers and the Allies were destroying each other using great technological weapons and artillery, the peace treaty of Versailles (1919) was to shape the sad future of Europe. In fact, the harsh punishment of the Central Powers, especially Germany, led to the rise of different dictatorships in many European countries, starting from Hitler's Nazism in Germany and Mussolini's Fascism in Italy. Meanwhile, communism arose because of the Bolshevick Revolution in Russia (1917). Lenin's extreme Socialist ideas combined with Marx's economic philosophy gave birth to the Soviet Union under the leadership of Vladimir Lenin. After his death in 1924, Joseph Stalin who instituted one of the most authoritarian regimes besides the two dictatorships aforementioned replaced him.

In addition, the inter-war period was characterized by a devastating phenomenon that is the Great Depression. Europe, which was already suffering from the casualties of

the First World War and its great debts to the U.S.A, found itself unable to repay them back because of the Stock Market Crash in 1929. As a result, millions of workers were jobless and were unable to sustain their families. It was one of the hardest times in the history of Europe. It was during these years of economic insecurity that a civil war broke out in Spain between the Fascist party of Francisco Franco and the elected republican government. Eventually the Fascists succeeded in defeating the republican government thanks to Hitler's and Mussolini's military support. Franco's totalitarian rule would last until his death in 1975.

The unstable economic and political situation in the inter-war period led to the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939; a horrible and dreadful event that many Western European countries would have been happy to avoid. This war witnessed the use of highly developed weapons as well as massive aerial bombing raids mainly encouraged by Hitler in his Blitzkrieg (a German battle tactic that used tanks, artillery and air power). Britain was one of the countries that suffered from the Blitz. Orwell's apartment was bombed in his absence by these aerial raids (Quinn 21). Moreover, the first atomic bomb was built. This meant more deaths. This atomic bomb ended the war between the U.S.A and Japan, as well as the lives of more than 200,000 Japanese civilians. One of the most horrifying event of the war was the Holocaust. Hitler's massive extermination of the Jews brought the word "genocide" into existence (Michael G. Maxwell).

The end of the Second World War and the fall of Nazism left the world's leadership to two superpowers: the capitalist United States of America and the communist Soviet Union. As if the preceding conflicts were not enough, the world plunged into an ideological war between communist and capitalist, which was known as the Cold War. For forty more years, constant crises broke out between the two superstates, sometimes to the extreme that one would fear a Third World War. The fall of the Soviet Union would end

this conflict for good leaving the field to the U.S.A as the major judge of today's world affairs.

This is concerning the historical background of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, which extends from World War I (1914-1918) to the beginning of the Cold War. While Orwell's dystopia deals with an imaginary, futuristic, extreme totalitarian regime, *Never Fall Down* is based on a real story that took place in Cambodia during the tyrannical reign of the Khmer Rouge in the period between 1975 and 1979. Below we will concentrate on the historical background of *Never Fall Down* and the emergence of the Khmer Rouge's dictatorship.

## **2. *Never Fall Down*:**

### **2.1. Biography of Patricia McCormick:**

#### **a) Early Life and Education:**

Patricia McCormick is an American journalist and novelist. She was born on May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1956 in Washington D.C. She grew up in Central Pennsylvania where she was educated and attended Rosemont College between 1974 and 1978. In the same period, she worked as an assistant press secretary to the governor of Pennsylvania (*Encyclopedia.com*). After that, she moved to New York and studied in Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism during the period 1985-1986, and earned an MS degree. In 1988, she got married with Paul W. Critchlow, a public-relations specialist, with whom she gave birth to two children (*pattymccormick.com*).

After graduating from Columbia, she had worked as a crime reporter for daily newspapers before writing book and movie reviews for magazines such as *The New York Times Book Review*, *Ladies Home Journal*, *Town and Country*, *More*, *Mademoiselle* and other publications. She has been an adjunct professor of journalism at Columbia University

Graduate School of Journalism, and an instructor of creative writing at the New School University from where she got her M.F.A in fiction writing in 1999 ([pattymccormick.com](http://pattymccormick.com)). She lives currently in Manhattan, New York with her family.

**b) Literary Career:**

Patricia McCormick entered the world of young adult literature in 2000 with her first novel *Cut* about a teenage girl who continuously injures herself. Most of her novels are inspired from real facts. For instance, *Cut*, is inspired from New York Times Magazine article about women cutting themselves. In 2005, she published *My Brother's Keeper* which tells the story of a high school boy who struggles with his brother's drug-addiction and family issues.

McCormick is also concerned with international issues, which need profound research and investigation. In order to write *Sold* and *Never Fall Down*, she relied on research and interviews ([Encyclopedia.com](http://Encyclopedia.com)). In her composition of *Sold* (2006), which is about sex trafficking in the villages of India and Nepal, the author had to go to the Nepalese city, Kathmandu, to interview the inhabitants about the practice of selling women and young girls to brothels as prostitutes. The same thing happened with *Never Fall Down* (2012). The novel is based on the real story of an eleven-year-old boy, Arn Chorn Pond, who survives the horrors of the Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia. In addition to interviewing Arn himself, Patricia traveled to Cambodia and met other survivors ([Encyclopedia.com](http://Encyclopedia.com)). Her career as a journalist precedes her and that is what makes her stories so realistic. Other books include *Purple Heart* (2009) that deals with the killing of a ten-year-old boy in Iraq, and *I am Malala: How One Girl Stood Up for Education and Changed the World* (2013) about the real issue of Malala Yousafzai, a Pakistani girl shot by the Taliban while standing for her right to education.

Patricia McCormick received several awards for her young-adult fiction. These include the American Library Association for *Cut* in 2002. *Purple Heart* was a Publishers Weekly Best Book and a New York Public Library Books for the Teen Age designation in 2004 (*Harpercollins.com*). *Sold* in itself received much acclaim and many prizes among which were the New York Foundation for the Arts fellowship, Virginia Center for the Creative Arts fellowship, National Book Award finalist in Young People's Literature, and Children's Literature Council Choice designation. McCormick was also named a New York Foundation on the Arts fellow in 2004 (*Encyclopedia.com*).

## **2.2 Summary of *Never Fall Down*:**

*Never Fall Down* tells the tragic story of an eleven-year-old Cambodian boy, named Arn Chorn under the Khmer Rouge regime. In April 1975, Khmer Rouge soldiers came to Arn's village, and forced the inhabitants to leave their homes and walk long distances to the countryside. Once there, they are kept in a work camp where they work the land whole days without rest and wear the same, unified, black garment. At the beginning, Arn and his family were grouped together in the same camp. However, with the new constitution that obliged the separation between the males and the females, the elderly and the children, each member of his family has gone to different camps according to their age and sex.

Cambodia under The Khmer Rouge is based on agricultural labour. People are considered to be of the same class order. There is no room for intellectuals. These are killed and got rid of. It is Year Zero: the past is vanished, no memory should be kept, no thought is tolerated. There is also no room for religion. Every night, the leaders organize indoctrinated meetings in which they call people to love Angka, their ruler. During four

long years, they are going to commit the worst crimes ever. They have executed children, old, disable persons, killed just for pleasure and starved their brothers in blood.

Arn works in the rice fields and witnesses his comrades getting sick, starving, or worst of all dying. He sees people go to the mango grove, but they never returned. In fact, they are killed and tossed into manure piles. These get bigger and bigger every day. Arn is obliged to throw the bodies into the grove and even to sleep there for three nights.

One day, the Khmer Rouge ask the kids to play music for them. Arn volunteers and other kids are chosen to perform. Together they learn to sing the revolutionary songs, and to play on the instruments. They perform each night during the meetings and in the leaders' camps. They even sing for the workers in the fields during the day. Later on, he comes to understand that the music is not only for entertainment, but also for distracting people from the sounds of the killing and the screams of the victims.

In the later years of the Khmer Rouge reign, Arn is forced to become a soldier in the Khmer Rouge side. He holds a gun and kills Vietnamese soldiers who have invaded the country. After the combat, he flees to Thailand, where he is hospitalized, then taken to a children's center. From there, he is brought under the care of Peter Pond who adopts him and welcomes him to the United States of America. Once there, he confronts the peculiarities of the American lifestyle, and the bullying of American youngsters and of his own compatriot who accuses him of being a Khmer Rouge soldier and a killer.

In 1984, Arn is invited to speak at the church of St. John the Divine, in New York City about the genocide committed in his country. It is only then that he experiences a kind of catharsis and is able to reconcile himself with the past.

## **2.3 Historical Background of *Never Fall Down*:**

Part of French Indochina during the French colonization, Cambodia has always known an unstable political system. Just after its independence in 1953, it was subjected to different dictatorial regimes. The worst of them was during the four years reign of the Khmer Rouge.

The rise of the Khmer Rouge goes back to the Civil War in Cambodia (1970-1975). In 1970, the anti-communist, Chief Marshal Lon Nol, organized a coup to overthrow the King, and became president of the Khmer Republic. He had the support of The United States of America and South Vietnam. King Sihanouk took refuge in China and was persuaded by the Chinese government to ally himself with the Khmer Rouge, who were not that numerous and strong at the time. The Khmer Rouge were part of the Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK), which was originally established against the monarchy. Largely composed of French educated Marxist leaders, the existence of the party was kept secret from the people since its creation in the 1940s. Its activities were directed since the beginning towards the suppression of the monarchy. One of its prominent members was Saloth Sar, the son of a rich landowner. In the 1950s, he studied in Paris and was a member of the French Communist Party together with other Cambodian scholars, who were influenced by Stalin's ideology. Saloth Sar called himself "Pol Pot", and was also known as "Brother Number One" (Rob Hamill).

In trying to win the support of the peasants and the inhabitants of rural areas, the CPK sought an alliance with King Sihanouk in exile. People's reverence for the King led them to take the side of the Red Khmer. Moreover, the CPK used Lon Nol's brutality and the American constant aerial bombings targeted at North Vietnamese bases in Cambodia, as means of propaganda to influence the Cambodians and attract new recruits. When the

war in Vietnam ended and the U.S.A pulled out its forces, Lon Nol lost his valuable support. The Khmer Rouge were able to win the war and seized power in April 1975. In 1976, Democratic Kampuchea was proclaimed and the existence of the CPK revealed to the population.

Pol Pot's greatest objective was to build an ideal, agrarian utopia where there would be no class divisions. He also viewed the cities as "parasitic growths and hotbeds of spies, foreign ideologies and capitalism" (John Tully 178) that must be destroyed. To make his plan into practice he obliged the city dwellers to flee the urban areas to the countryside. They were forced to leave their houses and their belongings, even patients were dragged outside the hospitals. Some people were told they had to flee in order to avoid U.S bombardments and were to stay out of the cities for only three days. However, they found themselves walking for days. Thousands of them died in the deportation.

Once in the countryside, the city dwellers or the "new people" as they were called, and the "old people" (the peasants), were imprisoned in work camps. They were subjects to hard labour, family separation and deprivation. Pol Pot was inspired from Stalin's model based on "the violent expropriation of the peasantry and slave labour" (Tully 180). Each individual was obliged to wear single black uniforms representing the party. Religious beliefs and expression of thoughts were forbidden. People were forced to be only devoted to "Angkar Padevat" (the party). Education was abolished and schools were transformed into prisons. The most famous prison cell was Security Office 21 that was established at a high school in Tuol Seng, Phnom Penh. Inside, all kinds of torture and interrogation methods such as electric shock and suffocation were used to extract confessions (Andy Carvin). It was Year Zero in Democratic Kampuchea where private life and property were inexistent and private gatherings forbidden.



The Khmer Rouge cleaned the country from all the soldiers of the ex-regime (Lon Nol's). Intellectuals and professional employees, who were referred to as the "lazy elite", were exterminated as well as the minorities. Even people with spectacles were suspected to belong to the educated elite, therefore they were got rid of. Overseas Khmers were lured to come back home only to be executed once there. Thus, people under the watch of the Khmer Rouge lived in constant terror. A huge number of them died as a result of starvation and disease because of the lack of supplies and the prohibition of medical care.

The Red Khmers committed the worst genocide ever against humanity. It is estimated that more than 1.7 million people were killed or died between 1975-1979 (Tully 181). No one was spared from the cruelty of the regime not even children and the old.

By the end of 1977, Vietnamese forces started a clash with the Khmer Rouge. Many civilians were forced to fight, most of whom were children, who participated in the combat as soldiers. Pol Pot was faced with an experienced, well-built, Vietnamese army. The latter was able to capture the capital, Phnom Penh on January 1979. The dictators had no other choice than to flee the country and hide in the remote parts of Thailand (Andy Carvin).

Vietnam settled a puppet government known as the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK). People regained their home villages with no surviving relatives to welcome them. Cambodia would be known to the world as the Killing Fields, reference to the thousand mass graves scattered around the country. As for Pol Pot, he would never regain power despite his many attempts. He died under a house arrest in 1998 denying the millions of Cambodians the justice they deserved.

## **Conclusion:**

Throughout this first chapter, we have introduced the theoretical corpus for a better understanding of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Never Fall Down*. In the first section, we tried to explain both psychological manipulation and Thoughtcrime through a Marxist perspective especially the concept of psychological manipulation relying mainly on the views of two French philosophers: Louis Althusser and Michel Foucault. We related the use of psychological manipulation to the tactics used by dictatorial enterprise notably Hitler's regime. As for the concept of thoughtcrime, we traveled through time to depict the origin of the word, but always in a political context.

In the second section, we concentrated on the historical background of the two novels. First, we plunged into the lives of George Orwell and Patricia McCormick and their literary achievements through which their political thinking was expressed. Secondly, we gave a brief summary for each novel. We traced the main events of the stories and the plights faced by the major characters. Finally, we were interested in the twentieth century, which represents the major setting of both works. The events of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* take place in the year 1984 even though the book was published in 1949 during a very sensitive period in the history of Europe. *Never Fall Down* in its turn focuses on the four years reign of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, during the Cold War (1975-1979).

Thus ends this first chapter. The following chapter will be concerned with the study of psychological manipulation and the major means of propaganda used in both works to spread the ideology of the dictator and subject the masses.

**Chapter Two:**

**Psychological Manipulation through**

**Propaganda in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and**

***Never Fall Down***

## **Introduction:**

The present chapter deals with psychological manipulation in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Never Fall Down*. It explores totalitarian control through the different aspects of propaganda, and its contribution to the mind-breaking of the citizens.

Propaganda is necessary for any given dictatorship to keep control of its subjects using different means. It is also very common that the highly superior leaders have recourse to propaganda in order to achieve this purpose. Propaganda is defined according to the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* as “ideas or statements that may be false or exaggerated and that are used in order to gain support for a political leader, party, etc” (Turnbull 1217). In most instances, the use of propaganda is the most powerful means in spreading ideas and/or a specific ideology to attract and manipulate a specific audience.

Originally, the word came into prominence in the sixteenth century as a tool for propagating the Christian faith. At that time, it was associated with the act of preaching and educating (Jackall 1). It was until the twentieth century, with the emergence of television and the radio, that the term was widely used for mass persuasion. During the two world wars, both the Allies and the Central Powers had recourse to different means of propaganda to give distorted truths about the enemy and manipulate public opinion about the war.

Propaganda is given different definitions by experts in communication and mass media. For instance, Sheryl Tuttle Ross, professor of philosophy at La Crosse - university of Wisconsin, defines the term as “an epistemically defective message used with the intention to persuade a socially significant group of people on behalf of a political institution, organization or cause”(24). In his turn, W. Russell Neuman, Professor of media technology at New York University, refers to it as a “false, manipulative, persuasive communication” (22). Overall, propaganda is meant to persuade, to make a group of people absorb a specific

ideology and oblige them to take sides, sometimes by force. Propagating ideas is part of the rule of totalitarian regimes. Everything is done for the sake of converting the masses. Through studying the different techniques of propaganda, we will be able to understand how the Party in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and the Khmer Rouge in *Never Fall Down* manipulate if not brainwash the people, and convert them to their diabolical beliefs.

## **2.1. Manipulation through propaganda in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*:**

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the use of propaganda to manipulate is so obvious and it is done all the time. Michael Yeo, an associate professor and chair of the department of philosophy at Laurentian University, distinguishes two main forms: the propaganda of facts and the propaganda of fiction. The first one has to do with Winston himself. Winston Smith works in the Ministry of Truth. He is responsible for the falsification of news, reports, etc. He is under propaganda and is a propagandist himself since he contributes to the reshaping of reality. In this case, Winston invents a story about a certain Comrade Ogilvy, who in reality does not exist, but is given life to satisfy a certain political need. “Winston’s news story exemplifies a kind of propaganda that is pervasive in the novel: the propagation of lies as facts (or lies) but to propagate values, or value judgments, which the propaganda of fact does indirectly” (Michael Yeo 53). The second form is done through Julia’s work in the fiction department. Here also, fiction promotes values like factual propaganda. Julia transforms fictitious writings into facts or “atrocities pamphlets” (Orwell 116).

Now, let us explore the main forms through which the system is propagated:

### **2.1.1. Big Brother:**

The figure of Big Brother plays an important part in the propagation of the system. Big Brother is the Party itself. It is everywhere: “On coins, on stamps, on the covers of books, on banners, on posters, and on the wrapping of a cigarette package—everywhere. Always

the eyes watching you and the voice enveloping you. Asleep or awake, working or eating, indoors or outdoors, in the bath or in bed—no escape” (Orwell 21).

Big Brother is “God” that watches every single movement you make. He is there to keep an eye on the citizens. The image on the posters and on other objects and places is made to persuade people that they are not only watched but also that it is comforting that someone is watching over us (Yeo 56). The phrase “Big Brother Is Watching You” is not only about the fact of being under constant surveillance but it is also a propaganda item about the fact of being watched in every instant. It “asserts yet again the priority of vision of a very specific and strictly enforced type within this society of surveillance” (Stewart 127). Therefore, people would be watchful of their doings and avoid making “unorthodox” acts. Living in such society needs to be extremely careful, wear a big smile on your face and be content with what you have. The system defines who you are. It is not up to you to pursue your own desires. Winston feels that he is always watched by the mythical figure who can be everywhere.

Through this figure, the Party is capable of maintaining order, establishing discipline and keeping people from following their desires that can be harmful to the continuity of the system. Literary critic Erika Gottlieb describes Big Brother as a Caesar who demands to be worshipped just like a divinity (60). She goes further as to coin it with O’Brien who is the cold, cruel personification of the “smiling icon” on the posters (57). This cruelty is seen in the Ministry of Love where Winston submits to a mental breakdown under weeks of extreme torture because of his pursuit of his private needs and wants.

Big Brother’s role as the divine representation of the Party participates in the disillusionment and the submission of the citizens, and makes it impossible for Winston and Julia to freely demonstrate their individuality in such a political-centred society. Since family relations are banned with children indoctrinated in schools to obey the Party’s doctrine, there

is no longer trust and tenderness in a home. These children being part of the Spies (a children's organization, inspired from Hitler Youth during WWII, which trains kids to become obedient Party members and turn against their parents) makes them enemies of their own parents, therefore perfect future Party members. For instance, Mrs. Parson, Winston's neighbour is terrified at her children who can denounce her at any moment for any heretical thought against the Party, because it is the way they are taught at the Spies (Orwell 19). They adore Big Brother whom they consider their hero. Furthermore, marital relationships are no more than a contract between a man and a woman to raise future Party members. Winston's relationship with his wife Katharine is based on satisfying the needs of the organization. Katharine was a perfect example of a party woman who has been educated in the Junior Anti-Sex League (an organisation that promotes celibacy for both sexes. Julia is also a member in it). In order to control the sexual desires of its subjects, which are parts of their individuality, the Party insists on the fact that the physical act should be performed only for the purpose of reproduction. Katharine's loyalty to the Party is seen as she tries incessantly to fulfill her duty of giving birth to children through regular sexual intercourse (Orwell 52). Because personal pleasure and love threatens the interests of the leader, family must be eradicated and the love felt towards one's family should be redirected toward Big Brother, the sole and powerful.

Big Brother alone is able to rule over a disillusioned society by isolating the individual from everything that makes his identity and his right to freedom. In Oceania where the slogan "Freedom Is Slavery" is omnipresent, people are governed with fear of a mythical god and have no choice other than to keep silent and follow the rules.

### **2.1.2. The telescreen:**

A very prominent device in promoting values is the telescreen. Besides 24 hours surveillance, this device broadcasts incessantly the latest news and statistics about the

“welfare” of the citizens and to what extent they are lucky to be under Big Brother’s wings instead of the rebellious Goldstein. In addition, the Party organizes sessions in which the device shows programmes about the war and Goldstein that push people to react as if hypnotized under the so-called Two Minutes Hate.

Orwell’s imaginary vision of the telescreen, or the modern television, is amazingly striking. In doing so, the author predicts how television is going to be used as a political, manipulative engine and as “an instrument of indoctrination and social control” (Kellner, 3) to sustain the government’s lust of power. Moreover, the “optimistic” statistics and the numbers constantly shown through the big screen, help exhort people from any kind of rebellion against the Party. Furthermore, knowing that they have better living conditions than their grandparents do, people will totally erase any suspicion or thought about their real situation. The programmes are made intentionally in a way that people are going to believe and to be blinded by these attracting numbers and facts:

Day and night the telescreen bruised your ears with statistics proving that people today had more food, more clothes, better houses, better recreations—that they lived longer, worked shorter hours, were bigger, healthier, stronger, happier, more intelligent, better educated, than people of fifty years ago. (Orwell 58)

The audience absorb the information even though they know it to be false. Here comes the notion of “doublethink” into work. This Newspeak word, which means the ability to hold two contradictory beliefs in one’s mind and accept them as being both true, is being used all the time especially during the broadcast. When the voice from the screen announces that the chocolate ration is raised to twenty grammes a week just twenty-four hours after saying it was reduced to the same amount, Winston is surprised at the rapidity to which Parsons and Syme, another Party member, absorb the information in such a very short period (Orwell 45). In this way, the telescreen encourages people to be passive watchers and slaves of the big screen.



The telescreen serves as an instrument of both propaganda and surveillance. Besides the constant broadcast of information, it is also a means for “disciplinary” aims. In fact, this device is everywhere even inside the houses of Party members. It is there to keep an eye on them for any misdemeanor and to remind them of the impossibility to flee the eyes of Big Brother. It is thus important to discipline them to obey the rules drawn by the Party as the French philosopher, Michel Foucault, puts it: “It is the fact of being constantly seen, of being able always to be seen, that maintains the disciplined individual in his subjection” (187). Therefore, the screen is able to dominate the minds of its audience through both distorted information and constant surveillance.

In a society of scarcity, people are contrived to imagine a place of comfort and yearn for a better, peaceful environment. The false images of wealth and peace broadcasted by the big screen as well as the voice that keeps repeating the same phrase “our new, happy life” (Orwell 45), demonstrate nothing more than the miserable state of a totally alienated and repressive society.

### **2.2.3. The Two Minutes Hate:**

Besides the statistical programmes broadcasted by the telescreen, the party members are often invited to take part in the Two Minutes Hate during which the image of Emmanuel Goldstein is projected through the screen. The impact of this session on spectators is surprising. The way they react to the picture resembles mad people who run from a psychiatric hospital. They are totally hypnotized and are unaware of their state of mind. According to Phillip Bounds, a Marxist historian, this is made on purpose to transfer their hatred and dissatisfaction toward a so-called enemy of the state in the figure of Goldstein. This hysteria allows the Party to break down any feelings of discontent against the institution and prevent any rebellion (150). Winston has himself tasted the dreadful effect of these Two

Minutes, in which he is forced to join in the event though unwillingly, as if some kind of “supernatural” force drives him to do like the other participants:

In a lucid moment Winston found that he was shouting with the others and kicking his heel violently against the rung of his chair. The horrible thing about the Two Minutes Hate was not that one was obliged to act a part, but, on the contrary, that it was impossible to avoid joining in... A hideous ecstasy of fear and vindictiveness, a desire to kill, to torture, to smash faces in with a sledge-hammer, seemed to flow through the whole group of people like an electric current, turning one even against one's will into a grimacing, screaming lunatic. (Orwell 11)

Winston experiences a kind of dissociation, as if having a second, hidden personality he has no knowledge about its existence before. He moves from being an intelligent, kind person to becoming a cruel, unstable lunatic full of hatred and dread. Although this session is supposed to clear the audience's minds and chests from any remains of complaints and transfer their hatred to the enemies of Oceania with which it is at war (Eurasia and Eastasia), Winston struggles with his sub-conscious from hating Big Brother to loving him at one time and hating him again at other times:

Thus, at one moment Winston's hatred was not turned against Goldstein at all, but on the contrary, against Big Brother, the Party, and the Thought Police; and at such moments his heart went out to the lonely, derided heretic on the screen, sole guardian of truth and sanity in a world of lies. And yet the very next instant he was at one with the people about him, and all what is said of Goldstein seemed to him to be true. At those moments his secret loathing of Big Brother, changed into adoration. (Orwell 11)

This demonstrates that the Party still has difficulties in maintaining total control over the thoughts of its subjects (Stewart 130). Moreover, it is at this precise moment that he understands that it is not hatred that he feels towards the dark-haired woman (Julia), but love instead. Therefore, it is a sort of rebellion coming from the two Party members as they face their oppressor through their love affair that would develop later in the novel.

It is up to the Party to reduce its citizens to nothingness, to break them down, to submit them to its own rules. These Minutes emphasize the impossibility to follow one's

own desires, to be mentally independent and conscious of one's state. This session involves both the use of the telescreen and the propagation of Big Brother, the savior, the protector from Goldstein, the rebel and the traitor.

## **2.2. Manipulation through propaganda in *Never Fall Down*:**

In *Never Fall Down*, propaganda also plays an important part in perpetuating Khmer Rouge's control over the masses. Different vehicles and techniques have been used to spread and engrave the dictator's ideology on people's minds, making it easier for the perpetrator to keep a constant eye on them and submit them under its mercy.

### **2.2.1. Angka:**

Like Big Brother, Angka is here to represent the leading power. It is up to the authorities to make use of this figure in order to plant fear in the minds of people and keep them under constant surveillance as "moonface guy", a Khmer Rouge officer, tells Arn and the other captives: "Angka", he says, "is a head with four face[s]. It follow[s] you everywhere" (McCormick 22).

Angka gives and takes, rewards and punishes, feeds and heals just like a "God". Dr. Alexander Laban Hinton, assistant professor of anthropology at Rutgers University-New Jersey, implies that the term Angka may refer to the population as well as to the leadership, which is portrayed as a divine entity that must be worshipped (127). Haing Ngor, a Cambodian intellectual and refugee during Pol Pot's tyrannical rule, stated that "Logically Angka had to be a person or a group of people, but many found it easier to believe that Angka was an all-powerful entity, something like a god" (qtd. in Hinton 127). Ironically, in the atheist society in which religion is banned, the Khmer Rouge took inspiration from the local religious metaphors related to Buddha. Though any religious thought and idolization is forbidden, the authority kept using these metaphors in order to emphasize its influence and attract people to its ideology. By relating this mythical god-like figure to the ancient

civilization of Jayavarman VII (the god-king of the ancient Cambodian civilization of the fifteenth century) and Buddhist logic, the populace will be more subversive and fearful of its divine power. Since no one knew if Angka is a person or an entity, it is therefore impossible to denounce its actions (Marston 108).

Arn cannot understand how this mysterious, god-like figure can be everywhere (McCormick 22). In fact, each one has to watch his doings and even other people's in order to survive. Spying is very common under any dictatorial regime. Nobody can be trusted even one's own children. The same thing is done in the novel. To protect oneself, one has to turn someone else over by incessantly keeping one's eyes open to any misdemeanor or misconduct. Arn is not only watched by the Khmer soldiers but also by another kid from his own camp: "Then one day a boy in my group—this boy, he want[s] the Khmer Rouge to like him and so he work[s] very hard, always first to start, last to quit, big smile all the time—he tells Frog Face I have bad character. He says I'm a faker. He says he counts how many times I go to the bush, more than everyone else, he says" (McCormick 25). By establishing mistrust and suspicion among the individuals, and give the illusion that nobody is spared from the eyes of this "mythical" figure, the Khmer Rouge government is able to cheat people and take hold of them, thus avoiding any revolt from them.

People must be loyal above all to Angka. This also implies that even family should be eradicated, because any close bounds with family members is a sign of individualism, therefore a threat to the newly communist Democratic Kampuchea, which seeks to empower its hierarchy. In order to transfer the love for a parent or a sibling to Angka, the Khmer Rouge have to suppress any familial bound. This is done through eliminating social meetings and private life (Hinton 129). All the citizens have no right to privacy and have to eat and gather in the same place under the watching eyes of the Khmer soldiers. This is also done through the abolition of the concept of parenthood and the adoption of the concept of "Comrade".

Everyone in the camp either a child to his father or a man to his wife or vice versa is ordered to call him/her by comrade instead of his/her proper name, suppressing thus the only thing that makes someone's identity which is his name and his denomination among his/her people (McCormick 16) . In addition, the separation is made complete by taking each member to a specific camp according to his age and sex:

[T]hen the Khmer Rouge organize us again. New work unit, they say, will be men with the men, women with the women, children with the children. Each work unit will go to a different farm. Men to one, women to another. Kid[s] like my age will go to one, kid[s] [like] my little sister Sophea ['s] age will go to another. Kid[s] who are almost adult, like my three big sister [s], they [will] go somewhere else. Kid[s] who are too little to work, like my brother, they will go to school. All families now will be split; parents must give their children to Angka. (McCormick 19)

The glory of Angka is thus revered and made powerful. Family is no longer at the centre. It is Angka who is the supreme and the divine, who must be revered like an eternal, indestructible god.

By using the myth of Angka, the Khmer Rouge are able to intensify their tight control of the population and maintain their authority. People are tamed through fear of an inexistent figure, who despite its ridicule is able to haunt them and direct them. The popular Khmer Rouge saying "Angka has the eyes of a pineapple" (Hinton 129) demonstrates the impossibility of running away from his constant, threatening watch personified in his armed, bull-like soldiers representing the Party.

### **2.2.2. The radio:**

The radio is an important tool for broadcasting information and entertainment. At the beginning of the novel, the radio is a means for entertainment. People use it as a tool to listen to music: "Even the guys who pedal the rickshaw cycle, they tie a tiny radio to the handle-bar and sing for the passenger" (McCormick 7). This emphasizes the importance of this object in the Cambodian community in the city of Battambang. It also makes a contrast

between the happy Cambodia of pre-DK (Democratic Kampuchea) and the bloody Democratic Kampuchea of 1975.

With the coming of the Khmer Rouge as the new leader of the newly proclaimed Democratic Kampuchea, the radio experiences a shift from being an instrument for entertainment to becoming a tool for propagating ideas. They use it to transmit their ideology and spread their lies. In one of the stations, called **Angka Speaking**, the Khmer Rouge fantasize about how Cambodia is full of joyful working peasants in the rice fields and soon the harvest will come and everybody will get dessert (McCormick 49). In fact, people are starving and dying, and hardly if they can get something to eat. Historian Ben Kiernan says that it is very common for the Khmer dictators to broadcast their ideas and publicize their false, distorted picture of the wealthy, resourceful Cambodia and its healthy, joyful peasants. For instance, one of their slogan was; “With water we have rice; with rice we have everything” (190). Alternatively, when in 1977, through a radio broadcast they claimed: “The water is gushing forth. And when there is water the scenery is fresh, life is pleasant, humor is lively, culture is evergreen” (190). However, life is no longer joyful as it is described in the beginning of the first chapter of the novel before the arrival of the new regime. People are portrayed living a simple, peaceful life and dancing to the rhythm of Rock’n’ Roll and traditional Cambodian music (McCormick 7). The Khmer Rouge’s complete transformation and control of the society enables them to manipulate the people as they wish through their annual brainwashing radio broadcast.

Furthermore, as the fighting with the Vietnamese started in the border, the dictators propagate false images of the enemy: “[W]e hear the Vietnamese, they like the devil, that they cut the ear off the people they kill. The ear, maybe also the tongue, and cook little baby for eating them” (McCormick 50). This is done on purpose to make the population hate the Vietnamese and push, if not force, them to fight against them.

From the above, we can deduce that the radio has three main functions in the novel. It moved from being a means for entertainment, to a tool for propagating dictatorial ideas and ideology, to finally a way of exhorting people to react against a supposed enemy.

### **2.2.3. The evening meetings:**

Right from their arrival to the work camps, Arn and his family as well as the rest of the citizens take part in meetings held by the Khmer Rouge leaders every night. These gatherings are supposed to exhort people to the regime's beliefs and submit them to their control by taming them. They can take several hours and no one except the Khmer Rouge leader has the right to speak. Their aim is to educate and "instill revolutionary values in the young. For a regime at war with most of Cambodia's traditional values, this meant that it was necessary to create a gap between the values of the young and the values of the non-revolutionary old" (Bultmann, 45).

It was important to create a disciplined society unpolluted from pre-revolutionary ideas and is not in contact with anyone from the old regime:

This night one Khmer Rouge, a high-ranking guy, he take[s] money from his pocket and rip[s] it into shred. I wake up for this, to see someone so crazy he tear[s] up money. "No need for money now," he says. "No school, no store, no mail, no religion. No thing from the American, from the imperialist. In Cambodia, now it's Year Zero." (McCormick 19)

Therefore, the dictators have to purify the masses from any imperialist, capitalist values, and this can be only done through intensive "educational" sessions. These Take place at night with the chief leader exhorting the populace.

In addition to the campaign of purification of pre-DK (Democratic Kampuchea) ideas, the Party takes the opportunity to present its mythical figure "Angka". "Angka" is idolized and is meant to make people afraid of his power and watchful eyes: "Angka", he says, "sees what inside your heart. The prince, he has two eyes. Angka, as many as a pineapple" (McCormick 19). It is also meant to submit the masses and push them to obey

this unknown supreme figure personified in the ruling party. They are expected to learn to be good revolutionaries through harvesting the land and growing rice. The Khmer Rouge wanted to build an idealistic socialist utopia based on working the land. They believed in the sacredness of work and its major role in educating “deluded subjects into becoming obedient socialists” (Bultmann 45). To achieve this, the armed soldiers initiated the populace into communal gatherings and meals, suppressed family structure and abolished trade and money. Thus, as the propaganda stated: “The spade is your pen, the rice field your paper. [...] Work must be your teacher, but don’t be at all the teacher of work.” (Locard 96). The citizens are taught about the importance of cultivating the rice. Even in the kids camp there are sessions about working the land and digging water canals. Arn and the other kids work all day long using their hands and doing adult work. He works so hard that he finds difficulties in keeping his eyes open at the meetings, which sometimes last more than four hours (McCormick 19).

Later on, these meetings became sessions for self-criticism in which each person has to speak about its bad character. What is supposedly meant by these confessions is to purify people from their bad habits. However, these in fact are tricks to make people confess their real thoughts and beliefs. Once done, the sessions usually end with the execution of the person even if it were an innocent child: “Anyone who acts bad goes for “education.” Education, now it’s not just sleeping in the manure pile. Those kid[s] now, they don’t come back” (McCormick 37). In this manner, the Khmer Rouge are able to keep control of its subjects and hold power for as long as possible. It is only through fear and trick that a small group of people can manipulate a larger one and keep stronger forever.



## **Conclusion:**

Throughout this chapter, we have tried to shed more light on the major role played by propaganda in dictatorial regimes. As we have seen, there is no limit for influencing and keeping the citizens to one's side in order to have total control. The fear of losing power prompts the rulers to do the craziest and the most atrocious acts. These means of propagating their power and supremacy did work, because anybody could be disillusioned and annihilated by these huge posters and deceitful meetings.

When the means of propagating the power of the supreme ruler are not efficient, both the Party and the Khmer Rouge have recourse to harsh ways in order to convert its subjects and maintain power. Thus, the following chapter will focus on the concept of Thoughtcrime and the instances of its occurrence in the two novels. We will also explore the different ways through which thoughtcriminals are being punished.

## **Chapter Three:**

# **Thoughtcrime in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Never Fall Down***

## **Introduction:**

The third and last chapter of this research paper will concentrate on the concept of Thoughtcrime in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Never Fall Down*. We will go through the main aspects of punishment under which the major characters are or may be subjected to as well as other important aspects that touched other secondary characters.

Originally, a famous Orwellian concept, Thoughtcrime is a severe offence done against the law. It is the act of holding ideas and thoughts different from the ideology of the leader. It can be manifested through popular rebellions, or when speaking in public against the hierarchy like what is happening in Russia as militants and journalists are arrested for holding a different view of the politics dominating the society. In a more religious context, this is called heresy. The fact of having a certain vision of life that is opposite to what the whole system is advocating, makes of us ‘thoughtcriminals’ or ‘heretics’ that must be eradicated.

In a dictatorship where the freedom of expression and belief is inexistent, it is impossible to hold a different ideology or approach to life. If it happens that someone expresses his inner beliefs that are contradictory to those of the state, most often his/her fate will result in death. The most common ways of punishment used to discipline a person who threatens the interests of the state may include torture, conversion, or worst of all massive executions. This may also imply the recourse to work camps or concentration camps such as Auschwitz in Poland, a Nazi extermination camp during WWII, in which all sorts of deaths were inflicted upon the Jewish people. They were murdered in the gas chambers or sometimes by firearms. They also perished under medical experimentations. This highlights the ability of the dictator to use extreme means in order to maintain his

position at the top of the hierarchy, thus confirming the famous Machiavellian saying “the end justifies the means”.

When the ways of indoctrination and subversion of the masses to the supreme ideology of the ruler are not efficient, it is necessary then to take measures against opposing figures who threaten the superstructure. Whatever the means might be, the hierarchy must be preserved at the expense of the ordinary people. This is clearly expressed in both novels, as the two dictatorships oppress their citizens through harsh methods of punishment.

Overall, the present chapter will deal with two main methods in each novel. We will go through the incessant suffering of the victims/characters caught for holding a different view or committed an offence against the authorities in order to understand the How and the Why of such behaviour. In the end, we will be able to answer the following question: Have these means succeeded in transforming and converting the Thoughtcriminal?

## **1. Thoughtcrime in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*:**

“Thoughtcrime does not entail death, thoughtcrime is death” (Orwell 22).

The fear of Thoughtcrime is omnipresent throughout the novel. Winston is in constant watch of his behaviour, because any sign of heretical thought could lead him directly to the Thought Police whose main job is to detect Thoughtcriminals. This fear is mainly expressed through his hatred for the dark-haired woman (Julia) whom he believed to be an agent of the Thought Police. In Winston’s mind, this concept is paralleled with death since there is no freedom of intellectual thought and self-expression.

From the writing of a diary to being in a relationship with a woman, Winston Smith owns all the features specific to a thoughtcriminal and a rebel. He undertakes a long

journey from being unconscious to becoming completely conscious of what is happening between the walls of the Party and their secret intentions.

### **1.1. The diary as a forbidden representation of the past:**

From the beginning of the novel, Winston is presented as a thinking creature. He has been a thoughtcriminal all along even for years. He just manages with, at some extent, an efficient manner to hide his thoughts by being an ideal, thoughtless member of the Outer Party on the outside. His unpremeditated act of thinking is his first step to revolution. The next step is to set his thoughts on paper by writing a diary.

The only fact of owning a diary without any word written on it is considered “a compromising possession” (Orwell 6) in itself. Any book is a form of self-expression, therefore a way of affirming one’s “ownlife” or individualism. Winston’s first words on paper demonstrate his revolt as an individual who claims his right for a better treatment of the human race. “All he had to do was to transfer to paper the interminable restless monologue that had been running inside his head, literally for years” (Orwell 7). As he begins to set pen on paper, a flow of memories comes back to him instantly. This urgent need to remember makes of him unlike the other party members the only human being in the apocalyptic world of Oceania. Though dangerous, the act of writing makes him feel relief, and it is satisfactory since he expresses his inner thoughts and beliefs. He begins his diary by describing the three Ministries and their system of governance. Because of his work in the Ministry of Truth or Minitrue, he is aware of the politics surrounding the Party’s quarters as well as their distortion of the truth as far as his profession is concerned. He is among the hundreds of rewriters in the Ministry of Truth that contributes to the falsification of history. That is what will make of him a future rebel.

The Party considers the act of writing a treasonous act, because it entails the use of the human brain and thought. In the Ministry of Truth where Winston works, rewriting history is performed using the Speak-Write (a voice recognition machine that transcribes the speech into words) which is connected to a writing machine. This device not only exempts the rewriter from the task of writing, it also keeps him from using his thoughts.

This great writing apparatus “stands in” for all individual psychic writing machines by absolutely controlling all written traces. As a reflection of the human psyche, it performs the very same functions that the censor does in the ego in order to maintain the integrity of its own power structure. But by forbidding all recourse to the written trace, it annuls the possibility of externalizing and socializing human memory, thus enabling it to perform its mediations for everyone (Peters 128-129).

Preventing people from using their pens and paper is essential in order to avoid the expression of the inner feelings. Considering the diary as an intimate possession of a person in which he keeps his dearest and private life experiences, he, then, will be more absorbed in his private life rather than idolizing Big Brother. Moreover, the fact of writing about one’s private matters is part of remembrance. The diary might be associated with a memory card which stores many useful things we can turn to when needed. Thus in Smith’s workplace, the task of putting words on paper is given to the machine instead of the worker to avoid any form of questioning or thinking that can be harmful to the continuity of the system.

Once the pen is in his hands, Winston finds difficulties in writing with because he is not accustomed to doing so: “Actually he was not used to writing by hand. Apart from very short notes, it was usual to dictate everything into the speak-write which was of course impossible for his present Purpose” (Orwell 6). This also emphasizes the burden of possessing an illegal notebook, which may lead to one’s imprisonment or even worse one’s death. Throughout the novel, Winston is in possession of two literary books. In addition to his diary, he obtains in the following chapters the book of the Brotherhood entitled *THE*

*THEORY AND PRACTICE OF OLIGARCHICAL COLLECTIVISM* By Emmanuel Goldstein, which demonstrates his direct betrayal of the Party.

Winston's first stage of rebellion apart from opening a diary comes as he questions the motives behind the manipulation and the falsification of the past: "I understand How: I do not understand Why" (Orwell 62). No one before has dared to question the Party, yet Winston does. From the beginning, he believes in the power of the "proles" (the proletariat or the working class) to overthrow the government, because they are free from the corrupt influence of the Party: "If there is hope it lies in the proles" (Orwell 5). However, they do not have any interest in politics and they are unconscious of the power they hold in their hands to overthrow the ruling superstructure.

At the end of the first part, Winston experiences a real change. He becomes mature and aware of the politics of the Party and takes a position in accordance with his political views. His rebellion begins in the second part as he entertains an affair with Julia, the dark-haired woman whom he fancied she belongs to the Thought Police. Thus, the diary plays an important part in shaping Winston's political thinking just as Burma did with Orwell.

## **1.2. The punishment of Thoughtcrime:**

Two main methods of punishments are used in the novel to condemn any Thoughtcrime and inculcate Thoughtcriminals with a sense of guilt and behaviour.

### **1.2.1. Vaporization:**

We read about "vaporization" from the beginning of the novel as Winston writes in his diary. This concept is referred to whenever Thoughtcrime is being spoken of. It is the fact of having one's life and existence completely erased from historical records as if he/she has never existed: "People simply disappeared always during the night. Your name was removed from the registers, every record of everything you had ever done was wiped

out, and your one-time existence was denied and then forgotten. You were abolished, annihilated: vaporized was the usual word” (Orwell 15).

In the dystopic world of Oceania, a small unusual thought can be the cause of your vaporization or disappearance if not death. Nobody knows what happens to the ones that are vaporized. All we know according to Winston is that the arrests happen at night. When citizens commit Thoughtcrime, the Party will extract them from their everyday lives and either kill them or place them in a work camp. The Party will then erase every record of their existence in society. Workers at the Ministry of Truth, for example, will edit newspaper articles and birth records so that the vaporized person only exists in the memories of his or her counterparts. Thanks to doublethink, however, they too will begin to forget that the vaporized person ever existed. Smith is fearful of being caught by the Thought Police and imagines what would happen to him if ever he were arrested.

Many cases of vaporization have been mentioned in the novel. The first one has to do with the last leaders of the revolution who survived during the Party’s hold to power, whose names were Jones, Aaronson and Rutherford. After Big Brother took the reins of power, a campaign of clearing up all the persons prominent in the revolution was followed. Among them, were these individuals who were arrested, and vanished for a year but who later reappeared and confessed all kinds of crimes. They were reinstated to the society, but were arrested again for treason and were executed after multiple confessions. Winston once, had the proof of their existence and that all confessions were lies, which was in the form of a photograph in a newspaper article, in his hands while working in the Ministry of Truth. He remembered reflecting about the damage that such an article could bring to the political institution. It emphasizes the tyranny and cruelty the autocracy inflicts upon people like Aaronson and even Winston in the last chapters when he is taken to Miniluv (Newspeak word that stands for the Ministry of Love).



Another character threatened of disappearance is Syme, a Newspeak expert who works on the Eleventh Edition of the Newspeak dictionary. From the beginning, Winston predicts his friend's vaporization, because of his great intellect. By saying that he is trying to suppress the ability to express thoughts of rebellion, Syme unintentionally confirms that language holds the power of revolution. It motivates action and captures individuality, which are seen as threats to the Party's doctrine. That is why the principles of Newspeak lay out the changes to language that the Party seeks to enforce, all of which are directed at suppressing individuality and thoughts of rebellion. Though Syme is a great supporter of the Party, he is vaporized because he knows too much and he might one day disapprove of the system, which is not favorable to them.

Syme had vanished. A morning came, and he was missing from work: a few thoughtless people commented on his absence. On the next day nobody mentioned him. On the third day Winston went into the vestibule of the Records Department to look at the notice-board. One of the notices carried a printed list of the members of the Chess Committee, of whom Syme had been one. It looked almost exactly as it had looked before--nothing had been crossed out--but it was one name shorter. It was enough. Syme had ceased to exist: he had never existed. (Orwell 116)

In just three days, Syme ceased to exist as if he has never worked in the Records Department. Everything concerning him has been erased and destroyed. He no longer exists. He is an "unperson".

As the Party encourages loyalties to its beliefs and trains children to spy and denounce their parents, it assures a better control of its subjects and oppresses their liberties. This is seen when Parsons meets Winston in Miniluv after his daughter denounced him for Thoughtcrime. He was shouting "Down With Big Brother" in his dreams (Orwell 183) even though he was a perfect adherent to the Party. It highlights the perfect measures of surveillance for detecting Thoughtcriminals.

The Party's way of dealing with subversive people is to make them disappear, and subsequently, to remove them from history all together. O'Brien explains the process to

Winston while torturing him: “We shall turn you into gas and pour you into the stratosphere. Nothing will remain of you; not a name in a register, not a memory in a living brain. You will be annihilated in the past as well as in the future. You will never have existed” (Orwell 200). Eventually, the Party vaporizes captured rebels, but not before bringing them under the process of conversion and re-indoctrination.

### **1.2.2. Conversion:**

The second aspect of punishment in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* has to do with the concept of conversion. We meet this concept in the third and last part of the novel when Winston is taken to the Ministry of Love, and is imprisoned in Room 101: “the place where there is no darkness” (Orwell 20). Conversion is defined according to the *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* as “[t]he process of changing or causing something to change from one form, use or system to another” (Turnbull 332). This entails a change from one situation or aspect to another.

Usually when we hear about “conversion”, the first thing that comes into our minds is the change from one religion to another. A convert is often a person who embraces another religion because he no longer believes in the principles of his first faith. This transition from one cult to another needs to go through rituals depending on the religion. In Islam, for example, a person becomes Muslim once he pronounces the Shahada, which is an attestation of faith.

In the novel, conversion aims at eradicating any unorthodox thinking from the psyche and this is done through re-education. In Part III, Winston and Julia are captured by the Thought Police and are taken to the Ministry of Love where they are tortured for breaking the rules. Winston finally becomes acquainted with “the place with no darkness” called Room 101, in which light is never turned off and inside which we cannot recognize the day from the night.

Through the mask of the Brotherhood and the emphasis put on opposition, the Party is able to provide powerful means in order to detect and catch possible opponents (Bound 150). By pushing Winston to join the opposition, O'Brien makes him believe that he is not the only subversive, since there are many other opponents in all Oceania who have the same hatred to the Party as himself. In doing this, he is able to bring Winston under his mercy and throw him to Miniluv to experience his worst fear under the process of political re-education.

During weeks of re-education, O'Brien incessantly keeps telling Winston of the importance of converting the betrayer and forces him to swallow their totalitarian ideology and destroy the thought inside him. In the end, he will be intellectually annihilated and purified from any heretic thought against the autocracy:

We do not destroy the heretic because he resists us: so long as he resists us we never destroy him. We convert him, we capture his inner mind, we reshape him. We burn all evil and all illusion out of him; we bring him over to our side, not in appearance, but genuinely, heart and soul. We make him one of ourselves before we kill him (Orwell 220).

In order to reshape Winston, O'Brien uses all means of torture and subjugation, starting from starvation, punches, threat and intense interrogations to facing his worst fears in the famous Room 101 that is rats. Even though he resists and keeps saying that no matter what they inflict on him, they will never enter his inner soul. They will never penetrate his mind. Yet, the process of conversion arrives at an end and is a total success. In the end, Winston surrenders to Big Brother whom he adores more than anything else and is purified from the symptoms of individualism threatening the interests of the dictatorial enterprise. Thus, "[t]he Party does not even consider any real exchange of ideas with an alternative perspective. Instead it transforms- by force- when necessary- the points of views of its citizens into that of the Party" (Stewart 126).

Winston Smith's conversion is seen according to Peters, an associate professor of English at the university of Southern Maine, as the character's failure to shape himself through his composition of the diary (130). His inability to find an audience in the first Part of the novel and his ambiguity as what to write brings his downfall and the everlasting rule of the Party. If the desire to make the world a better place where the freedom of expression and love co-exist persists in a way the Party deems heretical and contrary to what it stands for, then, the hierarchy has failed to capture the inner soul of the individual (Stewart 141). That is why it is primordial to control the individual's perception of the society so as to make it the same as that of the ruler and keep the power in the hands of the minority elite.

## **2. Thoughtcrime in *Never Fall Down*:**

The four-year reign of the Khmer Rouge was the bloodiest and the most horrific in the whole history of Cambodia. In *Never Fall Down*, punishment is recurrent under the Khmer Rouge's rule. Defying Angka's authority or lamenting about one's situation is considered a crime, which entails in most instances death. People are facing death everyday in the work camps. They do not live; they are trying to survive.

Since the capture of the city of Battambang and the evacuation of the citizens to the countryside, Arn's aunt always keeps telling her brother's children to be good and obedient in order to keep living. When the families become divided and each member is made to go to a specific camp, she advises them to be emotionless: "Be like the grass. Bend low, bend low, then bend lower. The wind blow[s] one way, you bow that way. It blow[s] the other way, you do, too. That is the way to survive" (McCormick 20). Because facial expressions can be seen as a proof of disloyalty and opposition to the state, it is preferable to hide them and to store one's feelings in the mind as the aunt says: "You cry only in your mind" (McCormick 20) for fear for her little protégés.

When rules are not followed and there is opposition to the ruling ideology, the superstructure or the rulers have recourse to different ways of punishment to teach their subjects obedience and submission. In *Never Fall Down*, we distinguish two main methods: chastisement/punishment and executions. We are going, hereafter, to carefully examine these means of punishment.

## **2.1. Chastisement / Punishment:**

Punishment and death make the daily life of Arn Chorn in the work camp as under any other dictatorial system. All the time, he witnesses kids like him starving to death and working incessantly in the fields without a minute rest. In order to survive, he has to show an emotionless, expressionless, “stone face” (McCormick 20) to go with the wave, because if he is caught doing otherwise he would be punished if not killed.

The ways of punishment during the Khmer Rouge’s control vary from whipping, to torture, to starvation, to death. Samnang Shawn Vann, is a Cambodian survivor, who moved to the United States from a refugee camp in Thailand. He was just five years old when the Khmer Rouge took control of Cambodia in 1975. Samnang declares that even the slightest infraction can attract a severe punishment. For instance, whenever he refuses to work, he is severely whipped and obliged to work all day without taking a drop of water (Bartrop 131). Sometimes, he is left to starve up to two days and a half, and is subjected to over-work whenever he is caught sneaking out (131).

Nothing is spared from the eyes of the oppressor. In order to make sure that the citizens follow the intended road, the Khmer Rouge impose a regime of surveillance in which the workers are watched constantly by the armed soldiers. Even dinners were communal. Nobody is left to eat alone for fear of uprising. In addition, soldiers are everywhere watching any misdemeanor: “All of us, we eat together. Long table in a long

hut. Plenty of food. All for sharing. The grandfather guy, he smile, like Buddha. But the soldier, they keep the gun point at us” (McCormick 18).

In addition to having Khmer Rouge soldiers scattered all around the fields, children spies bring information about people getting out from the way. For instance when Arn is caught sneaking out at night, he is denounced by another kid from his camp to the soldiers. He is punished by sleeping in the mango grove for three nights: “Because of my bad character, the Khmer Rouge send me for education. This education, it’s not in school. It’s sleeping three nights in the manure pile. Three nights, very bad smell and always feeling bugs crawling in my clothes. By myself and very scared. Scared of ghost, scared also if I don’t do this thing—lie in the manure—the Khmer Rouge will come and shoot me” (McCormick 25). Arn is then obliged to sleep among decomposed dead bodies by fear of being killed. Anyone who has done something wrong is said to possess a bad character, therefore he should be re-educated, i.e. he should receive a severe punishment.

One has to be careful where to put his feet. Once he is caught he is not going to be spared for sure. Either he would be punished through over-work, starvation and whipping or he would be shot dead, because this is how a traitor must be treated.

## **2.2. Executions:**

What is prominent and most essential in a dictatorship are the campaigns of executions held by the state to get rid of those that entertain a different view of the system. In a regime like that of the Khmer Rouge, it is the daily routine. People are killed every single hour. From their taking of power in 1975 to the end of their reign in 1979, 1.7 million civilians died, most of whom were atrociously murdered.

Once they took control of Battambang where Arn used to live, a campaign of executing officers from the ex- regime began. Arn witnesses the taking over of officers wearing green uniforms symbol of the ex-regime to the airport. What is supposed to be a

meeting with the Prince becomes a bloody intercourse. This scene resembles one of the many stories of survivors who saw their relatives or patriots die in front of their eyes. Leng Huth, a Cambodian woman who survived the atrocities of the regime, recounts the execution of a group of intellectuals and teachers after having been invited to a great feast:

I remember one day in 1977. Thirty people—all teachers, soldiers, doctors and nurses—were all gathered together for a big feast. They took all their utensils and burning wood and had a huge meal with the best foods, like lemongrass, fish soup and roasted beef and fried fish. It [was] all the foods I hadn't seen in two years. The Khmer Rouge fed them very well that night, but I knew they were to disappear the next day, when I went to the water well to fetch water, I found it full with floating bodies. I runaway full of fears, running in silence, afraid someone would hear me and punish me for seeing what I was not supposed to. (Bartrop 134)

It is necessary then to get rid of persons who have received education. Leng Huth had received a good education and worked as a teacher before getting married. She lived in constant fear of being caught because of education. This is understandable as thousands of doctors, teachers and anyone with a degree were killed simply because they represented a danger for the survival of the system. They are conscious people who achieved enough knowledge to rebel against the hierarchy.

Many educated persons in the time pretended to be peasants to avoid being killed. That is what the rich family from Arn's neighborhood did. The daughter no longer wears glasses and squints all the time. Arn is sure that eventually she will be discovered because of her soft hands and her weak eyes from so much book reading. The family was taken away days after (McCormick 18). Even his music teacher who taught him and his friends how to play on the instruments was got rid of.

Apart from intellectuals, minorities also suffered under the grip of the Red Khmer. They were the most affected by the brutality of the regime. Just the fact of being from another community other than the Cambodian Khmer's was considered an offence and a heresy. The Khmer Rouge idealized all that is Khmer. So any external ideology is seen

incompatible with the plans of Democratic Kampuchea. The most important group that perished during the reign of terror was the Vietnamese who were practically exterminated. The Chinese with a death toll of 50%, the Lao 40% and the Muslim Cham 36% are classed just behind (Kiernan 190). This explains why Arn's Chinese friend, named Hong, left the city with his family in the day of the arrival of the Red Khmer (McCormick 10). They knew that their lives would be threatened.

In the work camps, the atrocities are even worse. Kids are shot for being "lazy" and old men are hit by an ax on the back for lamenting or begging for a minute rest:

One old man digging a ditch, he fall[s] down. He cr[ies] and says he's too old for this hard work. A Khmer Rouge come[s] to him, says, "You [are] tired of working? Okay. We take you someplace you can rest." Never again we see that old guy. But the dirt pile, it get[s] bigger all the time. Bigger and worse smell. Like rot. And also like some kind [of] gas. And flies all over. That pile, now it's like mountain. (McCormick 19)

People disappear everyday as they are killed and thrown in the bush where they are tossed in piles that get bigger every day. The penalty for being lazy or the fact of having the "disease of consciousness" (23) as the dictators refer to it is death. It results in being sent to the "lazy village" (23) or the mango grove where hundreds of people are murdered and left to rot and decompose just like waste.

In order to stay alive in such an atmosphere, the one has nothing to do other than to keep silent and follow the rules. A word, a small gesture, or even an emotion can send you to the manure pile. Therefore, Arn must show no emotion and is obliged to go with the rhythm: "I make my eye blank. You show you care, you die. You show fear, you die. You show nothing, maybe you live" (McCormick 27).



**Conclusion:**

Punishment is recurrent in every dictatorial society. It is important to impose order and discipline and this cannot be achieved without the recourse to fear. In a regime of terror, people are ruled through the fear of suffering and death. Thus, silence becomes supreme ruler, which covers the lies of the oppressor who condemns and even suppresses the liberties of the citizens.

In both novels, order is established by threatening the populace of death and punishment. Any means of expression is abolished and nothing is left except to follow the path chosen by the ruler. If someone crosses the limits and opposes the general ideology, he will be the sole responsible of his death, because nobody can be left alive when facing the oppression of the tyrant.

## **General Conclusion**

The desire of any individual is to feel free, healthy and happy. The desire of any totalitarian regime is to prevent such desire to take place. Because the happiness of one is a nightmare to the other, it is then impossible to enjoy one's life. The danger of living under any tyrannical government hinders one's happiness and freedom, and keeps him in constant fear and death.

George Orwell's and Patricia McCormick's approach to totalitarianism emphasizes an important issue that is the blind control of despotic political systems. Through Winston and Arn we see a similar if not the same attitude toward the harsh conditions they encounter in their societies. They are both exposed to the tricky plans of the government and their coarse surveillance.

In both *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Never Fall Down*, we are exposed to the effect of propaganda, which is largely used to advertise about political ideologies and beliefs. During our analysis of the function of propaganda in the novels, we have referred to the most important and used means to which the two dictatorships have recourse. We have also deduced that the real meaning of each tool is to annihilate people's mind in order to keep on the top of the hierarchy and enjoy the feeling of sovereignty. In that, propaganda really worked in terms of assimilating the population. Everyone is in constant contact with these means, which seem to invade their minds and thoughts. Wherever they are or go, propaganda reaches them all the time and controls their psyche. Therefore, we understand that whatever a political leader/ party wants to achieve, he will do anything necessary to avoid anyone interfering between him and his will, even stepping on the backs of his own people. In fictitious Oceania or in real Cambodia, in 1984 or 1975, propaganda proves to be the best way in spreading values (or lies) among individuals and the best through which psychological manipulation can be attained.

Another concept studied in this dissertation is Thoughtcrime. We compared the two novels in terms of detecting Thoughtcrime and the ways that are used to punish its doers. When propaganda fails to give the effect needed to subvert and submit the citizens, and a rebellion is felt among them, the state has to defend itself from a possible coup d'état. This is what Winston wanted in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* to achieve. In such cases, the regime puts its plan B into execution, which consists of inflicting a severe punishment to the rebel if not killing him.

Since we are dealing with totalitarianism and politics, there is no other theory that is better than Marxism, in that it deals with the problem of class struggle. Yet, we relied on the two concepts that form the core of Marxism embodied in the superstructure and the base. Marx referred to these two concepts in his book entitled *The German Ideology* as he explained the role of the state in protecting its interests through the subjugation of the base or the working class. Other important scholars who referred to this struggle are Althusser and Foucault who concentrated on the process of punishment and discipline of the body to fit with the ideals of the system in their respective works *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* and *Discipline and Punish*.

While comparing the two dictatorships, we have shown that wherever there is an extreme totalitarian, idiosyncratic regime, the liberties are non-existents. People are made to believe if it were not for the Kindness and Generosity of the great leader, they would not have been leading such a “peaceful” and “happy” life. By incorporating myths to their lies, the dictators force people to submit to the god-like figure that rules over them. This kind of immortal myth has been illustrated in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in the figure of Big Brother and Angka in *Never Fall Down*. By resorting to myths and legends like those told by the Khmer Rouge about their great leader the so-called “Angka”, they are able to manipulate and destroy people’s lives and intellect. These individuals are unable to react because they are totally

disillusioned and live in constant fear of what this “god” would do to them if ever they cross the lines.

During our analysis of the novels in terms of psychological manipulation and Thoughtcrime, we have mainly relied, for the definition of these two concepts, on both Foucault’s and Althusser’s theories on discipline and punishment. This has helped us to clarify and erase any ambiguities surrounding them. We have also provided the historical context of the novels for a better understanding of the political atmosphere surrounding the events told in the two books. In this way, we have avoided for the reader any confusion or deviation from the line.

While studying the major means of propaganda that are recurrent in the two novels in terms of psychological manipulation, we have seen how the autocracy manipulates its subjects to spread and enforce its ideology. By going through each means, we have remarked its “magic” influence upon the audience when exposed to it. Their state of mind transforms into alienation and even craziness if we refer to the Two Minutes Hate in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. People are made to believe in the righteousness of the system as their savior from outsiders.

The exploration of the concept of Thoughtcrime throughout the last part of our study has led us to look into the fate of the traitors and all those who go against the wind. Holding views opposite to the Party is seen as a great offense that would bring your end. In analyzing the main ways of punishing a Thoughtcriminal, we deduced the extreme severity and inhumanity of the political leader toward the society over which he presides. This demonstrates the real face of the perpetrator who has two sides of the same coin.

In the end, we come to the conclusion that, after all, the famous Machiavellian saying: “the end justifies the means”, might be true, since it confirms the state of bureaucrats and

dictators in their pursuit of power. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as well as in *Never Fall Down*, Winston and Arn found themselves obliged to lay on a Procrustean bed in order to survive, because conformity is what makes the continuity of the totalitarian institution. Therefore, our answer to the question as to what extent the dictators are able to go in order to achieve their purpose is that they are capable of the extreme to reach their ultimate goal, which is supreme power. This extremism is well portrayed in both novels in the different techniques of psychological manipulation and the cruel means of punishment used to convert as well as execute the heretic.

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## Résumé

La présente dissertation explore la manipulation psychologique et le crime de la pensée dans le roman de George Orwell qui s'intitule *1984* et celui de Patricia McCormick, intitulé *Ne Tombe Jamais*. Il se concentre sur les pratiques des régimes dictatoriaux quant à la manipulation et à l'acquisition d'un contrôle total sur la population en utilisant différents moyens pour atteindre leurs objectifs. Grâce à notre étude des moyens de propagande et en les reliant à la manipulation de la psyché dans les deux romans, nous nous sommes efforcés de comprendre le processus principal par lequel le gouvernement trompe et manipule ses citoyens en utilisant la propagande afin de leur faire absorber son idéologie. Nous avons également étudié les principaux aspects de la pensée criminelle dans l'Océanie d'Orwell et le Kampuchea démocratique des Khmers rouges et comment elle est punie. En remettant en question la capacité des deux régimes à maintenir le pouvoir permanent quel que soit le coût, nous avons utilisé la théorie littéraire marxiste en s'appuyant sur les concepts de la superstructure et de la base, ainsi que l'idéologie de Foucault et d'Althusser pour répondre à cette question. Cette théorie nous a énormément aidé à comprendre l'atmosphère politique et la relation entre dominante et dominée dans les deux romans.

**Mots-clés :** manipulation psychologique, crime de la pensée, punition, contrôle, totalitarisme.

## **Abstract:**

The present dissertation explores psychological manipulation and Thoughtcrime in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Patricia McCormick's *Never Fall Down*. It focuses on the practices of dictatorial regimes as to manipulate and acquire total control over the population using different means to reach their goals. Through our study of the means of propaganda and by connecting them to the manipulation of the psyche in both novels, we endeavored to understand the main process through which the government trick and manipulate its citizens using propaganda in order to make them absorb its ideology. We also studied the main aspects of Thoughtcrime in both Orwell's Oceania and the Khmer Rouge's Democratic Kampuchea and how it is punished. In questioning the ability of the two regimes in keeping permanent power whatever the cost, we used Marxist literary theory relying on the concepts of the superstructure and the base and the ideology of Foucault and Althusser to answer this question. This theory helped enormously understand the political atmosphere and the relation between the dominant and the dominated in both novels.

**Keywords:** psychological manipulation, Thoughtcrime, punishment, control, totalitarianism.

## **Résumé :**

La présente dissertation explore la manipulation psychologique et le crime de la pensée dans le roman de George Orwell qui s'intitule *1984* et celui de Patricia McCormick, intitulé *Ne Tombe Jamais*. Il se concentre sur les pratiques des régimes dictatoriaux quant à la manipulation et à l'acquisition d'un contrôle total sur la population en utilisant différents moyens pour atteindre leurs objectifs. Grâce à notre étude des moyens de propagande et en les reliant à la manipulation de la psyché dans les deux romans, nous nous sommes efforcés de comprendre le processus principal par lequel le gouvernement trompe et manipule ses citoyens en utilisant la propagande afin de leur faire absorber son idéologie. Nous avons également étudié les principaux aspects de la pensée criminelle dans l'Océanie d'Orwell et le Kampuchea démocratique des Khmers rouges et comment elle est punie. En remettant en question la capacité des deux régimes à maintenir le pouvoir permanent quel que soit le coût, nous avons utilisé la théorie littéraire marxiste en s'appuyant sur les concepts de la superstructure et de la base, ainsi que l'idéologie de Foucault et d'Althusser pour répondre à cette question. Cette théorie nous a énormément aidé à comprendre l'atmosphère politique et la relation entre dominante et dominée dans les deux romans.

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