

Faculté de philosophie, arts et lettres

**Drawing *Nineteen Eighty-four*'s stifling atmosphere:**

**How some graphic novel adaptations recreate and enhance the atmosphere of *Nineteen Eighty-four* by George Orwell**

Auteur : Camille Van Reeth

Promoteur(s) : Professor Véronique Bragard

Année académique 2022-2023

Master (120) en langues et lettres modernes, orientation générale, finalité sciences et métiers du livre



## Acknowledgements

First, I would like to thank my professor, Véronique Bragard, for her feedback and help during the writing of this dissertation, but also for sharing her passion of literature with her students, which encouraged me to write about this subject.

I need to thank my partner, Malcolm Rose-Zadow who has been my rock for years and believed in me without ever doubting that I could make it. He helped me with each step of the way, while holding my hand. I also want to thank my friends, Léa, Elisa, Clémence, Charlotte, Antoine, Camille, who have been so supportive through all these years, with their kind words and constant motivation. I want to have a special word for Martin, who's been on the same boat as me at the same time. We shared the ride.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without the support of my dad Christopher, his partner Isabelle and my mom, Catherine. They were the first ones to believe in me and they kept doing so until the very end.

## Table of Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i> .....	3
<i>Table of Contents</i> .....	4
<i>Introduction</i> .....	5
<i>I. Nineteen Eighty-four: an instant classic</i> .....	7
<i>II. Graphic novel adaptations: drawing literary classics</i> .....	16
<i>III. The stifling atmosphere at the centre of Nineteen Eighty-four</i> .....	22
<i>IV. Adapting Nineteen Eighty-four in graphic novels</i> .....	30
<i>V. Intertextuality and cultural references as means to enhance the atmosphere</i> .....	34
Derrien and Torregrossa: total use of intertextuality to appeal to the reader .....	35
Pontarolo: Use of cyberpunk and propaganda for contextual clues .....	39
Xavier Coste: References to the modern world to appeal to the reader ..	42
<i>VI. Using Colour to set the atmosphere</i> .....	45
Xavier Coste: deceptive use of three colours.....	46
Pontarolo's use of yellow: recontextualization .....	50
The Golden country and the golden book: Torregrossa and Derrien's paradise in the dark and warning .....	55
<i>VII. Architecture as a means of oppression: Transcending this impact through graphic novels</i> .....	59
Xavier Coste: Brutalism and monumental scale to illustrate power.....	68
Pontarolo: Cyberpunk style to enhance a futuristic vision .....	73
Derrien and Torregrossa: Realism as a faithful tool .....	77
<i>Conclusion</i> .....	82
<i>Bibliography</i> .....	86

## Introduction

“Big Brother is watching you.” This sentence resonates in almost everyone's collective unconscious. It has become an expression often used in everyday life, particularly when talking about the various screens that surround us on a daily basis. Seventy years after its publication, George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-four* still has as much influence on the world as ever. Set in a dystopian post-war London, *Nineteen Eighty-four* recounts the story of Winston, a citizen of Oceania. Oceania is a totalitarian regime with Big Brother at its head.

Orwell's novel is a classic in the genre of dystopian literature. The novel is particularly well known for its very characteristic atmosphere: dark, oppressive and devoid of hope. *Nineteen Eighty-four* uses technology in the service of the regime and constant surveillance. When it was published, the book was ahead of its time and seen as a warning to specific regimes.

Over time, the novel grew in scope, and the initial criticism of totalitarian regimes drifted towards a critique of technology. As historical events unfold, the story always seems to resonate with readers. This is particularly true in a world like ours, where the presence of technology and surveillance are at their most extreme.

The present study aims to analyse how some of these graphic novel adaptations recreate and enhance the initial atmosphere of *Nineteen Eighty-four*. To do so, the corpus comprises three different adaptations: Xavier Coste's, Frédéric Pontarolo's and Jean-Christophe Derrien and Remi Torregrossa's. This dissertation aims to understand what a change of medium brings to the original text and how it is done.

The first chapter of this study explores the reception of Orwell's novel from its publication to nowadays. It will highlight how the subject of the book is always relevant, no matter which historical events are occurring. Orwell's novel is still a best seller to this day, and this chapter will explain the reasons behind it.

Chapter two overviews the theoretical framework needed to realise this study. Therefore, it will focus on the theories and studies on graphic novels and comics. As adapting literary classics into a different medium is a specific process, it is necessary to have a proper framework to allow the analysis of the corpus. Therefore, this chapter will use Baeten's *Adaptation et bande dessinée: Eloge de la fidélité* (2020), which explains the importance of adaptation and what is

considered a good one. Hutcheon's *A Theory of Adaptation* (2013) will also be used. It helps to determine what an adaptation is and, therefore, will allow us to analyse the corpus through that prism. The third chapter is an overview of the different graphic novel adaptations of *Nineteen Eighty-four* that have been published. This chapter develops why the adaptations of Xavier Coste, Frédéric Pontarolo and Jean-Christophe Derrien and Remi Torregrossa have been chosen to create the corpus.

As the main feature of *Nineteen Eighty-four* that is analysed is the atmosphere, it is essential to pinpoint what this atmosphere is and how it is actually created in the initial novel. Therefore, the fourth chapter of this dissertation is focused on the literary techniques used by Orwell to create the stifling atmosphere of the novel. Orwell uses numerous descriptions of the city, the weather, the smells and the technology that give this impression of dirt and imprisonment.

The following chapters focus on the analyses of the corpus through three features that are important in both the graphic novel medium and in *Nineteen Eighty-four*. The fifth chapter tackles the usefulness of using literary conventions and intertextuality in adaptations. The reader is familiar with the codes used by the authors and can easily immerse themselves in a universe like *Nineteen Eighty-four*. Moreover, Orwell's novel is a landmark of science-fiction and dystopian literature that influenced numerous works that followed. Using intertextuality in the adaptations allows one to return to the original work.

The sixth chapter addresses the use of colour in the adaptations. *Nineteen Eighty-four* is described as a dark world in which there is little light or colour. The absence of colours heightens the sense of hopelessness. Moreover, graphic novels are a visual medium that can use colours as symbols or to communicate a message. Therefore, this chapter analyses how the authors combine the two to recreate and enhance the initial atmosphere of the novel.

Finally, the seventh and last chapter tackles the importance of architecture in *Nineteen Eighty-four*. After a first overview of its significance in the original novel and its part in creating the stifling and oppressing atmosphere, the chapter analyses how each graphic novel adaptation appropriates this feature in its own style.

## I. *Nineteen Eighty-four*: an instant classic

### George Orwell's life

Eric Arthur Blair, alias George Orwell, was born in 1903 in India when it was still a British colony. He died in 1950 in London. Orwell was a writer, journalist and essayist clearly influenced by his surroundings. His political views became obvious early on. He used his writing to testify about everything of which he was a witness. He left India early in order to pursue his education in England. During his years in school, he had the chance to have Aldous Huxley as his French teacher for a little while. After his studies in England, his family decided he needed to enrol in the Imperial police in India, as they would not be able to afford to pay his university fees without a scholarship. He worked as an officer in Burma, having many responsibilities at a young age. However, he was quickly considered an outsider by his colleagues as he was not passionate about this life at all. He defined his position as boring. After five and a half years of service, he went back to England due to an unidentified illness. Once he arrived in Cornwall, he decided to resign from the Imperial Police to fully dedicate his life to writing. In 1927, he left for Paris where he mostly worked as a journalist, writing about poverty, politics, and the Spanish civil war. He came back to England after a few years. He then started teaching and continued writing about poverty. In 1936, he left for Spain to fight fascism. He joined the POUM (*Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista*) which was affiliated to the ILP (Independent Labour Party). He mainly fought in Barcelona. The POUM was accused of being allied with fascists by Pro-Soviet Communists, which had a great impact on Orwell who still viewed them as allies at the time. Wounded by a bullet to the throat during a fight in the trenches, George was seen unfit to keep fighting and had to leave the front. He was then accused of high treason and being an agent of the POUM which forced him to flee Spain and return to England in 1938. His time fighting in the Spanish civil war gave him the inspiration for his book *Homage to Catalonia*.

When the Second World War broke out, Orwell tried to enrol again but they did not want him to fight because of his poor health. His wife, Eileen worked in the Censorship Department of the Ministry of Information in London. Orwell still managed to find a way to participate in the war by joining the Home Guard for which he had a socialist vision, as a revolutionary People's Militia. In 1941, he finally obtained real "war work", for the BBC, for which he broadcasted to India to counter the Nazi's propaganda. During his interview for the job, the man who interviewed him wrote:

He accepts absolutely the need for propaganda to be directed by the government and stressed his view that, in wartime, discipline in the execution of government policy was essential. (John Walsh, 2016)

He resigned from his job at the BBC in 1943, two years after he started, to focus on the new novel on which he was working and which eventually became *Animal Farm*. From 1943 to 1945, he also worked as a literary critic for *The Tribune*. In 1945, he published *Animal Farm*, not long after his wife died during surgery. The novel became an instant best seller as it resonated with the post-war climate. In the following years, Orwell mixed journalistic work with the writing of his most famous book: *Nineteen Eighty-four*, published in 1949. The author clearly used his past experiences and his political opinions to write his famous dystopia. Unfortunately, George Orwell was diagnosed with tuberculosis in 1947. His health continued to deteriorate over the years and on the 21<sup>st</sup> of January 1950, the author died because of lung damage due to the disease. Orwell died without knowing how much his work was to impact the world for years to come.

### **Initial reception of *Nineteen Eighty-four***

*Nineteen Eighty-four* was first published in England in 1949. George Orwell wrote it in 1948. That is actually why he chose to set his novel in the year 1984 as he simply flipped the numbers of the year during which he wrote it. By doing so, the year 1984 became epic before it even happened. As soon as the novel was published, it was a commercial success. Though the reception of it was ambivalent, its literary success was undeniable. It was immediately recognized as a significant work of literature.

The novel was also deeply contested when first published. It was either seen as a prophecy and warning of the times to come or it was considered much too bleak. *Nineteen Eighty-four* was published not long after the huge success that was *Animal Farm*. Therefore, the novel started its commercial journey in the shadow of Orwell's previous work, which slowed its larger reception to the general public. As *Animal Farm* was famous for its satirical depiction of the brutal Soviet communism, people were expecting something more or less similar for Orwell's next novel. For this reason, the general academic reception of *Nineteen Eighty-four* was mixed. Far from the comic allegories as in *Animal Farm*, George's most famous dystopia was too somber and anxiety-inducing for what readers were expecting. The story was considered far

too dark and graphic. It was too pessimistic for the time it was published. The depiction of a totalitarian society where individual freedom did not exist anymore, and no one could have an individual thought was not well received by a society coming out of the war.

However, despite this initial response to the novel, more and more people started to develop an interest in the dystopian world suggested by Orwell. One of the explanations for this growing interest was the play created by the BBC for television in 1954. As Dorian Lynskey mentions in his book, *The Ministry of Truth: A Biography of George Orwell's 1984* (2019), the production drew the largest audience since the queen's coronation. The program created a major controversy. Watchers were horrified and shocked by the depiction of violence and graphic sex scenes for a whole two hours of performance. The director, Cartier, even received death threats in the following days. He was personally proud of his production. He explained that the TV medium allowed for a realistic image of Big Brother watching viewers through their television sets, closely resembling the original telescreen from the novel. Despite the scandal that followed the airing of the play on TV, the sales of the novel skyrocketed.

What also helped the novel to become such an influential book this early on was how the public perceived George Orwell. He was seen as a “real” socialist who told the truth. The only representation of a totalitarian regime that Orwell had witnessed was Spain during his participation in the civil war. That did not prevent him from depicting an extremely realistic totalitarian regime and its intricate ways of getting in its people's heads. His work was later confirmed by sociologists. Another reason explaining the wide success of the novel was the fact that it was claimed by every single political party in England. Much to the dismay of Orwell if he had still been around to hear it, even the conservative party claimed to have had the favours of the author:

The Tory Catholic Christopher Hollis and the right-wing libertarians at *The Freeman* each claimed Orwell for their camp, while Conservative MP Charles Curran (formerly the *Evening Standard* journalist who had aggravated Orwell at Cranham) made the ridiculous claim that the novel's effect on the British public “probably had more to do than any other single factor with the Socialist defeat in the 1951 General Election.” One can imagine Orwell's reaction to *that* claim. (Dorian, Lynskey. 2019)

Of course, the novel was condemned by communists who characterized it as an ode to capitalism. They considered it harmful in the line of the Cold War as it pushed people to see this conflict as extremely binary. The anti-communist atmosphere in the world was so strong that pretty soon after its publication, the novel was only seen as a critique of the Russian regime and its failed utopia. The criticism of Nazism was not mentioned much anymore as the reception started to move away from the original context in which it was written.

### **Cold War Era (1950s-1960s)**

As mentioned earlier, the Cold War brought up a very strong anti-communism attitude. Within this context, *Nineteen Eighty-four* served as a warning against the danger of totalitarianism and, most importantly, the dangers of communism. This led to a stronger mixed reception of the book in different parts of the world. Orwell's novel became a symbol of the anti-Soviet struggle present in the West, where the novel was widely read. Many readers, mainly in Europe and the United States, saw in *Nineteen Eighty-four* a warning sign against communism and the dangers of the government having too much power over people's lives. It strongly shaped people's general attitude during the Cold War towards the East. The novel became a best seller in a lot of countries at the time.

In the Soviet Union and other communist countries, the book was banned. Its publication was illegal or discouraged. The governments of these countries saw it as a direct attack on their ideology and their system. Therefore, it was important to the people in power at the time to suppress it. There was a fear that the people would read it and change their own ideas towards the government.

It became clear, very early on, that the book would also be a general symbol of resistance against totalitarianism. Thus, although it was banned in a lot of eastern countries, it still made an impression. The book was sometimes passed, behind closed doors, between people with whom it resonated.

### **The 1960s and 1970s**

The sixties and seventies were an unstable time all around the world. Pinochet just had successfully executed a coup in Chile. The world felt unsteady. Domestic conflicts and civil wars were still going on in multiple parts of the world. In the western part of the world, social battles that had started in the 60s kept making progress. Women started to have more and more

rights and a voice. An economic recession was created by a big oil crisis. Neoliberalism started to rise, with the coming of Margaret Thatcher to power in the UK. The Vietnam war that started in 1955 and lasted until 1975 was contested in the United States. It started a lot of anti-war movement as people felt it was unjustified and a murder machine. It was marked by protests, draft resistance, and acts of civil disobedience. The seventies are also considered to be a decade of great technological and scientific progress. This would modify the way people worked and saw the world in the future. In the United States mainly, but in the entirety of the Western world the counterculture movement was rising which led to a growing distrust of the government and people in power. The main ideas of the counterculture movement were to go against any authoritarian government and their policies. A great anti-nuclear attitude arose. In America, people, mainly young people, were extremely disappointed by the authorities which increased their distrust.

This hostile atmosphere explains the ongoing success of Orwell's book at the time. Multiple incidents happened after which *Nineteen Eighty-four* was referred to and which made its whole universe relevant. For example, the My Lai Massacre that happened in 1968 was a turning point in the Vietnam war. American soldiers entered the village and killed over 500 civilians, among which many women and children. The soldiers committed multiple other atrocities, like rape and torture. The massacre that was first covered up by the military resurfaced in the media with extreme graphic footage. To have televisions inside the home was fairly new at the time and so to see this kind of media inside the home and discover the power of television and mass media was extremely shocking. The news created a general sense of outrage and condemnation from people. This created a distrust of the military and the government policies. Multiple massacres like this happened during the Vietnam war. To justify these methods and appease the citizens, it was said "it was necessary to destroy the village to save the village". This was referred to as an instance of real-life *doublethink* which is one of the methods used in *Nineteen Eighty-four* by the government to control people's minds. Similarly, this resonated with the book's descriptions of propaganda, censorship and control over the media.

Another American scandal that secured *Nineteen Eighty-four* as an important classic that impacted the vocabulary of the youth of the seventies is the Watergate scandal. The Watergate scandal happened in 1972 when burglars were found breaking into the Democratic National Committee (DNC) headquarters at the Watergate complex in Washington. Suspicions arose that President Nixon was involved. Investigation by the media later uncovered a list of illegal

activities, such as wiretapping, break-ins and illegal campaign financing. This scandal had a profound impact on the America society with an on growing paranoia towards the state, government, and authorities. For this reason, it influenced the reception of *Nineteen Eighty-four* at the time, adding even more concepts of the novel in the day-to-day vocabulary such as “Big Brother is watching you”, which refers to an all-seeing, all-controlling government. The book’s portrayal of a dystopian society in which freedom of thought and expression are brutally suppressed helped to fuel a growing sense of scepticism and distrust towards authority, and it inspired many young people to become more politically active and engaged.

By 1973, sales of *Nineteen Eighty-four* had passed one million in the UK and at least ten million in the US. It had become all-purpose shorthand for not just a grim future but also an uncertain present. (Dorian, Lynskey. 2019)

In this quote, Lynskey Dorian explains that *Nineteen Eighty-four's* success could be explained by the recent events. A novel that was science-fiction when it was published, suddenly felt more probable than anyone had thought. The system of surveillance uncovered during the Watergate scandal reminded citizens of the novel.

### **Postmodern era**

In the postmodern era, during the eighties and nineties, the perception of the novel changed. G narratives and metanarratives were being rejected at the time, which led to consider the novel being too binary. However, it was praised for its complex portrayal of language, power, and subjectivity. Therefore, the reception of *Nineteen Eighty-four* during the postmodern era was ambivalent. Many scholars argued the responsibility of the novel in affirming a neoconservative view at the time:

In general, a powerful orthodoxy, the realist view has made *doublethink*, *newspeak*, and *Big Brother* household words and *Nineteen Eighty-four* a virtual primer on communist work, sex, speech, family, art, government, warfare, language, intellectuals, or scholarship. It has justified neoconservative attacks on postmodern theory and feminist, African-American, Marxist, cultural, and multicultural studies, whose specialized fields, technical language, and political values the neoconservatives reduce to vacuous jargon, academic elitism, and intolerant political “correctness.” (Goldstein, Philip. 2000)

On the other hand, the novel was praised for its capacity to show how power is taken advantage of, the way media was controlled, the power of language, etc. In a world in which technology was making progress every day, the warning sent by George Orwell in his novel seemed to become more accurate as time went by.

### **Post-9/11 Era**

The novel regained in success after the terrorist attacks of 9/11. What Orwell was talking about seemed to be real and happening in the modern world. The War on Terror that started after the terrorist attacks of 2001 started a new vague of government surveillance and propaganda that resonated with the novel's characteristics. Orwell's book sounded less like science fiction than like a warning about the future that he had anticipated. In 2001, this so-called dystopia appeared awfully realistic.

The twentieth century could be seen as a race between two versions of man-made Hell - the jackbooted state totalitarianism of Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-four* and the hedonistic ersatz paradise of *Brave New World* [...]. But with the notorious 9/11 World Trade Centre and Pentagon attacks in 2001, all that changed. Now it appears we face the prospect of two contradictory dystopias at once – open markets, closed minds – because state surveillance is back again with a vengeance. (Atwood, Margaret. 2012)

### ***Nineteen Eighty-four* today**

*Nineteen Eighty-four*, a book written 74 years ago, has become incredibly relevant. Every single theme that the novel explores, has some sort of significance today. In the era of fake news and in a world in which technology has such a strong hold, *Nineteen Eighty-four* has lost its association with science fiction. Almost every western household has a *telescreen* in their home. Everyone has a small device that has the ability to listen to them in their pocket. Propaganda in the shape of ads and influencers is everywhere and echoes back to Orwell's novel. There are many reasons why *Nineteen Eighty-four* still matters today. We will highlight three of them.

In 2017, the novel was on top of the charts. Orwell's book became a best seller once more in the United States. At the time, Donald Trump was still president of the USA. He has always been extremely vocal about fake news. Almost every journal or politician trying to criticise him has

been called out as a liar (which reminds us a little of the character of Big Brother, surprisingly enough). There were a lot of rumours that Trump's government used surveillance and distortion of truth during his mandate, notably during the case of the *Russiagate*, in which Trump's government was accused of collusion with Russia, in order to reveal Hillary Clinton's emails. Overall, Trump's mandate can explain *Nineteen Eighty-four*'s relevance today. However, a specific event boosted its sales so much that it became a best seller again. In 2017, the White House press secretary claimed that Donald Trump attracted the largest audience to ever witness an inauguration. This was false and fairly easy to verify. In response to the backlash, Ms. Conway stated that the White House press secretary "gave alternative facts" and did not, in fact, lie. Of course, this reminded people of *doublethink* and *newspeak* which led to a peak in sales of the novel. The concept of doublethink is to believe something and its opposite. It is the ability to believe something that is false.

Covid-19, which appeared in 2019 in China and made its way to the rest of the world at the beginning of 2020, impacted the whole planet very quickly. Thousands of people died in a traumatic way. Governments had to react and be able to keep people from going crazy in front of the fear that the epidemic was causing. Soon after the outburst, entire countries were put in quarantine. Every movement of everyone was checked. Justifications were needed to go outside. Mandatory curfews were put in place. A limited number of social interactions were allowed. People started communicating through small screens inside their houses. Vaccines were not mandatory but "strongly advised". Soon, people received QR codes that allowed them or not to go out with friends. Citizens were frequently tested, and this data was shared through digital devices to warn if a positive case was detected. If one had been confirmed positive, they were called in order to trace every single person they could have been in contact with. Soon these rules became very political and centralised. The real necessity of it was argued. For some people, it was considered abusive and for others, completely justified. The world was completely divided.

In this context, many people were reminded of *Nineteen Eighty-four* by these policies. As a consequence, a hashtag arose on Twitter: *#Covid1984*. On this hashtag, a numerous amount of people was comparing the policies adopted by the government with the policies used in the novel to control the population of Oceania. Not everyone agreed with this opinion and some people considered the comparison to be far-fetched. They mentioned that having a curfew to be able to eradicate a virus was not comparable to the *thought police* and their way of controlling

every single person's beliefs. However, it shows the importance that the novel has in popular culture. As an administrator of "Cerveaux non disponibles" said to *Franceinfo*:

When we use #Covid1984, it goes beyond the novel itself. It is everything that it represents in the collective subconscious: the reduction of our freedoms.<sup>1</sup>

If, *Nineteen Eighty-four* became a best seller again with Covid-19, Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 also played its part. George Orwell's novel became the most downloaded fiction book in Russia. Once more, citizens saw resemblances between fiction and reality. Some see similarities in the tentative of Vladimir Poutine to create a personality cult around himself, exactly as Big Brother is doing in the novel. Russia's president shares other features with the dictator of *Nineteen Eighty-four*, such as the eradication of opposition that he put in place and his use of propaganda through media. Concerning the Ukrainian war, it is not allowed, in Russia, to talk about a war. The terms that are used by officials and the media are "a special military operation"<sup>2</sup>. Officials still affirm that no attack was done on civilians and that any news that say otherwise are completely fabricated. Again, we can see here the themes of *doublethink*, *newspeak* and *thought police* in action in real life.

In conclusion, these examples show how Orwell's novel is still relevant in our societies now. Orwell's vision of technology, which was complete science fiction at the time now seems outdated. In the digital era, everyone has screens, streets are constantly under surveillance and freedom of speech and thinking is constantly threatened. Therefore, it explains the importance to continue studying this classic of literature. People always seem to go back to it to understand and process the events throughout the years thanks to its extremely smart warning on totalitarianism and the possible excess of technology. The reception of *Nineteen Eighty-four* might have evolved since its first publication, but it unquestionably has had an impact on literature, and more widely, on culture like very few other books have in history. It is timeless.

---

<sup>1</sup> Personal translation: « Quand on utilise #Covid1984, c'est au-delà de l'œuvre en elle-même. C'est tout ce qu'elle représente dans l'inconscient collectif : la réduction de nos libertés. »

<sup>2</sup> Fakany, Tamer. *Analysis: The ripples of the war Russia says isn't a war*, AP News, 2022

## II. Graphic novel adaptations: drawing literary classics

Comic books, as well as graphic novels, used to have a bad press. They were thought to be inferior to other forms of art, especially published arts. However, the medium is starting to take a different place in literary fields. The opinion on graphic novels has evolved drastically over time. Original pieces in a wide variety of genres are appearing as well as adaptations of classic novels and classic literary texts as *The Great Gatsby* or *the Constitution of the United States*.

Graphic novels are said to have appeared in the late 1980s, with the so-called “big three”: Moore and Gibbons’s *Watchmen*, Spiegelman’s *Maus*, and Miller’s *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*. The way for these books was paved in the 70s, during which comix were starting to become more serious and less frivolous. Therefore, the success of these three novels was made possible by years of evolution from the public opinion towards comics by adult readers. Up until then, comics were seen as a low-class art and were reserved for children. One can wonder what the difference between a comic book and a graphic novel actually is as the line between these seems somewhat blurry. In their book, *The Graphic Novel: An Introduction*, (2015) Jan Baetens and Hugo Frey try to give a definition to the word.

First, the form used in graphic novels are different than comics. There is a pursuit of a unique style. Though graphic novels use the same system of sequential art than comics, they are also trying to push the limits of it and explore the different rules of it. On a narrative point of view, the graphic novels also tend to leave a much bigger place to the narrator visually and verbally. Secondly, the content of graphic novels is also different from comic books. Graphic novels tried to distinguish themselves from superheroes comics by approaching more serious topics and generally stay in a certain realism (opposed to science-fiction or fantasy). Graphic novels can also be non-fiction, as mentioned above with the *Constitution of the United States*. Then, concerning the publication format, the graphic novel is rarely subject to serialization. Usually, graphic novels will be standalones. They also try to avoid the comic book format or the European BD format. They will usually prefer a format that resemble the classic one used by novels. Finally, the last difference Baetens and Frey talk about concerns the production and diffusion of the graphic novels. They tend to be published by independent publishers and sold by specialized or small bookshops. Baetens and Frey stress the fact that this definition is not a definitive one. It is open to change and not every graphic novel will conform to each rule.

The reception of adaptations of literary classics changed as it became more frequent. Over time, what was considered a good adaptation changed drastically. At the beginning of the emergence of literary classics' adaptations, the works were always criticised. Virginia Woolf used to say that films were a “parasite preying” on literature (Hutcheon, Linda. 2013). The adaptations of any work would be considered inferior, in comparison to the original work but also in general as its own production. For an adaptation to be considered good enough, it had to be extremely faithful to the original text. It could not have a creativity of its own. However, it was soon discussed that adaptations cannot be the exact replica of a work. In her book, *A Theory of Adaptations* (2013), Hutcheon explores how the theory of adaptation has evolved from exact replica to something different. According to her, adaptations are both a product and a process.

As Kukkonen explains in her book *Studying Comics and Graphic Novels* (2013), a criterion often used to assess graphic novel adaptations is their fidelity to the original work. However, this aspect of the theory is controversial. This method lacks nuance and therefore misses on a lot of other criteria that are as important in the analysis of adaptations. Hutcheon criticizes this search of fidelity above anything. She pushes it further by arguing that it should not be a concern. According to her, this obsession over fidelity stems from the idea that adaptations are repetitions and obscures the fact that adaptations can be their own creations. She states: “Adaptation is repetition, repetition without replication” (p.XVI). The reasons behind adapting a novel into another medium can be multiple. Again, Linda Hutcheon says:

And there are manifestly many different possible intentions behind the act of adaptation: the urge to consume and erase the memory of the adapted text or to call it into question is as likely as the desire to pay tribute by copying. (Hutcheon, Linda. 2013, p. 7)

According to Saltzman in her chapter “Novel to Graphic Novel” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Graphic Novel* (2017), graphic novel adaptations allow for a new interest in literary classics and offer different understandings and interpretations of the text. The adaptation adds a new voice to the original text, as the artist/author’s voice is intertwined with the original one. She also states that limiting the adaptation to the original text by trying to stick to it as much as possible misses a world of possibilities. Allowing departures in the graphic novel from the source material opens the reader to other interpretations and rediscovery of the classics.

Nevertheless, we can see in his book *Adaptation et bande dessinée: Éloge de la fidélité* (2020) that Baetens is not as definitive with this belief. He does agree that graphic novel adaptations can be as literary as the original text but, according to him, the best adaptations are, in reality, faithful to the original work with just the right amount of creativity from the graphic artist. According to him, the graphic novel must convey the atmosphere and main idea of the original work. In his article “Adventures in genre!: Rethinking genre through comics/graphic novels”, Thomas argues that the problem of fidelity is not brought up. However, it highlights the importance of the craft itself. As a matter of fact, graphic novels and comics have been considered inferior and of less literary quality for quite a long time. For this reason, adaptations were seen as easy versions of classics for people that could not put in the effort to read the original text. With increasing scholarly interest in graphic novels, this perception has changed. That is the reason why Thomas insists on the craft behind the adaptation of classics in graphic novels. He writes: “the focus of studying graphic novel adaptations of traditional works should include both the craft of the adaptations and how those adaptations conform with and differ from the original texts” (p.193). In the same idea, Hutcheon rejects completely fidelity as a criterion of analysis when working on adaptations. On the contrary, she comes up with three different criteria of her own that will help us analyse our own graphic novel adaptations:

An acknowledged transposition of a recognizable other work or works:  
An adaptation usually is the result of shift in medium or context. It stems from another piece of work by giving it another interpretation. It has to acknowledge the work it comes from, without being a simple copy of it. Hutcheon calls an adaptation as *formal entity or product*.

A creative *and* an interpretive act of appropriation/salvaging:  
Hutcheon calls this the *process of creation*. Any adaptation involves a reinterpretation and its own creation which can be called appropriation or salvaging. Appropriation being a way to give a new meaning to the text whereas salvaging will try to pay tribute to the original work.

An extended intertextual engagement with the adapted work:  
In this case, Hutcheon names this the *process of reception*. The idea behind is that adaptations stem from intertextuality. This leads to different interpretations and receptions of the adaptation if the receptor has seen/read/knowledge of the original work. (Hutcheon, Linda. 2013, p.8-9)

As we are studying here a novel’s adaptations into graphic novels, it is important to talk about transcoding and what it entails. Once again, Linda Hutcheon develops this idea in her book *A Theory of Adaptations* (2013). Even though she specifically talks more about novels adaptations

to films, the theory that she obtained by studying these adaptations can be used to understand the process of adapting novels to graphic novels. When adapting a written text into something from a different medium, it is important that the adapter takes into account the specificities and codes of the new media they are transposing the story into. In the case of novels to graphic novels, although it stays something that is printed and does not become some sort of live performance, the story is still transposed from telling to showing. Therefore, the story is distilled and made shorter. There is less of a need for descriptions as the author can simply show the reader the next movement, as it happens in cinema. However, the graphic novel is positioned in between as there are parts with descriptive text to allow for a better understanding of what is taking place in the action. Sometimes, it is not possible to show in a few panels everything that is happening. In that sense, graphic novels are a sort of hybrid medium between novel and film. In other terms, transcoding takes into account the codes of the new medium and the expectations that the audience has towards this medium. Transcoding is also important for the original work and its audience. When adapting a text from a novel to a graphic novel, it is important to respect the codes of the new medium, as that is what the new audience will be sensitive to. However, the adaptor also needs to respect a series of characteristics from the original work, as that is what the original audience will be expecting, such as characters' specificities, a precise timeline, ...

As mentioned above, adaptations often suppose a change of medium. As adapting a novel into a graphic novel involves transposing a story from telling to showing, that entails multiple changes. Graphic novels, as well as comics<sup>3</sup>, are usually more restrained in terms of length. A lot of the story unfolds inside the drawings panels and does not necessarily need as many descriptions since the actions are shown directly. However, it is still impossible to transpose the entirety of the original work. That means that the adapter must make creative choices in order to decide what to keep and how to keep the core of the original text whilst also removing significant parts of it. As Hutcheon explains in her book (2013), that is part of the *process of creation* which allows for the adaptation to be *a formal entity*.

As Scott McCloud explains in his study *Understanding comics: The Invisible Art* (1994), comics have a vocabulary of their own. It is important for artists to work with the medium they are using. McCloud mentions the importance of words and pictures and their ratio. To give

---

<sup>3</sup> Here, they can be put in the same category as we are talking about the specificities of sequential art and not the specificities of graphic novels themselves.

more weight to one or the other has different results. In the case of an adaptation, it is even more important to find the right balance between the two in order to take complete advantage of the new medium the story is transposed into. In *The System of Comics* (2007), Groensteen highlights the different attributes that need to be taken into account in the analysis of comics. Groensteen mentions the importance of the frames, the strips, the illustration of characters, the page layout, etc. Each of these elements and their complex link are what makes the comics, or here, the graphic novel. Therefore, their analysis is primordial in understanding the whole picture. It will also help understand how the novel is reinterpreted in the new medium. Using codes that are specific to the graphic novel medium allows the adaptor to reinterpret the original work. This is similar to the idea of Jan Baetens in his book *Adaptation et Bandes dessinées : Éloge de la fidélité* (2020). An adaptation can be faithful only by avoiding copying the original work. The distance taken from the original work allows for a reinterpretation and an effective use of the medium to, in the end, recall the original work itself.

To analyse the present corpus effectively, we also need to try and understand the reasons for which a work would be adapted in a different medium. That is even more interesting in our case as six adaptations have been published the same year when no (official) graphic novel adaptations had ever been made before. There has been an increasing amount of adapted works over the years. Hutcheon explains the motive can be multiple.

First, it can be of economic reasons. To work on a best-seller such as *Nineteen Eighty-four* is to assure yourself success in some way. Working on a story that is known to have impacted multiple generations can secure a public when the graphic novel comes out. The publishing industry is known to be keen on avoiding risk, especially when it comes to expensive books such as comics and graphic novels. Therefore, the previous success of the original work definitely impacts the decision to adapt it.

Secondly, the legal constraints are important when adapting a literary piece. To avoid problems with the justice, adapters need to modify the original work enough to avoid prosecutions for plagiarism. In the case of movies or even graphic novels, a lot of the original novel has to be cut off to be able to squeeze it in the new medium which makes it rarer to have enough material for a prosecution. In the case of the present corpus, they were published in 2021, which is more than seventy years after Orwell's death. That puts his work in the public domain and therefore, there are no risks to be persecuted for plagiarism. It also makes the economic aspect of the

adaptation less of a problem as there is no need to pay for the author's rights to adapt his work anymore. Therefore, that can definitely be an explanation for which there were so many adaptations of *Nineteen Eighty-four* the same year.

Thirdly, the cultural capital of the original novel is another reason that can motivate its adaptation. The cultural capital of the original work can secure an audience for when the adaptation is published, which motivates the choice of the adapter. In this case, *Nineteen Eighty-four* has a strong cultural capital. It is considered to be a classic and is still relevant today, which makes it the ideal novel to adapt. Jan Baetens, in *Adaptation et Bande dessinée : Éloge de la fidélité* states that:

It is therefore not surprising that the world of comics adapts literary texts. It is the logical consequence of a double necessity: any story, whatever its original medium, must be able to count on adaptations to ensure its influence and, in some cases, even its survival. And in order to respond to a demand that we know is pressing, all media forms benefit from borrowing all or part of their material from already existing stories, preferably those that have proven to be profitable<sup>4</sup>. (Baetens, Jan. 2020)

Finally, the personal and political motives of the adapter are strong influences to choose what piece of work will be adapted. Therefore, it is always interesting to learn more about the motives of the adapter when reading and analysing an adaptation as it can help us understand their interpretation of the original text. For example, in the case of Xavier Coste's adaptation in our corpus, he explains that it has always been a dream to adapt *Nineteen Eighty-four* in graphic format.<sup>5</sup> To understand the different motives behind an adaptation can allow us to analyse them better and understand the different layers of it.

---

<sup>4</sup> Personal translation : « Que le monde de la bande dessinée adapte des textes littéraires n'a donc rien de surprenant. C'est la conséquence logique d'une double nécessité : tout récit, quel que soit son média d'origine, doit pouvoir compter sur des adaptations pour assurer son rayonnement et dans certains cas jusqu'à son maintien. Et pour répondre à une demande qu'on sait pressante, toute forme médiatique gagne à emprunter tout ou partie de sa matière aux récits déjà existants, de préférence ceux qui se sont avérés profitables. »

<sup>5</sup> <https://france3-regions.blog.francetvinfo.fr/actu-bd-livrejeunesse/2021/01/18/rencontre-avec-xavier-coste-auteur-de-la-magnifique-adaptation-de-1984-chez-sarbacane.html>

### III. The stifling atmosphere at the centre of *Nineteen Eighty-four*

*Nineteen Eighty-four* is a novel in which atmosphere plays a crucial role. George Orwell has succeeded in creating an atmosphere that completely immerses the reader in the world of Oceania. This aspect is crucial in conveying the horror that a totalitarian world creates. As a result, the novel's atmosphere is the most important element to reintegrate into graphic novel adaptations. In order to analyze how the adaptations in our corpus capture the atmosphere of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, it is essential first to identify the atmosphere and how Orwell incorporated it into his novel.

The overall mood of this story is very dark. It is oppressive and imbued with constant tension. A sense of claustrophobia pervades the entire novel. In keeping with the dystopian aspect of this novel, the atmosphere is nightmarish, instilling fear, paranoia and despair in characters and readers alike. Orwell uses various techniques to bring this particular atmosphere to *Nineteen Eighty-four*.

First of all, the government constantly monitors its citizens. Oceania's oppressive atmosphere is set by the constant descriptions of the surveillance that exists to monitor the doings of the inhabitants of Airstrip One. Every location has a telescreen permanently switched on and a camera to watch citizens at work and home. Only Inner Party members have the right to turn it off:

(...) He stopped, turned aside and pressed a switch on the wall. There was a sharp snap. They had stopped. (...)

'You can turn it off!' he said.

'Yes,' said O'Brien, 'we can turn it off. We have that privilege.' (p.113)

This privilege reinforces the apparent difference between Inner Party members and other citizens. This quote highlights Winston's surprise when he realizes that O'Brien has the power to turn off the telescreen in his apartment. His surprise underlines the importance of these devices in the lives of Oceania's inhabitants. Indeed, surveillance is truly constant. There is no escaping the screens that watch them day and night. The lack of respite creates constant paranoia. There is never a moment to relax. The citizen must be permanently in line and not

step out of line. Otherwise, he or she will be directly considered a traitor and unable to escape the thought police. This process creates a feeling of confinement and makes people living in this environment claustrophobic. There is no escape. To add to this feeling of constant surveillance, the government uses everything as a means to an end. This is particularly true of children, who are used as weapons of surveillance from an early age:

(...) 'You're a traitor !' yelled the boy. 'You're a thought criminal! You're a Eurasian spy! I'll shoot you, I'll vaporize you, I'll send you to the salt mines!' Suddenly they were both leaping around him, shouting 'Traitor!' and 'Thought-criminal!', the little girl imitating her brother in every movement. It was somehow slightly frightening, like the gambolling of tiger cubs which will soon grow up into man-eaters. (...)  
(p.16-17)

In this scene, Winston is called by his neighbour to help out in her home. His children rush to accuse him of thoughtcrime. Children are trained and coached from an early age to be entirely under Big Brother's control. They are encouraged to denounce anyone who might be a criminal. As a result, parents are never safe at home. If they can escape the telescreens' surveillance, the children are always there to keep an eye on them. When Winston finds himself in the Ministry of Love, he is joined by his colleague Parsons, whose children have denounced him for whispering "Down with Big Brother" in his sleep. This constant surveillance and lack of security, created by the impossibility of trusting the people one lives with, play an essential role in creating the novel's oppressive atmosphere.

What is more, propaganda is omnipresent throughout the city. On every street corner, it is possible to see a poster with Big Brother's face and the slogan "Big Brother is watching you", a reminder that there is no escape from the surveillance of Big Brother and the thought police. The over-presence of cameras everywhere also reinforces this feeling.

Of course, this constant surveillance is linked to the totalitarian system in which the citizens of Oceania live. The novel's atmosphere is created in particular by all the descriptors Orwell uses to set up the totalitarian government. The Party and Big Brother take centre stage in this dystopian world. There is no public or private space that does not contain the presence of the Party. The Party uses everything to reinforce its power: surveillance, language, propaganda, and rewriting history. There is no room for revolution. Big Brother invades every corner of the

city and every mind. All means are used to reinforce the citizens' terror and their illusion of love for Big Brother. However, what is most significant about Orwell's novel is that it does not just use the terror techniques usually employed by this kind of totalitarian state. They use many other elements to reinforce this atmosphere of oppression and terror. Malcolm R. Thorp (1984) illustrates this well in his article:

On the surface, at least, the methods of terror Ingsoc employs are typical of the ruthless means totalitarian regimes use in the twentieth century. For example, purges and "vaporizations" of internal dissidents are thought to be an essential part of the mechanics of a government which uses such conventional instruments of brutality as truncheons, machine guns, grenades, bombs, rockets, hidden microphones, Dictaphones, two-way television, and police helicopter patrols. In addition, Ingsoc employs the usual methods of mass psychology, such as propaganda broadcasts and Two Minute Hate Drills that are so effectively staged that emotional frenzy momentarily mesmerizes even Winston. However, in *Nineteen Eighty-four*, Orwell emphasizes that the totalitarianism of the future will exceed even the most brutal methods of the past. In *Nineteen Eighty-four*, the state has developed a sophisticated technology that includes not only Memory Holes but also novel-writing machines and surveillance equipment that would seem to imply the use of computerized systems. (p.10)

Indeed, Orwell uses methods never before seen in a dystopian novel like this. Psychology is largely responsible for the atmosphere of terror and oppression that is created. The control of the state is not only physical but also mental. One of the most blatant examples of the techniques used is the concept of "doublethink", found notably in Ingsoc's slogans: "War is peace. Freedom is slavery. Ignorance is strength. Every detail is studied to take total control of citizens. They have to accept and consider as truth one thing and its opposite. This leads to confusion and uncertainty about what is real and what is not. It creates an atmosphere of alienation and despair. It is the same mechanic used for ministry names. The Ministry of Plenty is concerned with rationing citizens' resources. The Ministry of Love punishes and tortures dissidents. The Ministry of Truth, where Winston works, rewrites history.

To know and not to know, to be conscious of complete truthfulness while telling carefully constructed lies, to hold simultaneously two opinions which cancelled out,

knowing them to be contradictory and believing in both of them, to use logic against logic, to repudiate morality while laying claim to it, to believe that democracy was impossible and that the Party was the guardian of democracy to forget whatever it was necessary to forget, then to draw it back into memory again at the moment when it was needed, and then promptly to forget it again: and above all, to apply the same process to the process itself – that was the ultimate subtlety: consciously to induce unconsciousness, and then, once again, to become unconscious of the act of hypnosis you had just performed. Even to understand the word 'doublethink' involved the use of doublethink. (p.24)

With the description of Winston's job, Orwell reinforces this atmosphere of alienation and confusion that citizens suffer. Memory Holes are used to suppress information that runs counter to Big Brother's pronouncements. History is changed, and people are suppressed. This manipulation of history and truth contributes to this feeling of complete insecurity. There is no way to trust anyone, but citizens cannot even trust themselves. They must always control themselves to avoid making mistakes about the latest change in history, and their memory is unreliable. This reinforces the dark, depressing atmosphere.

Moreover, manipulating the truth contributes to the feeling of loneliness and isolation. This, too, is an important aspect of Orwell's novel, reinforcing the dark, depressing atmosphere. From the very start of the novel, the loneliness of the citizens, and Winston in particular, is evident. In this cold, grey world, he is alone. It is possible to glimpse this important feeling in this quote: "He was a lonely ghost uttering a truth that nobody would ever hear." This quote highlights the extent to which Winston feels isolated from the state's power. The impossibility of expressing oneself freely without the risk of being denounced at any moment is an isolating factor totalitarian states use to impose their control even more deeply. There is no way of knowing who can be trusted. Through Winston's eyes, the reader quickly understands that everyone seems completely under Big Brother's control and love. He feels he is the only one with these revolutionary thoughts. He is not allowed to express himself, or he will be vaporized. Love is also forbidden. There is no possibility of building a relationship with anyone. Physical relationships are forbidden too. It is also a technique used by the state to control its citizens. *Nineteen Eighty-four* deals with sexuality in its own way. It is an integral part of the story as the plot is led by the main character's sexual attraction to a woman. In the novel's world, sex is controlled by the government.

Several researchers have highlighted the importance sex has in the control of the population of Oceania. As Dikiciler mentions in her study (2017), sexuality is controlled and used as a tool to control the population. Dikiciler goes further in her analysis by explaining how sex has a double purpose. By associating sex to procreation and suppressing any other side of it, it leads sexual pleasure to be an act of rebellion, in return used by the population as a tool. Monssen Nordström expressed a similar view in his research paper: « Religion, sex and language: three means of governmental control in *Brave New World*, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *The Handmaid's Tale*. » (2008). He also draws attention to the fact that, in addition to the control over the population, the control of sex allows the government to use the pent-up energy caused by sexual frustration towards war goals. As a result, the prohibition of physical intercourse increases not only the citizens' sense of loneliness, but also their aggressiveness. This aggression and loneliness are felt throughout the novel and are used to create the novel's dark, depressing atmosphere. The violence that emerges from the citizens, particularly during the two minutes of hate, is largely responsible for this atmosphere of oppression and violence.

This violence is also evident in the measures taken by the state to reinforce the submissiveness of Oceania's inhabitants. The brutal practices of the regime reinforce this atmosphere of fear and instability. Orwell describes practices used by real-life totalitarian states. One example is the use of vaporization. It is a technique used by many dictators throughout history. The risk of being vaporized hangs over any citizen who does not respect the state's rules and could threaten the dictatorship in place. People disappear from one day to the next, and the remaining citizens must forget their existence and deny ever having known them. This psychological violence is compounded by physical violence. Within the Ministry of Love's walls, prisoners are tortured to be re-educated. This re-education aims to destroy the slightest shred of someone who might rebel against Big Brother and not truly love him. The regime ensures that any revolution is prevented by torturing and brainwashing rebels. To reinforce this dark atmosphere of oppression and fear, Orwell repeatedly describes examples of public punishments and executions that serve to deter deviant behaviour, reinforcing the idea that the regime's watchful eye is everywhere:

And in the general hardening of outlook that set in ... practices which had been long abandoned ... - imprisonment without trial, the use of war prisoners as slaves, public executions, torture to extract confessions, the use of hostages and the

deportation of whole populations  $\neg$  not only became common again but were tolerated and even defended by people who considered themselves enlightened and progressive. (p.134)

This violence on every street corner and for every possible reason reinforces this sense of fear and the dark, oppressive atmosphere of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. What is more, this violence, along with the sense of loneliness the citizens feel, reinforces a feeling of fatality and hopelessness. Throughout the novel, it is suggested that resistance against the Party regime is futile. The characters are confronted with an absence of hope and a feeling of powerlessness in the face of the crushing domination of power. This fatality contributes to the atmosphere of despair and resignation that hangs over the whole book. A discussion between Winston and Julia well represents this sense of fatality:

She did not understand that there was no such thing as happiness, that the only victory lay in the far future, long after you were dead, that from the moment of declaring war on the Party, it was better to think of yourself as a corpse.

'We are the dead,' he said.

'We're not dead yet,' said Julia prosaically.

'Not physically. Six months, a year  $\neg$  five years, conceivably. I am afraid of death. You are young, so presumably you're more afraid of it than I am. Obviously we shall put it off as long as we can. But it makes very little difference. So long as human beings stay human, death and life are the same thing.' (p.89)

In this situation, it is possible to see the despair Winston feels deeply. He has no intention of escaping the thought police and their inquisitive gaze. He knows it is only a matter of time. Thanks to this kind of description, Orwell succeeds in making the reader feel this oppressive atmosphere from which there is no escape. The erasure of the past prevents citizens from seeing a future different from what they know now. There is no way out because no different regime is possible. This inevitability reinforces *Nineteen Eighty-Four's* heavy atmosphere.

Descriptions of the weather and the seasons play an essential role in creating a dark, depressing and oppressive atmosphere. These meticulously crafted descriptions not only serve to evoke climatic conditions but also function as symbolic elements that reinforce the overall atmosphere of the novel. Indeed, the weather and seasons serve as an emotional backdrop, reflecting the

characters' mental state, the nature of Oceania's society and the central theme of total oppression. Right from the start of the novel, Orwell plunges readers into a gloomy world by describing "a bright and cold day in April." This description seems paradoxical, evoking both a cold atmosphere and a clear sky. This reflects the duality inherent in Oceania's society, where contradictory ideas coexist, such as "doublethink".

The final element Orwell uses to immerse readers in a sinister, oppressive dystopian world is the description of the environment. Orwell paints a bleak, dilapidated picture of Oceania's society. He describes grey, lifeless neighbourhoods, austere, oppressive buildings, and a physical environment that reflects the despair and dehumanization of society. This description of the physical environment helps create an atmosphere of sadness and abandonment. The Proles and Members of the Outer Party quarters are described as buildings founded before the era of Big Brother, probably in the 1930s.

Were there always these vistas of rotting nineteenth-century houses, their sides shored up with baulks of timber, their windows patched with cardboard and their roofs with corrugated iron, their crazy garden walls sagging in all directions? And the bombed sites where the plaster dust swirled in the air, and the willow-herb straggled over the heaps of rubble; and the place where the bombs had cleared a larger patch and there had sprung up sordid colonies of wooded dwellings like chicken-houses? (p. 5)

As the quotation points out, the buildings are dilapidated, smell of boiled cabbage and have no warm aspect. They are largely destroyed by the bombs that fall on the city constantly. This is in stark contrast to the monumental state buildings. They are described as immaculately white and pyramid-shaped. These buildings are there as an illustration of Big Brother's power. Citizens feel infinitely small next to the ministries and are reminded of their insignificance. There is no escaping their presence. The four ministries are placed around the city, so it is impossible to escape them. Citizens see them all the time, either outside or from the windows of their homes. This reinforces the sense of confinement that characterizes *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The atmosphere created by this mechanism is oppressive.

Orwell uses various literary techniques to establish and reinforce the atmosphere of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The atmosphere is oppressive, desperate, dirty and dark. The reader is immersed

in this atmosphere throughout the novel, amplifying Winston's experiences along the way, from the start of his rebellion, his love for Julia and his final torture. Orwell's dystopian universe works particularly well thanks to the specific atmosphere he has created throughout the story to convey the despair and suffering caused by a totalitarian regime.

#### IV. Adapting *Nineteen Eighty-four* in graphic novels

As it was mentioned in the previous chapter, *Nineteen Eighty-four* has been quite influential since it was first published. Multiple adaptations were created in the following years of its publication: theatre, movie, music, ... The novel seemed to inspire creators working with a lot of different mediums. However, before 2020, no one had adapted *Nineteen Eighty-four* in the graphic novel form<sup>6</sup>. Therefore, it was surprising when six different publishing houses decided to put out their own graphic novel adaptations of the novel, at the same time.

There are two main reasons for this to happen: first of all, there is a growing interest for adaptations in the graphic novel format. Our modern culture is extremely fond of visual arts with the way its shaped and what it implies. As Jan Baetens mentions it in his book, *Adaptation et bande dessinée : Éloge de la fidélité* (2020) :

In today's media culture, where the boundaries between creation, commerce and technology are increasingly blurred, adaptation, along with serialization, is an essential strategy for any artistic production in the field of storytelling<sup>7</sup>. (Baetens, Jan. 2020, p. 5-6)

Today's audience enjoys easily accessible forms of entertainment and therefore adaptations allow for that kind of product to be available for large audiences. They will ensure a larger public as people who enjoy reading graphic novels and comics will be interested as well as readers from the classic text will be too. Nowadays, publishers are looking for security over originality as it stays an industry that works with money and commercialisation. The other explanation for the sudden explosion in graphic novel adaptations comes from the fact that the novel is now in public domain. In 2020, we celebrated the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Orwell's death which leads to his entire work to fall into the public domain. That means it is not necessary to pay for the rights in order to adapt and work with Orwell's work. It allows publishers to create adaptation of *Nineteen Eighty-four* for a lesser cost. Thus, this explains why six graphic novel adaptations were published the same year. For this thesis's purpose we have decided to work only with

---

<sup>6</sup> Waddell, Nathan (dir.), *The Cambridge Companion to Nineteen Eighty-four*; Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2020.

<sup>7</sup> Personal translation: « Dans la culture médiatique qui est la nôtre et qui braille toujours davantage les frontières entre création, commerce et technologie, l'adaptation s'impose, avec la *sérialisation*, comme une stratégie essentielle de toute production artistique dans le domaine du récit. » (Baetens 2002 : (5-6).

three adaptations to have a manageable corpus to work with. However, it is important to present each of the adaptations and explain why the choice was made to use the three that compose the corpus. Here are the covers of all the adaptations:



- 1) Pontarolo's adaptation, *1984* (2021), is the least faithful adaptation of the four I chose. The end is slightly different than the original novel. The main character, Winston, is black and Julia, the love interest, presents Eurasian traits. Reality and dreams are also blended, which makes it difficult to tell reality, dreams, and memories apart in some panels. The drawings are realistic and the sequences of panels extremely variable. There are many splash pages, some of the images bleed in completely. For the story itself, the author focused a lot more on the love story than the original novel and the author made changes. Emphasis is also put on violence and technology. The latter seems futuristic. Concerning the text, there is a lot of dialogues. Narrative text is also present in a lot of pages.
- 2) Fido Nesti's adaptation is completely different. The drawings are nothing near realistic and are more cartoons like. The story is extremely faithful to the original text. There is actually a lot of narrative text, directly taken from Orwell's novel. The text in this graphic novel plays a big part in the story. The way it is present in the panels is kind of overwhelming and helps transcribing the suffocating atmosphere from the original

work. Therefore, there is a lot of narrative text and dialogues. The author plays with framing and panels. We can find a lot of splash pages, drawings that are broken in different panels, bleed in pages, ... There is also a colour pattern: red, black, blue and yellow. The colours are desaturated which also plays in the bleak atmosphere.

- 3) Concerning Xavier Coste's adaptation, it is also completely different from the others. First of all, the format of the novel itself is square. Even though the story is also pretty faithful to the original one, it doesn't use text to do so. There is some text, narrative and dialogues, but way less than the other three adaptations. The story mostly unfolds itself through the drawings. Again, these differ totally from the other three. The drawings resemble more sketches and are abstract. Thus, the atmosphere of the novel is transcribed through colours and shades. There is a clear colour pattern too. Red fits in with the outside world, no ministries. Yellow appears when Winston is in the Ministry of truth. Blue is used when he is in the Ministry of love. The panels are variable and alternate between multiple panels and slash pages.
- 4) Matyas Namai's adaptation uses a lot of cinematographic framings. It seems made to be looking like a movie. The story is more or less faithful to the original one. However, it can be difficult to understand the story if the reader has not read the original novel. The drawings are extremely realistic. They are black and white, except for some red that is used to accentuate some details in different panels. The panels are variable, alternating between multiple panels and splash pages. The framing can also be variable and be round for example. The atmosphere is transcribed through shades and the cinematography. There is also a clear emphasis on violence.
- 5) Jean-Christophe and Rémi Torregrossa's adaptation follows the tradition of the *ligne claire*. The drawings are in a monochromatic grey, beside some colours that pop up here and there throughout the book. This is the shortest adaptation with only 120 pages. There is a lot of dialogues. The descriptive text is not as present and is written as Winston's inside monologue. The story is faithful to the original text and is filled with pop culture references in its graphism. The panels follow more or less a classic line of comics.
- 6) Sybille Titeux de la Croix and Amazing Ameziane's adaptation is the only one written by women. It is 223 pages long. The colours used are mainly a cold light blue and a dark red. There is a lot of descriptive text that is often written next to the drawings, which leads to a ping pong between the two while reading the book. A lot of propaganda is shown throughout the book with splash pages dedicated to it. The story is faithful to the original text.

For this analysis, Pontarolo, Coste and, Derrien and Torregrossa's adaptations have been chosen. As each of these adaptations were published around the exact same time, that was hardly a criterion used to choose which ones would compose the corpus. They were published in 2021. Therefore, they were all published after Covid-19, *#BlackLivesMatter* and *#MeToo*. Xavier Coste's adaptation includes a certificate of exit as French people needed to go outside during lockdown in 2020. In Pontarolo's version, Winston is black. Thus, these adaptations are contemporary and make them good fits to analyse. The three chosen adaptations have different length going from 120 pages, which is very short to 240 pages, which is closer to the original work. The difference in length is also an interesting feature to analyse further. All three adaptations also have very different styles. Unlike the other adaptations, the three selected take fully advantage of the graphic novel medium. They also are in accordance with what is considered a good adaptation, as seen in the previous chapter.

## V. Intertextuality and cultural references as means to enhance the atmosphere

*Nineteen Eighty-four* is a landmark work of dystopian and science fiction literature that has influenced many subsequent works. These works inspired by Orwell's novel became classics in their own right. These same works inspired others that followed, including the graphic novels that comprise our corpus. So we've come full circle. By referencing other works of literature or film, the authors of these graphic novels use codes that are already familiar to most readers. These codes allow readers to situate the story within a literary (or cinematographic or artistic) genre. They, therefore, enable readers to have some sort of expectation of the work they are reading. By recognising these codes, they largely recognise the universe they are facing. In this way, the references made to other works help to recreate the atmosphere of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by situating readers in a particular genre: science fiction. The various works referred to in these graphic novels deal with similar subjects to Orwell's novel. This is because Orwell's original novel often inspired them.

Literary conventions are recurring elements in literature that are often used to convey particular meanings, themes or ideas. Authors use them to communicate with their audience and reinforce the meaning or atmosphere of their works. They can be used for several reasons.

Firstly, they enable effective communication by acting as a shared language between authors and readers. Authors can effectively convey complex ideas and emotions by using familiar elements, as readers generally understand the connotations associated with these elements.

They are also used to build themes and motifs. These symbols reinforce the central ideas of a story, just as we analysed above with the ministry buildings, which are symbols of Big Brother's power.

Literary codes are generally specific to certain genres or literary styles. In science fiction, in particular, futuristic technology is a characteristic code that recurs almost every time.

What is particularly interesting for our analysis is that literary codes also create an atmosphere or emotions. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the constant repetition of rain throughout the novel helps to create a dark, depressing atmosphere.

Finally, literary codes are often used to establish connections between different works. References to selected codes or motifs can evoke earlier works or other genres, adding layers

of meaning for readers familiar with those references. This is what we observe in our corpus. Intertextuality is highly present. As a result, using these literary codes and references to different previous works makes it possible to recreate the original atmosphere of *Nineteen Eighty-four*, based on different universes that use the same conventions.

### **Derrien and Torregrossa: total use of intertextuality to appeal to the reader**

In the corpus we use for our analysis, this adaptation makes the most use of intertextuality. This graphic novel refers to a vast number of other works. In doing so, the authors use codes familiar to science fiction fans, but not only that, as they refer to classics of the genre known to a broader audience than just science fiction or dystopian enthusiasts. The use of this intertextuality serves to reinforce the atmosphere of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Firstly, because the works from which these references come were inspired by George Orwell's novel, but also because the literary conventions associated with these references and these worlds are also markers of the atmosphere specific to this literary or cinematographic genre. Of the three adaptations in the corpus analysed, Derrien and Torregrossa's adaptation makes the most use of intertextual references.

First of all, the representation of the characters is not insignificant. Big Brother, O'Brien and Goldstein are all drawn, so the reader recognises or feels déjà vu when confronted with the characters.



Fig.1 O'Brien torturing Winston in the Ministry of Love  
© Soleil, Jean-Christophe Derrien et Rémi Torregrossa 2021



Fig.2 President Snow in the movie adaptation of *The Hunger Games*

The figure of O'Brien shown in Fig. 1 is depicted as overweight, with a beard and glasses. He looks almost harmless. According to an interview with the authors, the character of Snow in the film adaptation of *The Hunger Games* directly inspired them (Fig.2). *The Hunger Games* is a trilogy of novels first published in 2008 and written by Suzanne Collins. *The Hunger Games* is a dystopian trilogy. After catastrophic ecological events, America is under a totalitarian regime called "Panem". The country is divided into twelve districts and one region, called the Capitol, which holds all the power. The people living in the Capitol live in opulence. They are supplied by the twelve districts, each with a speciality that it looks after, such as coal, luxury goods, fishing, etc. The first districts are the richest, and the poverty level increases as you go down the districts. Following a revolution caused by District 13 (which has now disappeared as far as the other districts know) long before the time of the story, the Capitol set up an extreme crackdown to punish the other districts and prevent a new rebellion. Every year, the Capitol organises the Hunger Games. Each district must send two citizens to an arena, where the 24 candidates will battle it out until only one is left alive. The trilogy of novels revolves around Katniss Everdeen, a resident of District 12, who will be the source of a revolt in the various districts against the Capitol. At the head of the Capitol is President Snow. He is a manipulative and treacherous character who seeks to destroy Katniss's rebellious spirit to control her.

As it is visible in the two images, the resemblance is striking. The choice to portray O'Brien as similar to President Snow probably stems from the fact that both characters are manipulative and power-hungry. President Snow is in charge of brainwashing Peeta, Katniss's partner, in the third novel of the trilogy. This is similar to Fig. 1, where O'Brien tortures Winston to break his mind and reprogram his brain to love Big Brother.

Moreover, *The Hunger Games* is one of the trilogies that marks the resurgence of dystopian novels. Like *Nineteen Eighty-four*, the state is the enemy. Erwan Morrison (2014) explains in his article that the revival of dystopias whose enemy is the state is mistaken. In our capitalist age, he argues, dystopian literature should attack corporations, which are today's real enemy. However, in the case of our analysis, the fact that it is based on one of the characters from the film adaptation of *The Hunger Games* is not insignificant. The authors' intertextual interplay gives the reader a sense of familiarity, particularly among younger readers who may be more familiar with Suzanne Collins' trilogy than with George Orwell. By using familiar references like this one, the authors help to set the scene. Readers will recognise a feeling of mistrust

towards this friendly-looking character, who makes you want to trust him but who turns out to be a great manipulator.

Secondly, the characters of Goldstein and Big Brother are also based on cult characters from another classic dystopia: *V for Vendetta*. The writers have also confirmed that they drew inspiration for Big Brother from John Hurt playing Adam Sutler. As for Goldstein, he bears a striking resemblance to V's mask, which actually represents Guy Fawkes. *V for Vendetta* is a graphic novel published between 1982 and 1988 and written by Alan Moore and David Lloyd. It's a dystopian universe with many similarities to *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The story takes place in a post-apocalyptic future in England, under the totalitarian regime of the Norsefire party. The reader mainly follows the protagonist V, a mysterious masked man who fights against the oppressive regime using radical methods to incite revolution. There is also Evey Hammond, a young woman rescued from an attack by V, who follows him in his rebellion. The character of Adam Susan, also known as Adam Sutler, plays a crucial role in the story. He is the leader of the Norsefire party and holds absolute power over the government and the population. He is obsessed with control and order, using surveillance, censorship and propaganda to maintain his authority.

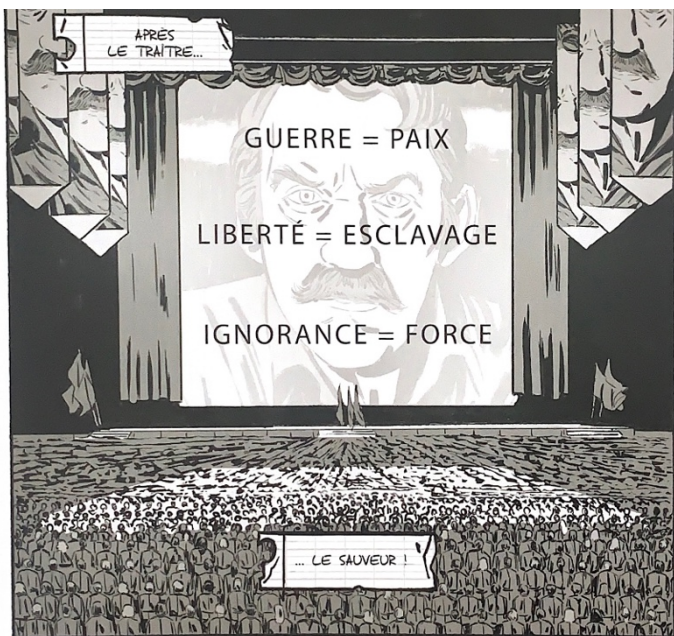


Fig.3 : Big Brother on the telescreen during the two minutes of hate.

© Soleil, Jean-Christophe Derrien et Rémi Torregrossa 2021



Fig.4 : John Hurt as Adam Sutler in the movie adaptation of *V for Vendetta*

Adam Sutler's character has a lot in common with Big Brother. They are both gunmen who use repressive methods to take control of society. In Fig. 3, Big Brother's face appears large on a telescreen with Ingsoc slogans at the end of the two minutes of hate. He is presented as the saviour. His eyes are cold and dark. They show a specific authority. He also has a very recognisable moustache. By comparing Fig. 3 with Fig. 4, it is possible to see the direct resemblance between the two characters. The scene is practically the same. The two dictators are shown large and cold-eyed on a giant screen.

The Goldstein character (Fig. 5) was inspired by V/the Guy Fawkes mask (Fig. 6). In *V for Vendetta*, V is the character who represents rebellion against this authoritarian system. Both are symbols of resistance to the regime that controls this dystopian world.

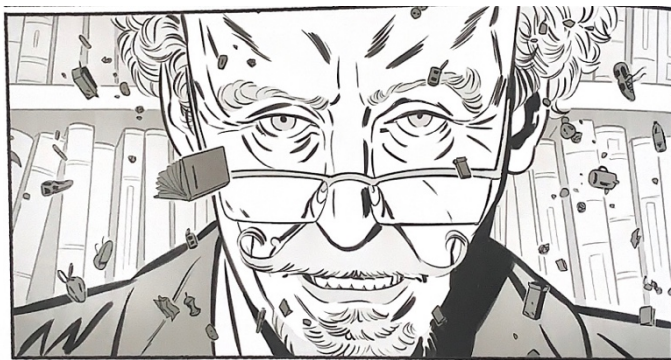


Fig.5: Goldstein on the telescreen during the two minutes of hate.

© Soleil, Jean-Christophe Derrien et Rémi Torregrossa 2021

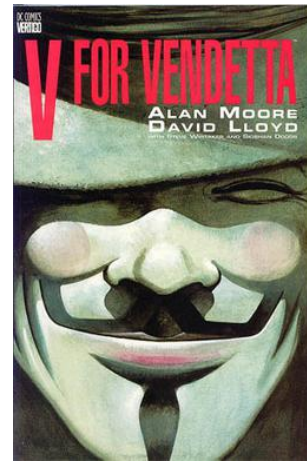


Fig.6: V with the mask of Guy Fawkes in *V for Vendetta*.

Once again, Derrien and Torregrossa have drawn on a classic of the dystopian genre to recreate the world and atmosphere of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. *V for Vendetta* tackles the same themes as *Nineteen Eighty-four* and was greatly influenced by Orwell's original work.

As it will be developed more in-depth in a following chapter, this adaptation is also inspired by the film *Blade Runner*. The Ministry of Truth pyramid is inspired by the pyramid in Ridley Scott's film. The story also takes place in a dystopian future marked by advanced technologies and the quest for meaning. The themes addressed in this film are once again related to those put forward by Orwell when he wrote *Nineteen Eighty-four*.

This adaptation also takes advantage of the dark world of *Nineteen Eighty-four* to refer to the film *Pleasantville*, using a similar mechanism, as we mentioned in the chapter dealing with the representation of atmosphere through the colours used by the different adaptations in our

corpus. The atmosphere of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is dark and depressing, devoid of hope and colour. The authors of this adaptation chose to represent this by drawing in black and white, with significant shades of grey. When Julia and Winston make love for the first time, the world is filled with colour and nature. This mechanism is used in the film *Pleasantville*.

Following this analysis, we can see that the authors extensively use intertextuality to create their own *Nineteen Eighty-four* universe. By using the various references known to the general public, Derrien and Torregrossa draw on a collective knowledge that allows them to immerse readers in an atmosphere very specific to the dystopian world of *Nineteen Eighty-four*. These different references have all been influenced by Orwell's original work. Using them in a graphic novel adaptation brings the circle full circle, reinforcing the dark, oppressive atmosphere typical of the dystopian trend.

### **Pontarolo: Use of cyberpunk and propaganda for contextual clues**

We mentioned in the previous chapters that Pontarolo's adaptation is part of a specific trend in science fiction: cyberpunk. It's a universe that contains its own codes and is very technology-driven. A dark, urban and futuristic aesthetic characterises cyberpunk. This is particularly evident in Fig. 7, where futuristic technology is omnipresent. There are neon lights in the sky, drones and vehicles that seem to have emerged from a completely alien universe. The drawings are very dark and realistic. The urban architecture takes up all the space. This matches the atmosphere of Orwell's original novel. Cyberpunk often occurs in a futuristic universe where technology is omnipresent and a source of control and alienation. This echoes the constant technological surveillance and manipulation present

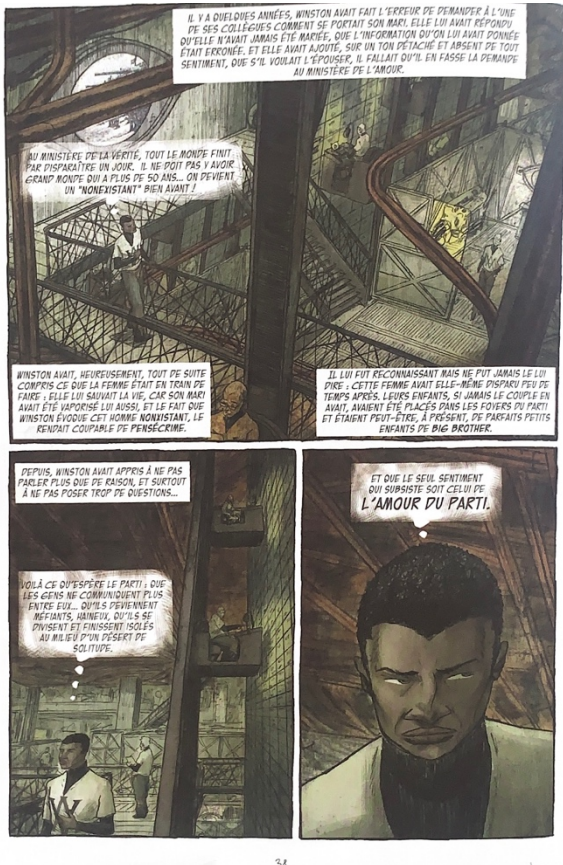


- Fig.7: The pyramid of the Ministry of Truth with drones and neon lights.

© Michel Lafon / Frédéric Pontarolo, 2021

in *Nineteen Eighty-four*, where the telescreens and methods of control are reminiscent of the surveillance technologies of cyberpunk.

Fig. 8 is an extract from the scene where Julia and Winston meet for the first time. Julia tells him at that moment that she loves him. This is a critical moment in Orwell's novel, as it is from here that Winston really begins to rebel against the Party. In comparison, Fig. 9 shows that the



setting is the same. This is a scene from the film *Blade Runner*. *Blade Runner* is a science fiction film released in 1982, based on a novel by Phil K. Dick. The story takes place in a dystopian future in Los Angeles in 2019, where androids called "replicants" are created to do hard labour on alien colonies. When a group of replicants escape and hide out in Los Angeles, "blade runners" are tasked with tracking them down and eliminating them. The setting of the two scenes is similar. These two moments are scenes of tension in their respective worlds. The atmosphere is heavy and full of consequences depending on the actions that are going to be taken. The two protagonists choose whether to stay in the lines or start their rebellion. By referring to this critical moment, Pontarolo uses the reader's knowledge to recreate the atmosphere of oppression and unease that is so characteristic of Orwell's novel.

Fig.8: Winston in the maze of the ministry of Truth, before meeting Julia.

© Michel Lafon / Frédéric Pontarolo, 2021

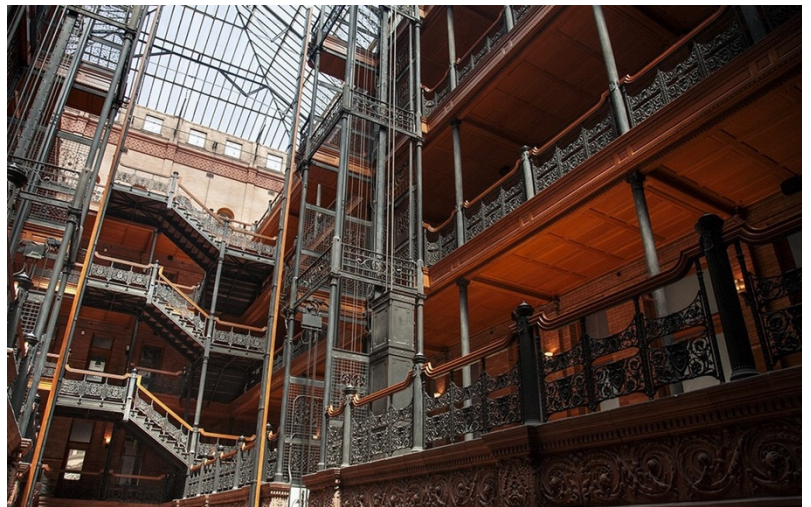


Fig.9: theater scene in *Blade Runner*.

What is more, the codes used are not all strictly literary or cinematographic. Some images or animals can be symbols of other things in the collective unconscious. Propaganda is a field in which it is common to use different symbols. It is a system that was used extensively during the Cold War, which was also considered to be a "war of images". In her article, Lucie Fougeron (2001) explains the importance of symbols in the propaganda at the time:

Posters and illustrated leaflets were published en masse, at a steady pace. They were a major medium for Communist propaganda, providing images of the party's slogans, which were then disseminated throughout the country. In the field of mass communication, popular par excellence, the poster was a privileged medium, the illustrated poster in particular, which immediately caught the eye of passers-by, who were not inclined to read long texts pasted on walls<sup>8</sup>. (p.269)

The image of the octopus is very often used in propaganda. It was used by communist parties to criticise American capitalism (Fig.10). It was also used in anti-communist posters (Fig.11). The octopus, with its eight arms, is depicted as trying to grab everything it can around it and swallow it up. In these posters, it is used to highlight the danger that the various parties represent.



Fig.10: Propaganda against capitalism from the communist party.

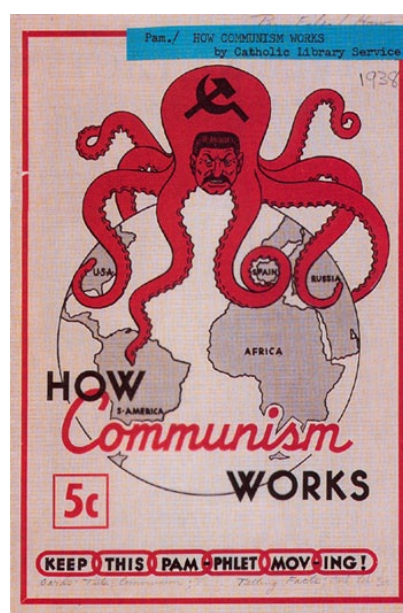


Fig.11: Propaganda against communism by catholic party.



Fig.12: Image of an octopus taking away Winston's family in his memories.  
© Michel Lafon / Frédéric Pontarolo, 2021

<sup>8</sup> Personal translation : Affiches et tracts illustrés sont édités en masse, à un rythme soutenu. Ils constituent un support majeur de la propagande communiste, mettant en image les mots d'ordre lancés par le parti, qui sont ainsi diffusés à travers tout le pays. Dans le domaine de la communication de masse, populaire par excellence, l'affiche est alors un support privilégié, l'affiche illustrée en particulier, qui attire immédiatement l'œil du passant, peu enclin à lire de longs textes collés sur les murs.

Orwell wrote and published *Nineteen Eighty-four* shortly after the Second World War. It strongly critiques totalitarian regimes, particularly Nazism and Stalin's communism. In Fig. 12, we can see that Pontarolo also uses the image of the octopus. In this panel, Winston stands off to the side, watching as a giant octopus grabs and carries away his sister and mother. In the background is an image of Big Brother with the Ingsoc logo and falling bombs. This scene refers to Winston's memory of the disappearance of his mother and sister when he was younger. He feels a deep sense of guilt that he could not help them, as illustrated by his mother's phrase, "Winston, help us". By using the octopus image, Pontarolo uses a symbol present in the collective unconscious. The author uses this reference to reinforce the idea that the party, like an octopus, had come to ransack the world in which Winston used to live, taking his family and everything he knew before the dictatorship was put in place.

Moreover, by referring in his adaptation to an image often used to criticise communism, Pontarolo puts *Nineteen Eighty-four* back into its original context of the time. This links with Orwell's initial criticism when he wrote his novel. In a different and more subtle way than Derrien and Torregrossa's adaptation, these other references anchor the story in a context that speaks to the reader and recreate its atmosphere. The message of a tense context and a dark, oppressive atmosphere reaches the reader through different intertextual and cultural references.

### **Xavier Coste: References to the modern world to appeal to the reader**

In this adaptation, intertextual and cultural references are less present than in the other two adaptations in the corpus. However, there are still two images that we can analyse. In Fig. 13, Winston is tortured by O'Brien in the Ministry of Love. This image is very similar to the image of Evey in *V for Vendetta*, after she has been tortured (Fig. 14). Both characters are unrecognisable. They are emaciated, and their features are drawn. The pain is directly visible on their bodies. It's a powerful image of what torture can do to a person. In Coste's panel, Winston screams out the truth of what he sincerely believes, while O'Brien tries to break his spirit so that he finally accepts that  $2+2=5$ . Winston can't get his mind to believe the lie. In comparison, Evey's image is the opposite. She screams at V that she doesn't want to face reality. The happiness she felt in ignorance is too hard to give up. V then tells her that she has to face reality. In both cases, we are faced with two characters who have undergone intense physical and psychological torture and find themselves forced by a third party to abandon an entire thought system. By using the same graphic style as *V for Vendetta* in this particular scene, Coste

uses an intertextual reference to recreate the atmosphere of torture and the sense of loss of self that is very specific to both dystopias.



Fig.13: Winston being tortured in the Ministry of Love.  
© Sarbacane / Xavier Coste, 2021



Fig.14: Evey screaming at V after being tortured.

In addition, at the beginning of the novel, Xavier Coste draws an exit permit for Winston Smith (Fig. 15). In an interview, the author explains that this drawing was inspired by the exit permits that were required in France during the COVID-19 lockdown. The author, who was in the middle of creating his adaptation at the time, explained that this element fitted in perfectly with the world of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. During the COVID-19 epidemic, people were locked up in their homes except for work. Surveillance was constant. There was a curfew. Xavier Coste's use of exit permits anchors his adaptation to today's world. He makes a link between the totalitarian world of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, where every move is scrutinised, and citizens are held to account for every action they take. By referencing current events, the author gives the reader a sense of the atmosphere in which the novel is set. From the book's very first page, readers know what to expect from the following story.



Fig.15: drawing of an exit permit for Winston Smith.  
© Sarbacane / Xavier Coste, 2021

In conclusion, each adaptation references other works in the dystopian genre or cultural references that allow readers to position themselves in relation to the story they are reading and immerse themselves in a specific atmosphere. These references help to recreate the original atmosphere of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* because they use similar mechanics or are taken from works inspired by Orwell's original novel. The reader's knowledge of the various literary conventions makes it easier for them to immerse themselves in and recognise *Nineteen Eighty-four's* oppressive, dark atmosphere.

## VI. Using Colour to set the atmosphere

As said before, Orwell's novel is a classic example of a totalitarian system. Throughout the book, the author conveys an uneasy feeling of surveillance, imprisonment, fatality, and revolt. Therefore, the adaptations' challenge was transcribing and translating that original atmosphere. Working with a graphic medium, one instrument that the adapters can use is colours.

It is complicated to discuss colours in comics as it is an important subject that has not been studied much. Jan Baetens, in his article "Black and White to Color and Back: What Does It Mean to (Not) Use Colors?" (2011), explains that this absence can be understood for two reasons. First, it has always been and still is more expensive to produce a coloured book. Therefore, smaller publishing houses or less-known authors would not have the possibility to publish their work in colours. Whereas more prominent publishers would have easy access to colours and sometimes even force their authors to add colours to their productions. However, Baetens insists that this reason is not satisfying enough to justify the lack of study on (the absence of) colours in comics and graphic novels. According to him, two types of obstacles to it would be ideological and methodological. The ideological barrier would come from the idea that graphic novels, supposedly the more distinguished form of sequential art, tend to be in black and white. Thus, this leads to scholars and theorists being "colour-blind" and tend to ignore that aspect of comics and graphic novels, as the latter is spontaneously associated with black and white. The other obstacle, Jan Baetens explains, is methodological. Comics and graphic novel theories are only now starting to flourish. That means that the scholars who write these theories are usually scholars from other fields, and they do not have any other matter to base themselves on:

The lack of any previous "medium-specific" theory has been dramatically significant in comics theory, which is still struggling to find its own voice and to free itself from the influences of both literary theory and film studies. (Baetens, Jan. 2011, p.113)

These reasons explain the lack of theory on colours in comics. Each of the adaptations that have been published has a very different approach to colours. The authors use various techniques and symbols to convey meaning. Each adaptation has tried to recreate Orwell's universe from monochromatic to polychromatic, full of colours or black and white. The adaptations that form

the corpus adopted radically different techniques when it came to colouring Orwell's novel. It is challenging to analyse the different colours that are used since every author chooses a different approach and symbols in their work. They work with their own lens shaped by their experiences and culture. However, it is possible to interpret their different artistic choices by studying the patterns and knowing the original novel they are adapting.

### **Xavier Coste: deceptive use of three colours**

Xavier Coste's adaptation uses yellow, blue, burgundy, and bright red. The colours were added *a posteriori* numerically to the hand-drawn drawings. The artist is using a pattern with these colours that is extremely visible. When the story unfolds inside the Ministry of Truth, where Winston works, the drawings are a bright yellow. When Winston is trapped inside the prison of the Ministry of Love or when there is violence, the pages adopt a light blue with much black in contrast. Outside of work or during the intimacy scenes, each page is a deep burgundy. And finally, in the pages in which Winston adores Big Brother and does not have control of his mind anymore, there is a bright, almost orange-red. This pattern can be seen in the following pictures.



The colours chosen for this adaptation are most definitely not random. *Nineteen Eighty-four* is a story of propaganda and the use of mental manipulation by people in power over citizens. The original novel was written following the war as a criticism of Nazism and the communism of the USSR. The book dramatically inspires itself from Stalin's system. Despite his modernised approach to the novel, Xavier Coste includes this in his adaptation to keep the novel's original atmosphere and context. Indeed, the author uses colours, as visible in the following pictures, that are directly linked to the USSR propaganda: blue, yellow, and of course, red.



The hammer and sickle, which is yellow on the communist flag, represent work. That echoes Coste's choice to represent the Ministry of Truth, Winston's place of work, in yellow. Moreover, the yellow colour that Coste uses has a brightness that resembles a flashlight. It gives the impression that the characters are under scrutiny, exposed to the lights of cameras.

The blue colour is used for all the scenes that happen in the Ministry of Love, in which Winston is tortured into loving and believing Big Brother. The blue is a cold colour often associated with feelings of despair and loss of hope. In English, it is used in some expressions to reference feelings of depression, such as "I'm feeling blue", which means "to feel sad". When Winston is tortured in room 101, he loses all hope and cannot tell how long he has been there or how long he will stay. The colour blue intensifies this sense of lost hope.

Bright red was used a lot in propaganda and is associated with power. In posters worshipping Hitler, Stalin, and Lenin, ... bright red is often used. Therefore, it makes sense that Xavier Coste chose that colour for the end of the book or the posters in which Big Brother is prominent. In the end, Winston has lost and admits to loving Big Brother; therefore, his entire world adopts the colour of worship. Red is also associated with the proletariat, partly because of the communist flag. For this reason, Coste's choice to present the parts of the story that occur among the proles in a deep burgundy red is coherent.

Moreover, they are the three primary colours: blue, yellow and red. Those are the primary colours that have been used in publishing, and especially in comics, according to Scott McCloud in his book *Understanding Comics*. As said above, the graphic novel follows a discernible pattern. Therefore, as soon as the reader flips to the next page, he knows in which situation the main character is. Without even reading the page or looking clearly at the drawings, the reader can tell who should be in the scene, why and how the main character will act at that moment. In *Nineteen Eighty-four*, the characters are constantly being watched. They

are either in front of their *telescreen*, with co-workers or in front of cameras. Throughout the story, Winston finds some scarce places where he can afford to relax his behaviour a little. That is the case when he spends time with Julia outside the city, during their first meeting, for example. Therefore, when the reader flips a page and immediately notices the bright yellow all over the drawings, they know without needing a context explanation that co-workers will surround Winston and therefore not act in adequation with his thoughts as he cannot be discovered as a traitor at work.

This system of patterns that offers scenic cues also serves to set up *Nineteen Eighty-four*'s unstable atmosphere. On multiple occasions, Coste disrupts the initial pattern, which betrays the reader's trust. As said before, the intimacy scenes are a deep burgundy. The pages adopt the dark and warm colour whenever Winston is outside work, at home or with Julia. The reader gets used to that system and understands it fast. Therefore, a form of trust in the system from the reader appears early in the reading process. However, as we know, *Nineteen Eighty-four* happens in a world of terror and instability. No one is safe from Big Brother and can be accused of a thought crime at any point. Each citizen is always being watched, and there is no possibility to escape it.



Fig. 16: Julia and Winston getting caught in the apartment

© Sarbacane / Xavier Coste, 2021

Nonetheless, the original book manages to put the reader in a particular stage of trust towards Julia and Winston's relationship. They seem to find ways to escape and create intimacy in the small apartment they rent outside the inner city. They also meet with O'Brien without getting caught, or so the reader thinks at first. Orwell manages to create an atmosphere of trust, even though he is very clear from the beginning that it is impossible to have any freedom in *Airstrip One*.

Thanks to his colour system, Xavier Coste succeeds in doing so too. As previously mentioned, the reader believes in the pattern early on. Burgundy is the synonym for intimacy and more freedom. In Figure 16, Winston and Julia

are in the apartment, reading Goldstein's book, sharing a moment of affection in confidence.

As the pattern of colours calls for, the colour is a deep burgundy. Suddenly, the thought police burst the bubble, and the violence starts. Julia is still wearing only her bra when a gun is pointed at her. Xavier Coste decides to keep the same deep burgundy for that scene, disrupting the initial pattern. That intensifies that idea of instability as the reader realises they cannot trust the pattern as they thought they could.

The pattern is disrupted another time, in a more subtle way, at the beginning of the novel. In Figure 17, the page is yellow, representing Winston's workplace, the Ministry of Truth. In this particular scene, the pattern is disrupted once more. Julia and Winston meet for the first time. At this moment, Julia slides a note to Winston in which she wrote, "I love you". This is a moment of intimacy. According to the pattern, the yellow indicates no room for intimacy as the characters are scrutinised. However, the note exchange is a moment of intimacy that the reader would not have been able to anticipate. Once more, Xavier Coste uses the system of colour he put in place to unsettle the reader and create this feeling of uncertainty typical of the novel.



Fig. 17: Julia and Winston's meeting in the Ministry of Truth  
© Sarbacane / Xavier Coste, 2021



Fig. 18: Winston realizes he loves Big Brother  
© Sarbacane / Xavier Coste, 2021

The last instance of disruption in the pattern occurs at the end of the novel. After being tortured in the Ministry of Love, Winston was successfully brainwashed into loving Big Brother. The different panels that follow his stay at the Ministry are bright red (Fig. 18). Since the beginning of the novel, the colour red has represented intimacy and an environment in which citizens seem to be more free of Big Brother. However, the colour red is now used to express the love that Winston feels for Big Brother. Nonetheless, this red is different. It has some artificial qualities to it. This gives off the idea that the love

Winston feels for Big Brother is not real. It is created by torture, and at the same time, it is more intense than the love he could feel before.

Therefore, the author moves away from the original descriptions of colours in Orwell's novel. Initially, the colours are described as bleak and dark. Everything is grey beside the Golden Country that Winston dreams about. Xavier Coste decided not to follow these descriptions and create a pattern of his own, to enhance the unsettling atmosphere of *Nineteen Eighty-four* by disrupting it multiple times.

### **Pontarolo's use of yellow: recontextualization**

This adaptation has chosen a completely different approach than Xavier Coste's. In this version, Pontarolo uses colours as dim and bleak as possible. Colours do not seem to be visible in Oceania. That perfectly matches the original book, as Orwell often describes the atmosphere as cold and grey throughout the novel:

Outside, even through the shut windowpane, the world looked cold. Down in the street little eddies of wind were whirling dust and torn paper into spirals, and though the sun was shining and the sky a harsh blue, there seemed to be no color in anything except the posters that were plastered everywhere. (5)

Therefore, this adaptation is polychromatic, but the colours are desaturated. There are no bright colours. It is a mix of blue, red, grey, and black, ... It gives the entire story an impression of dirt and dust. Pontarolo's style is cyberpunk. This movement is often used to represent dystopias as it is grim and futuristic. The colours in this drawing style are usually desaturated to enhance the impression of dirt and darkness. However, Pontarolo does use some colours that stand out in specific settings. For the scene in which Pontarolo introduces the Ministry of Love, he uses blue to colour the pages (Fig. 19). It is an extremely pale blue. It is icy. The entire room feels cold. In the original novel, Orwell mentions that the Ministry of Love has bright lights turned on all the time:

In this place, he knew instinctively, the lights would never be turned out. It was the place with no darkness: he saw now why O'Brien had seemed to recognize the allusion. (280)

The allusion to the “place with no darkness” was done multiple times in the original novel. At first, Winston thought it referred to some place where he would be free from Big Brother's totalitarian regime. Then, he realised it was a reference to the Ministry of Love, as the lights are never turned off in these torture rooms. The use of icy blue accentuates this statement and illustrates the illusion of hospital-like artificial light. That is a technique used in other graphic novels, as Jan Baetens says in his article “Black and White to Color and Back: What Does It Mean to (Not) Use Colors?” (2011). In Daniel Clowes's *Ghost World* (2001), the author uses the same technique by colouring the pages a special light blue to represent the streetlights of



Fig. 19: Winston in the Ministry of Love  
© Michel Lafon / Frédéric Pontarolo, 2021

Chicago, giving this interesting atmosphere to the city and the novel.

Another detail that stands out in the desaturated colours is Julia's red anti-sex belt, as seen in



Fig. 20: Julia and Winston's sex scene  
© Michel Lafon / Frédéric Pontarolo, 2021

Figure 20. It is drawn brighter in the scene when she takes her clothes off when they meet for the first time and have sex, as a rebellious act against the party. The belt stands out more firmly against her surroundings' bleak colours and overalls. The use of a brighter red can be justified to underline the dichotomy between her belt, which is a symbol of the party's control over its citizens by forbidding sex and intimacy, and the act of taking off her clothes to engage in sexual relations with a member of the party. In this case, colour is used to pinpoint the over-presence of Big Brother's control and show how it is

everywhere and in everything. The belt stays in the background even though she took it off. There is no way to escape the surveillance of the Party.

Red is also used to illustrate the anger in the two minutes of hate at the beginning of the novel (Fig. 21). Pontarolo starts his book with bleak colours to create the original atmosphere of Orwell's novel directly. Everything is dimmed. There is no space for individual thinking. It does not seem possible to have any other feeling than emptiness or depression in a world without colour. Then suddenly, the two minutes of hate happen, and the entire pages are coloured in red. Red is a colour associated with anger and violence, and blood. In this scene, Pontarolo uses it to accentuate it and contrasts it with the rest of the novel, which is more saturated. The red the author uses stays dimmed and cannot be considered bright *per se*. However, it is more accentuated than the other colours used throughout the book. By adding this more brilliant colour for the two minutes of hate scene, Pontarolo intensifies the feelings of hatred and anger that take over the characters, especially Winston. The sudden change in colour highlights the idea of being controlled by this feeling of violence and the loss of identity that can happen when surrounded by a socially cohesive group.



Fig. 21: The two minutes of hate  
© Michel Lafon / Frédéric Pontarolo, 2021

As the precedent chapter mentions, Pontarolo uses different graphic techniques to recontextualise *Nineteen Eighty-four*. Winston appears in yellow multiple times throughout the story. Outside, he is wearing a raincoat that is a bright yellow. There have been a lot of different symbols attributed to yellow. In history, yellow has been associated with the star of David. During World War II, Germany was controlled by the Nazis regime with Hitler at the head of it, which is one of the totalitarian regimes and protagonists that Orwell used as an inspiration for *Nineteen Eighty-four*. Nazis are at the root of the Jewish genocide that happened during World War II. During that time, Jewish people were persecuted and killed for being Jewish. The Shoah was a well-oiled machine with an almost automatic system. To achieve their aims, the Nazis set up a plan with exact stages that were implemented very early in the process. One of the first steps was to appropriate the Star of David. This star was used to represent the Jewish religion. In 1939, the Nazis claimed it to create a badge for all Jewish people to wear, which began the process of identifying Jews. Yellow had already been associated with Jews long before the Nazis intervened, simply using a system that existed before them. From the Middle Ages onwards, yellow became the colour of infamy and betrayal because it was associated with

the "perfidious Jews" and Judas' betrayal of Jesus. This association was made because, at the time, Jews already had to wear a distinctive sign. In France, this was a yellow roundel. Therefore, the Nazis' appropriation of the Star of David to create the yellow star took advantage of a symbolic code already in place for a long time. This star was worn by Jewish people in Europe between 1939 and 1945. It made them more easily identifiable as enemies of the system the Nazis were trying to create.

In Pontarolo's adaptation, Winston wears a bright yellow raincoat when he is on the street (Fig. 22). He is the only character wearing this outfit and, as such, stands out very clearly against the rest of the citizens and the town, which are all depicted in very drab colours. By representing him this way, Winston is directly perceived as different. He is identifiable, apart. In Orwell's story, Winston is also presented as an enemy of the system whose disturbing thoughts justify his eradication. Yellow is the colour of crime, and in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Winston commits thought crimes and more throughout the book.



Fig. 22: Winston in the crowd after meeting with O'Brien

© Michel Lafon / Frédéric Pontarolo, 2021

Moreover, a yellow coat is visible in a crowd of people wearing black clothes. In Fig. 25, light seems to shine on Winston, making him stand out. Moreover, he seems lively compared to the people surrounding him, who look lifeless. Winston believes in revolution and the possibility of breaking free from this world run by Big Brother. These thoughts are visible on his face. Where yellow can look like it emanates from Winston's hope to change the world, it is more likely that it is the lights from the cameras and flying machines that watch the citizens at all times. Winston stands out, and Big Brother sees it.

## The Golden country and the golden book: Torregrossa and Derrien's paradise in the dark and warning

Torregrossa and Derrien's adaptation is drawn in black and white. There are little apparitions of colours at precise moments during the story. This adds meaning to the scenes or objects highlighted by colours, in contrast to the black-and-white world presented.

The absence of colour helps put in place the grey atmosphere of *Nineteen Eighty-four*, as it is an essential aspect of the story and helps understand the mindset in which Winston is. Nothing has colours in Airstrip One. Everything is depressing and dark, as can be. There is no space for love or happiness. That is why Torregrossa chose to represent his idea of *Nineteen Eighty-four* in black and white. Another reason for this choice of black and white might be a desire to stay faithful to the original novel and the time in which it was published. It might also be a desire to stay close to the original movie of 1956, as only a few visual versions of the novel were given to the public between the film and the graphic novels.

Colours are still present in this adaptation. There are two striking appearances of colours in the entire novel: the love scene with Julia, the first time they meet and Goldstein's book. The latter appears multiple times in different frames of the story. The book is painted yellow (Fig. 23). As explained above, yellow is the colour of treason. Winston believes that the book was written by Goldstein, leader of the Brotherhood, a revolutionary underground organisation to fight Big Brother and his system. When O'Brien invites Winston and Julia to join the Brotherhood, they commit fully to the cause. To understand the system in which they live and fight it, they must read Goldstein's book. However, we learn later that the book is a scam that was actually written by O'Brien to blindsight Winston. It is a decoy that will be used to crush Winston's spirit. Therefore, as a reader discovering *Nineteen Eighty-four*, we might first be tempted to see Goldstein's book as the light in the dark. We want to trust it as the tool that will help the main character obtain, first, his freedom of mind by understanding the system and then his physical freedom by giving him the tools to fight said system. However, as we have already analysed with Pontarolo's adaptation, yellow can also be a colour of treason. Whereas the reader, and



Fig. 23: Winston and Julia with the book  
© Soleil, Jean-Christophe Derrien et Rémi Torregrossa  
2021

Winston, might have seen this golden book as the saving light, Torregrossa and Derrien were actually trying to warn the reader not to trust this object.

The other use of colour in this adaptation has an apparent pop culture reference as well as a strong interpretation of Orwell's vision. In the first part of the novel, Winston mentions the *Golden Country*. It is a place that often appears in his dreams. It is wild and utterly opposite to what Oceania is like. In his dream, he sees Julia, and she takes her clothes off.

Suddenly he was standing on short springy turf, on a summer evening when the slanting rays of the sun gilded the ground. The landscape that he was looking at recurred so often in his dreams that he was never fully certain whether or not he had seen it in the real world. In his waking thoughts he called it the Golden Country. It was an old, rabbit-bitten pasture, with a foot-track wandering across it and a molehill here and there. In the ragged hedge on the opposite side of the field the boughs of the elm trees were swaying very faintly in the breeze, their leaves just stirring in dense masses like women's hair. Somewhere near at hand, though out of sight, there was a clear, slow-moving stream where dace were swimming in the pools under the willow trees. (p.21)

The *Golden Country* is a manifestation of Winston's memories and hopes for the future. It is most likely that through his dreams, he remembers a world before Big Brother, in which colour and nature were present. It also shows Winston's hopes for a better future. He believes that it can exist, and later in the novel, his dream comes true when he finally meets Julia and have sex with her for the first time. Derrien and Torregrossa chose to draw that scene the same way Winston describes it in his dream in the original novel. This adaptation is considerably shorter than the original novel; the adapters cut the mention of the *Golden Country* and Winston's dream. Therefore, it was necessary to find a way to highlight the importance of the scene and its impact on the storyline without the original context offered by Orwell. The authors have chosen to do so with the use of colours. That scene stands out for the rest of the graphic novel is in black and white. The colours are pastel and show a wild environment controlled by nature. Even the characters regain their colours as soon as they touch each other.

As mentioned, Derrien and Torregrossa's adaptation shows multiple pop culture references throughout the novel. As J r my Zucchi says in his article for the website *Culturellementvotre*, the use of colour for Winston and Julia's love scene resembles the movie *Pleasantville* (1998). *Pleasantville* (1998) is a movie that came out in



Fig. 24: *Pleasantville* (1998)

1998 and was directed by Gary Ross, around the same time as many science-fiction movies of the same order. The story takes place in a small, made-up town called Pleasantville. Throughout the film, we follow the story of David and Jennifer, brother and sister, who find themselves sucked into David's favourite sitcom, *Pleasantville*, thanks to a strange remote control.

The fictional town has all the makings of a utopia. It is presented in black and white, like all series from the 50s. Like all utopias, there are rules and norms that everyone abides by in order to preserve the established order of society. The town's inhabitants are simple and never stray beyond the established framework, totally unaware of the complexity of the real world, in the manner of the *Truman Show* (1998). The people of Pleasantville don't know about sex or the meaning of rebellion. As the story unfolds, David and Jennifer disrupt the established order with their arrival, bringing change and challenging the conformity that characterises the town. Jennifer encourages the townspeople to explore their desires and engages in sexual and romantic relationships. On the other hand, David tries to preserve the balance and values that characterise the small fictional world.

The link between this adaptation and the film *Pleasantville* lies in the use of colour. As the sitcom takes place in the 1950s, the town and its characters are black and white. However, colour appears as the characters are introduced to relationships, art and literature. When they finally question the order established by the dictatorship in which they live under the guise of utopia, colour can eventually appear in the world. The first appearance of colour is in a bush after the first sexual encounter that happens in the story.



Fig. 25: Winston and Julia's meeting to have sex for the first time

© Soleil, Jean-Christophe Derrien et Rémi Torregrossa

Thus, we can easily make the connection between Derrien and Torregrossa's adaptation and this film. The graphic novel is monochromatic, except for the first love scene between Julia and Winston, where the pages are filled with colour (Fig. 25), showing the same mechanism as in the film *Pleasantville*. In this way, as in the movie, the authors emphasise the importance of these actions in the face of power. By breaking the rules set up by Big Brother, Winston and Julia show their resistance to this totalitarian world. Colour appears at this point as a symbol of the hope that is born when the two lovers meet. It illustrates the change in the characters' mentality and the breach towards another world that their relationship will open.

Some panels have a splash of colour here and there elsewhere in the book: a propaganda poster (mainly yellow), the victory gin in the Ministry of

Truth refectory (green) and red in the background when the revolution is mentioned, or the rats' scene takes place. However, these appearances are not regular or consistent enough to be able to analyse anything worthwhile.

In conclusion, the various graphic novel adaptations analysed all use colour in very different ways. The same colours do not necessarily mean the same things, even though many similar colours recur in each adaptation. Each author used colours to recreate the unsettling and dark atmosphere of the novel. Depending on what the author wanted to emphasise in their adaptation, the use of colour differs and shows how it can be a tool when adapting a novel to a graphic medium to enhance the original work.

## VII. Architecture as a means of oppression: Transcending this impact through graphic novels.

An essential element in the oppressive atmosphere of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is the architecture described by Orwell. It is used to amplify the sense of unease that grips the reader and immerses them in the dystopian world of Oceania. Since architecture is a visual element of the story, it is one of the most critical aspects that the authors of the graphic novel adaptations could work on to recreate the atmosphere of *Nineteen Eighty-four*. This chapter will go over why and how architecture plays a part in creating the atmosphere in Orwell's novel and how the graphic novel adaptations have dealt with this aspect.

As we said, architecture is a significant aspect of Orwell's novel. The narrator describes at length and in minute detail, what the monuments that make up Airstrip One look like. As a convention, settings and architecture are essential in utopian and dystopian fiction. Describing a world in decay, increasingly deteriorating with an absence of nature and monumental cities in disrepair, reinforces the conditions for totalitarian power. Dystopian writers often use these elements to reinforce the imagery of a totalitarian, dystopian world. However, in *Nineteen Eighty-four*, Orwell goes further. The author uses architecture and space to bolster the government's domination by including them as tools of power. In the novel, architecture plays a key role in amplifying a sense of despair in Winston and the other citizens. Whether it's the layering of old and new buildings or the contrast between the monumental architecture of the party and the dilapidated, rotting buildings of the citizens, their presence and detailed descriptions are essential to creating the novel's atmosphere.

It is important to remember that *Nineteen Eighty-four* was published in 1949. This was very soon after the Second World War, which had a major impact on Orwell. At the time, the landscapes described in the novel did not seem like science fiction. Indeed, Orwell describes Airstrip One as a decaying city destroyed by bombs and poverty. This is a strategy from the Party to psychologically impact the town's inhabitants and instil greater terror and misery. However, Orwell's descriptions strongly resemble London after the two world wars. It is also a city destroyed by bombs. This choice, on Orwell's part, proves once again that his novel was intended as a cautionary tale to remind people of what happens and can happen when totalitarianism is allowed to take over rather than as a prophetic novel about the future that was needed at the time. As such, it is a novel of satire, not prophecy.

There are many ways in which Orwell's novel uses architecture to amplify the atmosphere of domination and despair. The absence of nature, the absence of a sense of home, the monumental architecture, the juxtaposition of old and new, the interiors of the ministries... Each of these architectural elements impacts the story and helps to create the atmosphere of terror at the heart of the totalitarian government's domination.

What obviously contributes to the depressive atmosphere of Oceania, in addition to the decay of the city, is the absence of nature. There is no natural landscape. The only patch of nature in the novel is the field where Julia and Winston meet and make love for the first time. This natural space comes into the story as an ounce of hope to which the characters cling because they are convinced that they are safe from the eyes of Big Brother. Julia reassures Winston from the outset that this place has no hidden microphones, so they are safe. However, this is a false hope and a deception. There is no way to escape the government. The only natural part is used to create an even greater sense of despair and doom when the characters realise that this haven of peace is not real. It's reminiscent of the Golden Country Winston so often dreams about. In this illusion, Winston escapes from the cold, destroyed concrete landscape to join his family or Julia in a landscape of nature and warmth where he can free himself. But this, too, is not real. This manipulation of characters through confinement within the constructed environment is a recurring theme in dystopian literature, observable in other works such as Zamyatin's *We* and Huxley's *Brave New World*.

This sense of imprisonment is often ignored by characters in dystopias. However, decaying cities and the absence of nature prevent humans from creating a sense of rootedness. Nobody really has a "home". There is no home, and no one feels "at home". Yet the concept of "home" is fundamental in personal development. It's a feature of architecture broader than just the building itself. It includes a sense of security and refuge in which one can gather, rest and put down one's arms. In dystopias, but even more so in Oceania, the concept of home does not exist. Every house is controlled and owned by the government. Buildings are in a state of decay, and the inhabitants are under constant surveillance. Added to the continuous surveillance, the state of the architecture itself also prevents this feeling of security and home. In fact, the dilapidated infrastructure, lack of ventilation (Winston talks about the smell of boiled cabbage that permeates the whole building at all times), dark walls, etc., are architectural elements used to

prevent the inhabitants from feeling at home. This creates great psychological distress in them, making them easier to manipulate and control.

Orwell's novel's most important architectural elements that impose a specific authority and create an atmosphere of terror are the ministries and the contrast they create with the rest of the city. As Gerald Bernstein (1984) points out in his work, the theme of society being controlled by architecture and the symbolism that goes with it recurs throughout the novel. Indeed, Bernstein explains that to achieve this result, the narrator gives extremely detailed descriptions of the urban landscape and architecture of London/Airstrip One. In this way, the reader can see the psychological hold and the importance of the manipulation conveyed by these buildings throughout the novel.

However, both Gerald Bernstein (1984) and Lawrence Phillips (2008) mention in their respective works that Orwell describes London/Airstrip One as a juxtaposition of past and present. The two scholars explain that this element is not insignificant and far from being a detail. Orwell describes the Victory Mansions as dilapidated buildings built in the 1930s. Bernstein explains that "it presents us with one half of a juxtaposition between the surviving architecture of the so-called pre-Revolutionary period and the monumentally scaled structures of the State bureaucracies" (Bernstein, p. 26). The latter are monumental and central. They dominate all the other buildings around them as well as the citizens of Oceania. This juxtaposition is significant because it crystallises the dominance of the Party, but it also underlines a past that existed before Big Brother came to power. In the world of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, there are no sure facts. Winston is the first to know because he works for the Ministry of Truth. He takes it upon himself to change events to suit Big Brother's agenda. The government claims that nothing good or memorable has come out of the capitalist past in today's society. According to the government's propaganda, no buildings worth remembering have been produced in the past. The only buildings of any interest were built under the Big Brother government. But the architecture of the city clearly contradicts this. Lawrence Phillips (2008) makes this clear in his article: "Yet the one aspect of Winston's world that challenges both the stifling of historical debate, the erasure of the written record of the past and the inability to communicate across class and generational boundaries, is the material fabric of the city." Of course, the party has tried to alter the impact and perception of these elements of the past to suit their ideology and is all the more involved in their psychological manipulation, as mentioned in the original novel:

Winston wondered vaguely to what century the church belonged. It was always difficult to determine the age of a London building. Anything large and impressive, if it was reasonably new in appearance, was automatically claimed as having been built since the revolution, while anything that was obviously of an earlier date was ascribed to some dim period called the Middle Ages. The centuries of capitalism were held to have produced nothing of any value. One could not learn history from architecture any more than one could learn it from books. Statues, inscriptions, memorial stones, the names of streets – anything that might throw light upon the past had been systematically altered. (p. 88)

Therefore, the most significant manipulation is achieved through the contrast between pyramidal ministry buildings and the ruined and decaying houses of the members of the Outer party and the proles. The monumental architecture of the ministry buildings holds symbolic significance beyond what the narrator explicitly conveys. These structures represent the power and authority of the government. Moreover, the central positioning of these governmental buildings is noteworthy, as it signifies their powerful positioning at the centre while relegating others to the periphery, reinforcing a sense of total control over the latter. Therefore, the Ministry of Truth, the Ministry of Peace, the Ministry of Plenty, and the Ministry of Love, with their enormous pyramidal structures, are undeniably integral to the oppressive nature of the totalitarian government. Each of these ministries has specific functions which, thanks to *newspeak* and *doublethink*, are the opposite of what their name entails: “The Ministry of Peace concerns itself with war, the Ministry of Truth with lies, the Ministry of Love with torture and the Ministry of Plenty with starvation” (p. 246). However, their monumental size and colossal mass make these ministries even more frightening. The narrator talks early on about the profound impact of these buildings by describing them in detail. The constructed environment clearly affects the characters' psychology by their dominating size that looms over the citizens like a threat. Their gigantic mass shows how architecture is used as an instrumental ideological vehicle to demonstrate the power and authority of the Party. The psychological effect caused by their enormous size is to give the impression of insignificance to the citizens by dwarfing them. Winston feels that sensation like everybody else. At the beginning of the novel, Winston describes what he sees from his window in his flat in the Victory Mansions: “A kilometre away the Ministry of Truth, his place of work, towered vast and white above the grimy landscape” (p. 5). To see that building from his room, pyramidal structure, white concrete, and thousands

of rooms high in the air creates a sense of despair and helplessness in Winston. How could someone as small as him ever go against such monumental power? That feeling is well described in the novel:

The sun had shifted round, and the myriad windows of the Ministry of Truth, with the light no longer shining on them, looked grim as the loopholes of a fortress. His heart quailed before the enormous pyramidal shape. It was too strong, it could not be stormed. A thousand rocket bombs would not batter it down. (p. 32)

The way Winston's feelings of despair are depicted, as well as the highly detailed descriptions of the monumental buildings, are not coincidental. They are used to highlight the juxtaposition of the government's power with the weakness of a single citizen and, therefore, demonstrate how these symbols underline the unvanquishable power of the State. As Lawrence Phillips (2008) states in his research: "the view of the ministry buildings at near ground level is where one would expect their effect to be the most potent. Yet their vision of unassailable and complete power is rather diminished despite the presence of the technological adjunct of scopic domination, the telescreen." As it happens in the novel, it is possible to turn your back to the telescreens to avoid being watched. Winston does it in his apartment. He also mentions a small alcove in which the telescreen cannot reach him and, therefore, he is not watched. The same goes with Charrington's little room in the proles' neighbourhood, where Julia and Winston find themselves a sanctuary of peace. These architectural elements are created and left there to develop a sense of security for the citizens, in which they can let their thoughts of resistance go free and allow their individuality to show. However, it is another ploy of the government to control the citizens. They take advantage of the past architecture, such as the Victory Mansions built in the 1930s and the proles' district, to incite one to commit a *thoughtcrime* with a fake sense of security so that they can hit them harder later. There is no possibility of freedom in Oceania.

The buildings' exteriors are monumental and impose terror on citizens, but the interior of the ministries matters as much. Their inner spatial arrangements are also significant in shedding light on the power and authority of the Party. The absence of windows in Winston's place of work, the Ministry of Truth, and the plethora of colleagues inside the small cubicles have a repressive impact on the characters' psychology. As Bernstein (1984) puts it, it symbolises "the repressive society of the Orwellian future" (p. 26). These places are intentionally created to be

claustrophobic and, therefore, create a feeling of uneasiness and discomfort to have direct control of the psychology of the workers of the Outer Party. This space is also imagined as a giant maze in which workers could never familiarise themselves enough to feel at ease or have possibilities to meet and create relationships with their co-workers. That can be seen in the following passage from the novel:

Winston hardly knew Tillotson, and had no idea what work he was employed on. People in the Records Department did not readily talk about their jobs. In the long, windowless hall, with its double row of cubicles and its endless rustle of papers and hum of voices murmuring into speakwrites, there were quite a dozen people whom Winston did not even know by name, though he daily saw them hurrying to and fro in the corridors or gesticulating in the Two Minutes Hates. He knew that in the cubicle next to him the little woman with sandy hair toiled day in and day out, simply at tracking down and deleting from the Press the names of people who had been vaporized and were therefore considered never to have existed. (p. 49)

The Ministry of Truth is described as a claustrophobic place with a low ceiling and overly crowded by its workers. Once again, the site's architecture manipulates the citizen's psyche and drives them more into obedience and helplessness. For example, the canteen is described to be "deep underground" (p. 56) and "with a sour metallic smell" (p. 56). The environment being completely insalubrious is another manipulation of the State, driving the workers to feel insignificant and valueless, as they do not have the privilege to evolve in a sanitary place. There is always an apparent contrast between the enormous buildings of the State and the feeling of insignificance that is created in the citizens by this show of grandeur. The Ministry of Truth also must be intimidating because of its function. The State uses manipulation and doublethink to make people obedient, so it needs something imposing to work. When the citizens look up at the building, they must be able to anticipate the consequences that exist in case of misbehaviour. This is what Goulding (2018) states in his article: "Minitru needs to be the principal physical presence in order to underline its implied message — we are watching you! (...) For Ingsoc the result is the impression of a public being constantly watched: Minitru must dominate the skyline as a symbol of force: a phallic signifier if you like, its brutality of political power dependent on the means of constraint to maintain its will."

Similarly, the Ministry of Love has a terrifying and enormous inner space, which impacts the psychology of the prisoners. It is described to be the “really frightening one”. It is windowless and circled by barbed-wire, steel doors and hidden machine-gun nests. Its monolithic architecture makes the Ministry frightening as it is both impenetrable and impossible to escape. It settles the State’s ideology and is the centre of its defence. Winston’s experience inside the Ministry of Love serves as an example of how the architecture of the place impacts prisoners. What Winston sees in the Ministry of Love is minutely described. There is unceasing blinding artificial light, white porcelain walls, high ceilings with no windows and giant telescreens. Winston can't tell time, to know whether it is day or night. The architecture of the cells is done so it will lead to the psychological downfall of the prisoner. It becomes part of the torture. At some point, Winston even tries “to calculate the number of porcelain bricks in the walls of the cell” (263). The configuration of the building amplifies Winston’s despair. The fact that he does not know with precision where his cell might be in the actual building is creating helplessness as there is no way to escape when not knowing where one is:

More often he wondered where he was, and what time of day it was. At one moment he felt certain that it was broad daylight outside, and at the next equally certain that it was pitch darkness. In this place, he knew instinctively, the lights would never be turned out. It was the place with no darkness: he saw now why O’Brien had seemed to recognize the allusion. In the Ministry of Love there were no windows. His cell might be at the heart of the building or against its outer wall; it might be ten floors below the ground, or thirty above it. He moved himself mentally from place to place, and tried to determine by the feeling of his body whether he was perched high in the air or buried deep underground (p. 263-264).

This disorientation created by the architecture of the Ministry of Love, the absence of windows and the impossibility of knowing where one is, is another proof that the Party uses the architecture as a means to an end: power. Winston's disorientation caused by the oppressive architecture makes him weaker and more prompt to break down under torture. Hence, as Bernstein (1984) puts it, “It is within this hermetically sealed interior, as repressive and degrading as any of the techniques of brainwashing, that Winston finally breaks down”.

The four ministries’ buildings are “scattered around London” (p. 6). That means they are always visible from the centre of town. There is no way to escape the gaze of Big Brother. The

surveillance is constant, so citizens are under continuous control from the Party. As we explained when we talked about the absence of a home-like environment, there is no place for people to relax and let their guard down. The four ministries are constantly in vision to remind them that there is no escape, leading the citizens to self-regulate and self-police their thoughts and behaviours.

As mentioned above, the monumental pyramidal buildings of the ministries contrast highly with the decaying Victory Mansions, built probably around the 1930s, pre-revolution times. The narrator uses derogatory terms to describe them. There is a real sense of decay and despair in the descriptions used for the prole's neighbourhood and the Outer Party members' mansions. The state of these constructions adds to the psychological distress the citizens are in, as it feels they are being treated as animals. That is actually the case for proles, which are said to be "natural inferiors who must be kept in subjection, like animals" (p. 82).

Again, these mansions are used to create contrast between the citizens' hierarchy. When the Victory Mansions of the outer party and the quarters of the proles are rotting and getting more and more destroyed by bombs, the Inner Party members are treated with quality living situation. Again, Orwell uses the architecture to enhance the difference in treatment in Oceania and amplify the atmosphere of injustice and totalitarianism. That can be seen notably in the way O'Brien's apartment is described in detail:

The room they were standing in was long-shaped and softly lit. The telescreen was dimmed to a low murmur; the richness of the dark-blue carpet gave one the impression of treading on velvet. (...) It was only on very rare occasions that one saw inside the dwelling-places on the Inner Party, or even penetrated into the quarter of the town where they lived. The whole atmosphere of the huge block of flats, the richness and spaciousness of everything, the unfamiliar smells of good food and good tobacco, the silent and incredibly rapid lifts sliding up and down, the white-jacketed servants hurrying to and fro — everything was intimidating. (...) The passage down which he led them was softly carpeted, with cream-papered walls and white wainscoting, all exquisitely clean. That too was intimidating. Winston could not remember ever to have seen a passageway whose walls were not grimy from the contact of human bodies (p. 194-195)

The contrast between this description and the way the Outer Party members' quarters are described only adds to the absence of compassion and interest the State feels towards its citizens. The proles and the Outer Party members are crammed inside decaying, grimy, dirty, unhygienic quarters while the Inner Party members have carpet in their corridors. To realise this difference in treatment only adds to the feeling of uneasiness and injustice the reader feels when immersed in *Nineteen Eighty-four's* atmosphere.

Another way the architecture participates in creating the helpless atmosphere of *Nineteen Eighty-four* is in the false hope it is making. As said previously, there is no way to escape the all-seeing eyes of Big Brother. However, it happens multiple times in the novel that Winston feels free and trusts that he is not watched. It happens right at the beginning of the story when Winston sits down in a small alcove in his apartment, which he is sure is safe from the telescreens. This is, of course, a false sense of security as the telescreens have a 360 degrees vision that allows them to see everything happening in the room. The screen is put as this to create this false sense of freedom on purpose. Lisa Mullens (2017) explains this clearly in her article:

Within the tyrannical architecture of visibility, the telescreens retrofitted into the fabric of every building act as a clever distraction. The screen in Winston's flat appears to have been put in the wrong place, offering him a shallow sanctuary in the alcove where he writes his diary, but like all Winston's feeble assertions of autonomy, this turns out to be an illusion: the alcove is another architectural trap, like the room above the junk shop. The real purpose of the screen is to misdirect the gaze of those who are, in fact, under 360-degree surveillance whether they are aware of it or not. (p. 13-28)

The idea behind that is to push Winston to put his rebellious thoughts into practice. It is another manipulation tool that the Party uses over its citizens. This is the exact mechanism that is used when Winston and Julia rent the room above Charrington's shop. There is a fake feeling of security created by the seeming absence of telescreens and the condescending idea that the proles are less than people and, therefore, could not be of any danger. Thus, the couple is pushed over the edge and starts to create what could almost look and feel like a home. They let their guard down in this building. Then, this space that had become their haven is turned into their first place of entrapment. The reader is led to believe Winston's beliefs as the narrator details

his story and mind. Therefore, what is created to control Winston's mind and world will have the same effect on the reader. The architecture having such an impact on the characters of the book will have an impact on the reader. Thus, it participates in creating the atmosphere that is characteristic of *Nineteen Eighty-four*.

We have explained the importance of architecture in dystopias and even more in *Nineteen Eighty-four*. Orwell uses it almost as a character of its own. It is the aspect of the novel that contributes the most to the setting of the atmosphere. It causes the reader to actually realise how claustrophobic and insignificant Winston and other citizens of Oceania feel.

### **Xavier Coste: Brutalism and monumental scale to illustrate power**

Xavier Coste's adaptation focuses on the conflict between the individual and the omnipotence of the state. The first-person narrative allows the reader to immerse themselves fully in Winston's mind and the moral conflicts that run through him. Throughout this adaptation, the reader faces the same questions as the main character. Access to Winston's thoughts and feelings gives the reader an insight into the effect that architecture has on the character. On top of this, visually, Xavier Coste has taken the plunge and emphasised architecture by working enormously on the perspectives and scale of the buildings and characters.

First of all, the first edition of this adaptation reflects the importance of architecture in the novel. For the first edition, the author and publisher (Sarbacane) decided to create a pop-up version of Airstrip One (Fig.26). At the end of the novel, the last



Fig. 26: Pop-up of Airstrip one for the first edition of Xavier Coste's adaptation

© Sarbacane / Xavier Coste, 2021

page opens, revealing immense buildings compared to the character of Winston, who is also present and much smaller than the rest of the drawings. This pop-up is an example of how Xavier Coste uses architecture to recreate the atmosphere of *Nineteen Eighty-four*. The work on scale is very important.

The author of this adaptation was inspired by Brutalist architecture, which he believes is the movement that best captures the novel's atmosphere. Brutalist architecture is an architectural movement that emerged in the 1950s and peaked in the 1960s and 1970s. The style is characterised by raw, massive geometric forms, exposed concrete surfaces and a minimalist aesthetic. The term "brutalist" comes from the French word *béton brut*, which describes using unrefined, unadorned concrete as the primary material. Brutalist architects emphasised the structural and material truth of buildings, rejecting ornamentation and superficial details. This totally agrees with the mentality of dystopian states, particularly *Nineteen Eighty-four*. In these worlds, the trivial is rejected. There is only room for what is necessary. Beauty is not essential to life, and the good is only there to make people happy. The manipulation of a totalitarian state is based on the feeling of despair caused among citizens who find no reason to rebel because there is nothing else but their miserable daily lives. The city, and therefore the people who live there, too, is completely dehumanised. The buildings' coldness and lack of humanity reflect the society in which the people live and contribute to the characters' sense of alienation.

Brutalist buildings are often characterised by their monumental scale, angular lines and bold geometric forms. They may also feature elements such as prefabricated panel facades, external staircases and textured concrete surfaces. Brutalist architecture was often associated with public institutions, such as government buildings or residential complexes. This architectural style was seen as an expression of modernity, functionality and the social utopia of the time. Brutalist architecture has met with mixed reactions. Some admire it for its raw and honest aesthetic, while others criticise it for its austere and oppressive appearance. This makes the link with *Nineteen Eighty-four* all the more apparent. As explained above, Big Brother's architecture is monumental and overpowering. The ministries can be seen above the other buildings, and escaping their vision or surveillance is impossible. Xavier Coste's choice of brutalist architecture seems consistent with the atmosphere sought by the novel and George Orwell's original descriptions. In particular, Xavier Coste draws a multitude of panels of only the raw buildings, devoid of any other decoration. The only thing that matters is Big Brother.

However, the author has avoided reproducing each of Orwell's descriptions exactly. The Ministry of Truth, for example, is not drawn as a pyramid as it is in the original novel. As for the Outer Party members' and proles' quarters, Xavier Coste departs slightly from Orwell's descriptions. The original novel mentions several times that these districts were probably built years earlier, in the 1930s. The buildings are dilapidated, not at all modern and bear no resemblance to the buildings erected by Big Brother's government. But Xavier Coste's drawings go in a different direction. The poor neighbourhoods of Airstrip One are also designed in this vein to achieve uniformity and a brutalist style of architecture. However, the difference between the buildings of the government and the Inner Party, and those of the proletariat and the Outer Party, remains evident. In the case of the government departments, the buildings are taller and more meticulously drawn, whereas the poor districts have slightly lower buildings with straighter lines and look more dilapidated. Some buildings have broken windows, for example. Once again, this makes sense regarding the message of Orwell's original novel. Indeed, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, as explained in the previous chapters, is a satire and a critique of the communist totalitarianism imposed by Stalin. This architectural movement was seen as an expression of the social utopia of the time, particularly in the USSR. However, just like the communist utopia of the time, the whole thing is completely dehumanised. There is no room for curves, movement or feeling.



Fig. 27: The Parsons' apartment  
© Sarbacane / Xavier Coste, 2021



Fig. 28: O'Brien's apartment  
© Sarbacane / Xavier Coste, 2021

As explained above, one of the ways in which architecture was used to create atmosphere was by contrasting the neighbourhoods of the Proles and Outer Party members with the homes of the Inner Party members. In the original novel, this contrast is created by the difference in detail between the two neighbourhoods. O'Brien's house is described in greater detail and with more positive adjectives than the Parsons' home. Xavier Coste draws this contrast very clearly. When Winston goes to the Parsons' house at the beginning of the novel to unblock their sink, the house shows almost no detail. (Fig. 27) All that is visible is a small, shabby kitchen where the dishes smell. On the other hand, O'Brien's flat is designed with great detail and ornamentation. His space is modern and highly decorated (Fig. 28). The ceilings are high. The injustice is highly visible through this representation of the differences between the Inner and Outer Parties.



Fig. 29: Splash page of destroyed buildings  
© Sarbacane / Xavier Coste, 2021

Finally, another way in which Xavier Coste reinforces the atmosphere created by the architecture is by letting it take up all the space (Fig. 29). Many of the splash pages consist of just the buildings. There is no dialogue, no descriptions. The whole atmosphere is created by this dehumanised urban landscape. What is more, some of these landscapes are depicted in low-angle, which enhances the effect of grandeur. The citizens of Oceania, next to these monumental buildings, appear completely insignificant and dehumanised. Like a low-angle shot in cinema, this technique is often used for this purpose, notably in the film adaptation of *Nineteen Eighty-four* (1984).

Xavier Coste also emphasised the disorientating nature of the buildings of the various ministries. On this panel (Fig.30), again, without description or dialogue, staircases go in all directions, and corridors are everywhere. The labyrinth effect is utterly present in this adaptation. The reader does not know where to look. The corridors are high but have an oppressive impact because it is impossible to know where one really is. The employees' cubicles are small and enclosed. The space is suffocating. The grandeur of the building compared to the small area of the employees is reinforced by these drawings.



Fig. 30: Cubicles in the Ministry of Truth  
© Sarbacane / Xavier Coste, 2021



Fig. 31: Bird's-eye view from the cell in the  
Ministry of Love  
© Sarbacane / Xavier Coste, 2021

It is also the case in the part that takes place in the Ministry of Love. Winston is locked in a small room. Xavier Coste draws a bird's-eye view of this cell (Fig. 31). The space is completely enclosed. As shown on this panel, the room's layout shows the reader that there is no way out. There is no window, and the door is made of reinforced steel like a bank safe. At this point, thanks to the drawing, the reader understands that hope is dead. There is no way out for Winston.

## **Pontarolo: Cyberpunk style to enhance a futuristic vision**

Pontarolo's version follows a different path than Xavier Coste's adaptation. Whereas Xavier Coste focused on a particular architectural trend from the past, Frédéric Pontarolo preferred to go for something with more futuristic overtones. Pontarolo draws her inspiration from different dystopias to create her own. This adaptation is part of the cyberpunk movement. Cyberpunk emerged in the 1980s as a sub-genre of science fiction. Cyberpunk generally explores a dystopian future where technology coexists with a dark and dehumanised society. So Pontarolo's use of this movement to adapt *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as a graphic novel makes sense. The origins and concerns of the movement are the same as those that inspired Orwell to write his novel.

In the context of architecture, the cyberpunk movement focuses on the visual representation and design of futuristic urban environments, often characterised by a grungy, futuristic and technological aesthetic. The architectural elements of cyberpunk are influenced by motifs such as neon lights, metal structures, exposed cables and connections, crumbling buildings, dark streets and ubiquitous billboards.

Cyberpunk architecture generally reflects a pessimistic vision of the future, where corporate powers and technology have taken control, leading to the degradation of society and the increasing alienation of individuals. Cyberpunk buildings are often monumental in scale, with towering skyscrapers, tangled structures and dense urban landscapes. They are also designed to show the complex relationship between technology, society and the built environment.

In the cyberpunk aesthetic, architecture is often represented as an interface between people and technology. Architectural spaces are zones of contrast where virtual reality, advanced communications, ubiquitous surveillance and social isolation exist side by side. Cyberpunk architecture can also feature elements of bricolage and reappropriation, where individuals use materials and technologies to create subversive and resistant spaces.

From the first pages of this adaptation, readers can see the importance of architecture in the following story. The first panel (Fig. 32), drawn from the sky, is an image of the pyramids of the ministries. These are very dark and have thousands of windows. In this way, the author departs from George Orwell's original descriptions. In the original novel, the ministries were



Fig. 32: The ministries pyramids  
© Michel Lafon / Frédéric Pontarolo, 2021

The building where Winston lives, in the Victory Mansions, is designed in the shape of a monumental V (Fig. 33). Through his representations of architecture, Pontarolo reminds us that the state is everywhere. Even in his flat, Winston is not at home. Futuristic drones circle the building, observing the inhabitants through windows that allow no privacy. No matter which district Winston walks in, the buildings around him are all dilapidated. The drawings are dark and give the various buildings a certain impression of dirtiness. The contrast between the Inner Party and the Outer Party is particularly apparent when Winston visits O'Brien's house. In this panel, Pontarolo has drawn the building where O'Brien lives with more detail and care (Fig. 34) Although it is as dark as the rest of the buildings in Victory Mansions, it is not dilapidated. The windows are more prominent, and there is more ornamentation on the façades. This is all the more striking because in the foreground are the remains of buildings destroyed by bombs. The

described as porcelain white, but they are the complete opposite in this adaptation. However, this can be explained by the author's choice to depict Airstrip One as a completely dilapidated city ruled by technology. Ingsoc's slogans in large neon lights are visible in the middle of the pyramids. By looking closer, at the foot of the monumental pyramids, the city completely dilapidated and dirty is visible. The contrast between the state and the citizens is already evident in this first image. The state is monumental and towers over the citizens, who are only entitled to buildings in a deplorable state.



Fig. 33: The V-shaped victory mansions  
© Michel Lafon / Frédéric Pontarolo, 2021

reader quickly realises that this is someone with a higher social status because of the building in which he lives.

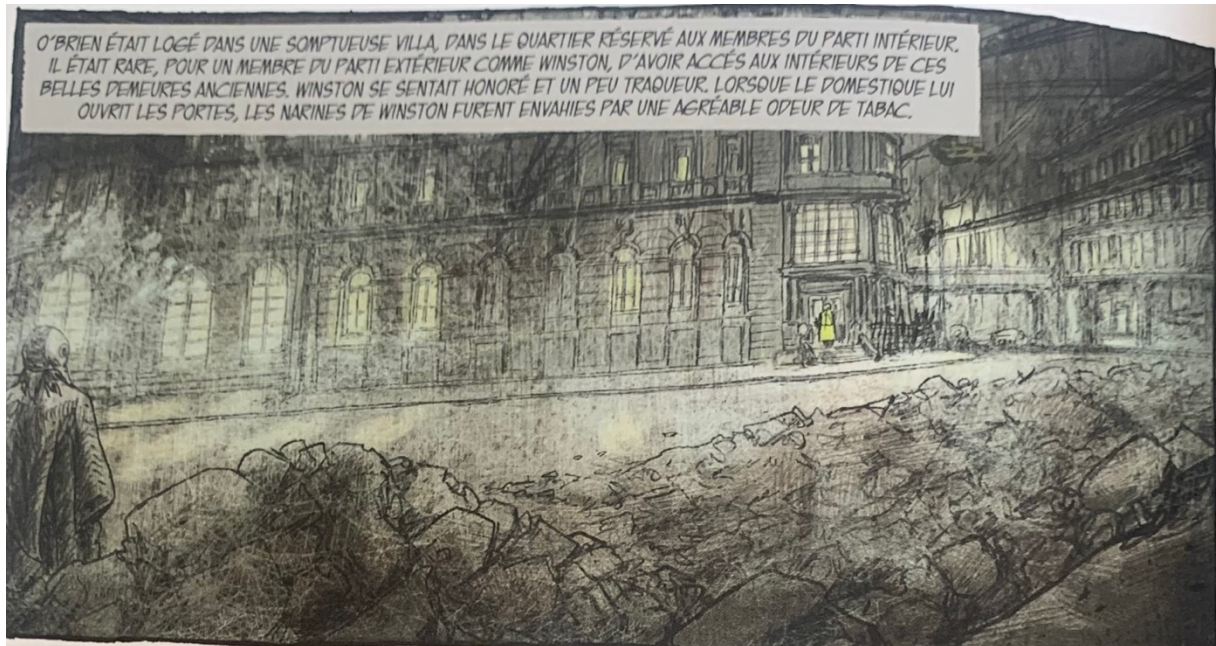


Fig. 34: O'Brien's building  
© Michel Lafon / Frédéric Pontarolo, 2021

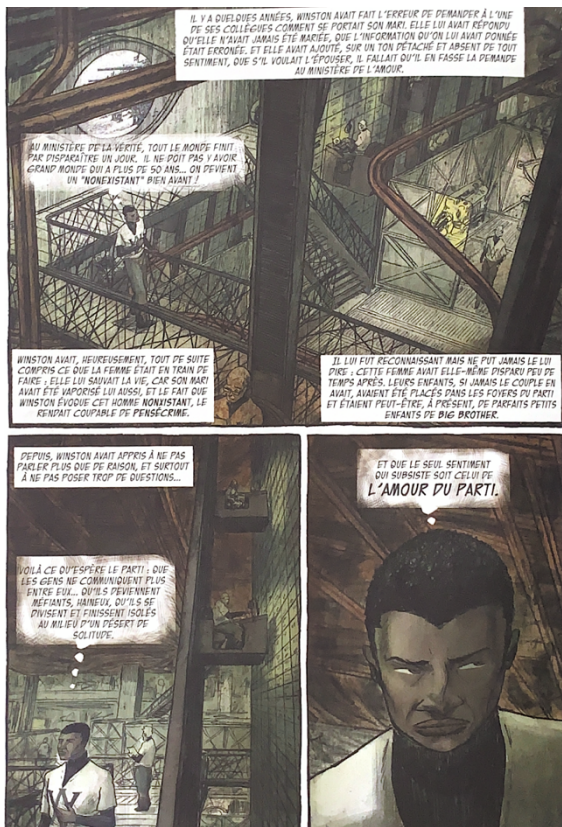


Fig. 35: Ministry of Truth interior  
© Michel Lafon / Frédéric Pontarolo, 2021

As far as the interior of the Ministry of Truth is concerned, Pontarolo has also included a fair amount of detail to show the importance of architecture in the novel and in creating the atmosphere of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Once again, the Ministry of Truth is designed as an enormous labyrinth in which anyone can get lost. There is no way to have an identity in the human tide that this interior creates. There are several floors, paths everywhere and giant staircases on which many people constantly stand.

As well as anchoring his adaptation in the cyberpunk movement, Pontarolo references other classic dystopias, which were inspired by *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. In particular, when the author draws the meeting between Winston and Julia, where she tells him that she loves him, the drawing is very reminiscent of one of the mythical scenes from the film *Blade Runner*. A link can be made between this panel (Fig. 35) and the theatre scene in *Blade Runner* (Fig. 36), which is a crucial scene in the film. Visually, the architecture is very similar. The metal barriers and staircases are very similar. What is more, the choice of showing the scene where Julia and Winston meet in an architectural environment identical to the scene in *Blade Runner* is probably no coincidence. Both scenes are key moments in the story in which the characters are faced with their humanity and an important choice to make. By including references to other influential dystopias, themselves influenced by the universe created by Orwell, Pontarolo uses drawing to create a familiar architecture that captures the dystopian atmosphere.



Fig. 36: Theatre scene in *Blade Runner*



Fig. 37: Victory park's entrance  
© Michel Lafon / Frédéric Pontarolo, 2021

Towards the end of the novel, the characters Julia and Winston reunite after being tortured in the Ministry of Love and betraying each other. The two characters meet in a park, probably Hyde Park in London today. At the entrance to the park is a gate with the words "Place de la Victoire" (Victory Square) (Fig. 37). The entrance to this park is very similar to the entrance to the Auschwitz extermination camp. In this adaptation, Julia and Winston have betrayed each other, but their convictions have not been completely shattered. They still don't like Big Brother. So they confess their love to each other again as a final act of resistance. Just then, the thought police arrive and vaporise them on the spot.

The fact that the entrance to the park is designed to resemble the access to Auschwitz reinforces

the impression that the two characters are walking to their deaths on the way there. Once more, Pontarolo recontextualises Orwell's novel.

### **Derrien and Torregrossa: Realism as a faithful tool**

This adaptation is extremely faithful, and that is reflected in the architecture of the city. The authors decided to work in *ligne claire* for this adaptation, remaining firmly within a long tradition of comics. Although this may seem surprising for a dystopian novel such as *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, this type of drawing has its advantages. *Ligne claire* style is characterised by clean lines, sharp contours and an absence of superfluous detail. As such, it corresponds to the austere aesthetic of the *Nineteen Eighty-four* universe, in which the superfluous has no *raison d'être* and the characters' lives are governed by enforced simplicity and constant surveillance. The clear-line style reflects this bare, oppressive atmosphere, where every element is reduced to its essential essence. As far as the architecture is concerned, the clear line style allows the buildings and environments of the *Nineteen Eighty-four* universe to be represented clearly and concisely. The clean lines of sharp contours help to accurately represent architectural structures, whether party monuments, citizens' homes or urban landscapes in general. In addition, the clear line style helps to emphasise geometric shapes and architectural perspectives, enhancing the visual impact of buildings and the environment. Clear lines and sharp contours also help to represent the contrasts between the monumental architecture of the Party and the dark and degraded living spaces of the citizens of Oceania. The clean lines also help to create a certain distance and objectivity in the visual representation, which is in keeping with the critical nature of Orwell's novel. There is an impression of neutrality and an impartial look at the architectural structures and their role in *Nineteen Eighty-four's* dystopian society.



Fig. 38: The Ministry of Truth pyramid  
© Soleil, Jean-Christophe Derrien et Rémi  
Torregrossa 2021

The first panel of this adaptation is dedicated to the architecture of Airstrip One (Fig. 38). Right from the start, the pyramid of the Ministry of Truth appears in the background of a city that looks completely dilapidated. Once again, the authors have used a reference from science fiction culture. It clearly is the pyramid from *Blade Runner* that Derrien and Torregrossa used as inspiration for their version of the Ministry of Truth. As in Orwell's original novel, the pyramid is porcelain white, contrasting with the grey buildings of the rest of the city. Thanks to this, the novel's atmosphere is set right from the start. The authors also use their representations of architecture to convey the omnipotence and over-presence of the state. When Winston writes in his diary at the beginning of the novel, the pyramid is visible through his window. This is consistent with Orwell's original descriptions while hinting

at the fact that he cannot escape Big Brother's constant surveillance. Thanks to this panel at the beginning of the story, there is already a clue to the end of the novel. Even though Winston is sure he can escape state surveillance at this moment, the pyramid in the background warns the reader that this is not really the case.



Fig. 39: The Parsons' apartment

© Soleil, Jean-Christophe Derrien et Rémi Torregrossa  
2021

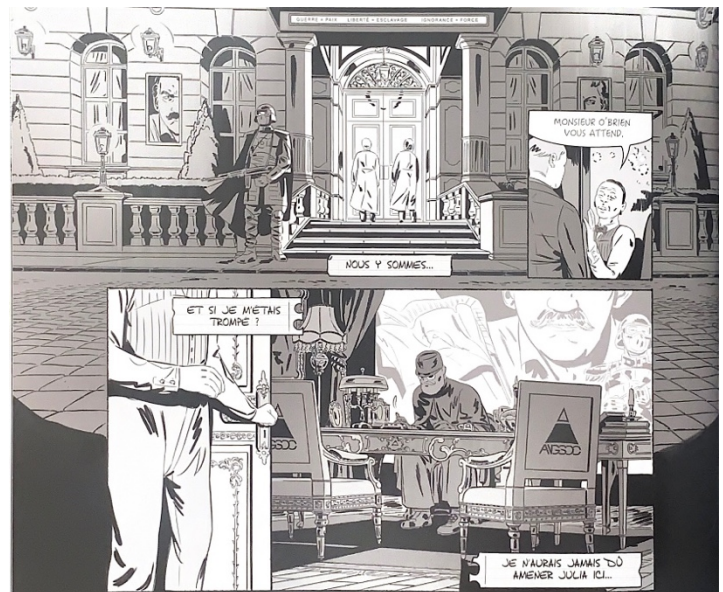


Fig. 40: O'Brien's house

© Soleil, Jean-Christophe Derrien et Rémi Torregrossa  
2021

Regarding the architecture of Victory Mansions, the authors have once again decided to be faithful to the text. *Nineteen Eighty-four* was written in 1948, taking its inspiration directly from post-war London. As a result, many of Orwell's descriptions are inspired by this design, particularly the interior of Victory Mansions (Fig. 39). This can be seen when Winston visits the Parsons. The interior of their flat is directly inspired by the interiors of houses from the 1930s-1940s. The drawing conveys the age and wear of these houses by showing walls with peeling paint. Moreover, the contrast between the poorer and richer parts of the city is stark. When Winston goes to O'Brien's house to discuss their future alliance, there is a dedicated panel at the entrance to O'Brien's house (Fig. 40). This contrasts with Winston's flat or that of the Parsons. The façade is decorated, and the windows are large. The building is less austere than the others. It also looks relatively new compared with the Victory Mansions, which seem to date from another era. In this way, the difference between the Ingsoc buildings and those built before Big Brother's totalitarian state is very visible in this graphic novel.

For the offices of the Ministry of Truth, the designers also drew inspiration from a major architectural trend of the early 20th century (Fig. 41). This trend was based on the design of workspaces aligned with the principles of Taylorism, a work management method developed by the American engineer Frederick Winslow Taylor at the turn of the century. Taylorism focuses on the rationalisation and optimisation of industrial production processes.



Fig. 41: Offices built with Taylorism principles

It promotes a meticulous division of labour, standardisation of tasks and close supervision of workers. This method aims to maximise efficiency, productivity and control in the working environment. In this context, new workspaces have been designed. They are organised in a rigid, hierarchical fashion. Desks are often arranged in rows and straight lines, with individual spaces or cubicles isolating workers from each other. The aim is to create a disciplined and controlled working environment where each employee concentrates on their task without



Fig. 42: Cubicles in the Ministry of Truth

© Soleil, Jean-Christophe Derrien et Rémi Torregrossa 2021

distraction. These offices emphasise the standardisation of space and furniture, with uniform and repetitive elements. Workspaces are often devoid of decorative or personal details, reinforcing the idea of efficiency and standardisation. The colours and materials used are generally neutral and functional. These offices aim to encourage productivity and facilitate worker supervision and control. In Figure 42, we can see how the authors were inspired by that movement. Thus, further reinforcing the atmosphere of surveillance and dehumanisation that is so specific to *Nineteen Eighty-four*.

In conclusion, the authors of the three different adaptations that make up our corpus use very different techniques to recreate the atmosphere of *Nineteen Eighty-four*. However, each of them works meticulously on the architecture. Architecture is an integral part of the story, enabling it to move forward and move from stage to stage. As a visual element, it was imperative to include it 100% in the graphic novel adaptations of Orwell's work. The analysis of the different proposals made by each adaptation demonstrates its importance and versatility.

## Conclusion

*Nineteen Eighty-four* has been considered a literary classic for a long time. As such, when it finally fell into the public domain, it was no surprise to see multiple adaptations appearing simultaneously. As Jan Baetens (2020) explains, in a society where images are predominant and where the boundaries between media and technology, and commerce and creation are blurry, graphic novel adaptations are bound to be more frequent (5-6). However, adaptations need to add to the original novel for them to be worthwhile. There is no interest in simply illustrating the initial text without trying to reclaim it. Therefore, this dissertation has aimed to highlight how some of these adaptations enhance the original work's atmosphere and recreate or recontextualise it. To do so, this paper focused itself on the original stifling atmosphere of *Nineteen Eighty-four* and the different manners through which the adaptations from the corpus have managed to enhance it. Xavier Coste, Frédéric Pontarolo, and Jean-Christophe Derrien and Remi Torregrossa have all chosen highly different approaches to adapt and reinterpret Orwell's original novel.

To analyse the techniques used in these graphic novels, it was essential to go back to *Nineteen Eighty-four* in its original form to highlight what created this stifling and claustrophobic atmosphere. Reading the original novel is often a singular experience in perceiving its atmosphere. Through his words, Orwell manages to make the reader feel entrapped and suffocated without them always noticing how it is done. To work on graphic novel adaptations of this novel allowed to pinpoint how this process occurs. Since graphic novels are a visual medium, these aspects were transcribed in images to reinforce this original atmosphere.

After analysis, it is possible to highlight that Pontarolo's approach to adapting *Nineteen Eighty-four* is the one that most agrees with Jan Baetens' theory of adapting literary classics in graphic novels. Jan Baetens explains that you have to be able to move away from the original text and not seek fidelity at all costs to get back to the essentials. In Pontarolo's case, this is what is achieved. He makes a few changes to the original novel, notably by changing the ending and adding a black character as the main protagonist. Moreover, the environment in which the story takes place is far more futuristic than the original novel. However, by using images such as the octopus and references to Auschwitz, Pontarolo recontextualises Orwell's original text. Over time, the reception of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* has evolved. The original critique that characterised the novel has been lost in favour of a critique that focuses more on technology

and the government's use of it. However, Orwell's original critique was of the excesses of a totalitarian regime, such as the Russian Communist regime or Nazism. While setting his adaptation in a futuristic world, Pontarolo uses the graphic medium to reintegrate and recontextualise this aspect of the original novel.

In the case of Xavier Coste's adaptation, the environment also departs from the original novel. He uses a different type of architecture from that described by Orwell. His characters wear suits rather than overalls. He incorporates elements of the modern world, such as the exit permit used during the covid. Xavier Coste makes full use of the graphic medium, using his own style to transpose Orwell's novel.

The case of Derrien and Torregrossa is different. The adaptation remains completely faithful to the original novel. There are no changes, so the adaptation loses the dimension of interpretation. However, this does not prevent the authors from using the graphic novel format to recreate the atmosphere of the original novel. Using a more classic style, such as *ligne claire*, the authors use different techniques to bring to life the dark world of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Graphic novel adaptations add to the dark atmosphere of the original text. Thanks to the visual aspect of the medium, authors can play with different elements already present in the novel and amplify them to leave a strong impression on the reader. The medium can also be used to enhance the original text using techniques typical of the graphic medium. The atmosphere of the novel is dark and oppressive. Orwell describes the buildings that make up the city in minute detail. He emphasises the seasons, the architecture, the presence of technology, etc. All these elements are present throughout the novel to convey to the reader the feeling of despair that the main character feels.

These elements are ideal for adaptation as a graphic novel. Orwell describes this world in a very vivid and visual way. This provides an ideal basis for the authors of the adaptations to develop them in images and capture the oppressive atmosphere. The city of Oceania plays a crucial role in the oppression of its citizens. Government departments are laid out in such a way that they are never able to escape. Cameras are present on every street corner. All these elements are essential to the story and the creation of the novel's oppressive atmosphere. The graphic novel adaptation brings them to life in images, making them more striking. The adaptations in this corpus each have a different way of reworking the novel's atmosphere. This essay focuses on

three major aspects in order to analyse how Orwell's novel is put into images: the use of intertextuality, the use of colour and the architecture.

As the corpus analysis highlighted, intertextuality in a graphic novel adaptation adds an extra dimension to the original text. *Nineteen Eighty-four* is a major novel in the science fiction and dystopia genres. These literary movements use very precise codes that allow readers to situate themselves in the novel's universe. Orwell's novel quickly became a blueprint for the works that followed its publication. Numerous works have developed and reused elements such as state surveillance, the over-presence of technology and the manipulation of the truth. Graphic novel adaptations can incorporate references to these works in more or less subtle ways. In the case of Derrien and Torregrossa's adaptation, intertextuality is used extensively to immerse readers in the novel's world while giving them access to codes they can understand. These conventions can also come from a broader culture, as Pontarolo does. In the case of this adaptation, Pontarolo uses intertextuality to recontextualise the original novel. By using the image of the octopus, the author puts Orwell's initial criticism of totalitarian regimes back at the centre of the novel. Adaptations can also use elements entirely outside the original novel to enhance its atmosphere. By incorporating an exit permit used during the Covid-19 pandemic, Xavier Coste creates a direct link between the universe created by Orwell and today's world.

Another element that the adaptations use to recreate the atmosphere of *Nineteen Eighty-four* is colour. The use of colour amplifies the atmosphere in different ways. Xavier Coste has created a system for his adaptation that departs from the original novel. The author builds trust by setting up a colour pattern that the reader quickly understands. However, to support the instability characteristic of Orwell's novel, Coste decides to betray the reader's trust by disrupting the pattern. The use of colour can also be modelled on the original novel, as Pontarolo does. In this adaptation, the colours are dark and grey, giving an impression of dirtiness to the city. In contrast, he uses bright colours, such as yellow, to isolate the character of Winston in the crowd, reminiscent of the use of the Star of David during the Second World War. Once again, this recontextualises the original novel, using methods similar to those used in history. Derrien and Torregrossa's approach is more traditional. While remaining true to their chosen graphic style, they remain faithful to the original novel by using shades of grey. Colour is not used to heighten the atmosphere throughout the novel, except for one essential element: the love scene between Julia and Winston. At this point, the authors decided to move away from the system used in their adaptation to incorporate a whole world of colours, referring to

the Golden Country mentioned by Winston in the original novel. They used a system of contrasts to reflect the difference between reality and Winston's dream world.

Adaptation into a graphic novel also makes it possible to take original elements from the text and give them greater prominence and importance. In the case of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, architecture is a key part of Orwell's story. However, through the written word, its importance goes unnoticed. Thanks to a visual medium like the graphic novel, it can be brought back to the fore. Architecture plays a very important role in each of the adaptations in the corpus. Buildings fill the boxes and are present at every moment. Although each adaptation uses different graphic styles and dwells on them with varying degrees of intensity, each uses them to recreate the oppressive atmosphere of Orwell's novel and amplify it visually.

To conclude, this study has highlighted why a graphic novel adaptation can breathe new life into a classic text. By analysing certain adaptations of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, we can see that it is a medium that allows us to go beyond simple rewriting and really embrace the very heart of the story. The door is open to all sorts of interpretations. The adaptations can be used to recontextualise, re-politicise or reinvent the original story. What is more, graphic novel adaptations of classic literary texts allow us to return to the original novel, as we saw when we analysed the architecture. As a medium considered more accessible by the majority of the general public, these adaptations allow readers to have a first contact with some texts and then to develop this interest by referring to the initial text. These adaptations also serve as a reminder of the relevance of a novel like *Nineteen Eighty-Four* to today's world. The use of a futuristic world like Pontarolo's, or the transposition of everyday elements like Coste's, reminds us of the importance of Orwell's text, even today.

For this study, we have concentrated on three graphic novel adaptations. However, given the recent success of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and the many graphic novel adaptations published in recent years, it is clear that others will follow. A rewrite of the novel will be published in October 2023 under the title *Julia*. This rewrite will revisit the world of Oceania, focusing on the character of Julia and bringing a feminist perspective to the original novel. Other studies on the subject would therefore be interesting to analyse the value of rewriting this novel from a gender studies perspective.

## Bibliography

Atwood, Margaret. *In Other Worlds: SF and the Human Imagination*, London, Virago, 2012, p. 148.

Baetens, Jan. *Adaptation et bande dessinée: éloge de la fidélité*. Les Impressions Nouvelles, 2020.

Baetens, Jan. "Graphic novels: literature without text?." *English Language Notes* 46.2 (2008): 77-88.

Baetens, Jan. "From black & white to color and back: what does it mean (not) to use color?." *College Literature* (2011): 111-128.

Baetens, Jan, & Frey, Hugo. *The Graphic Novel: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Balci Adem, *Architectural Psychology in Utopias/Dystopias: William Morris's News From Nowhere, George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-four and J. G. Ballard's High-Rise*, University of Ankara, 2022, 86-123.

Bernstein, Gerald S. "The Architecture of Repression: The Built Environment of George Orwell's 1984." *Journal of Architectural Education* (1984-) 38.2 (Winter 1985): 26-28.

*Blade Runner*. Directed by Ridley Scott, The Ladd Company, 1982.

Collins, Suzanne. *The Hunger Games*, Scholastic Inc. 2008.

Devroey, Jean-Pierre. *L'Âme de cristal. George Orwell au présent*, Bruxelles, Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1985.

Dikiciler, Merve. "Suppression of Sexuality and Gender in Dystopias: George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four, Anthony Burgess's The Wanting Seed and Iain Banks's The Wasp Factory." Master's Thesis, Ankara, 2017.

Enteen, George M. "GEORGE ORWELL AND THE THEORY OF TOTALITARIANISM: A 1984 RETROSPECTIVE." *The Journal of General Education*, vol. 36, no. 3, 1984, pp. 206–15.

de Freytas-Tamura, Kimiko. *George Orwell's "1984" Is Suddenly a Best-Seller*, The New-York Times, 2017.  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/25/books/1984-george-orwell-donald-trump.html>

Fougeron, Lucie. « Propagande et création picturale. L'exemple du PCF dans la guerre froide. », *Sociétés & Représentations*, vol. 12, no. 2, 2001, pp. 269-284.

Goldstein, Philip. "Orwell as a (Neo)conservative: The Reception of 1984" in *The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association*, Winter, 2000, Vol. 33, No. 1, pp 44-57.

Goulding, Simon. "Senate House: Utopia, Dystopia in Charles Holden's Architecture and Its Place as London Literary and Visual Landmark." *The Literary London Journal* 15.1 (Spring 2018): 3-20.

Groensteen, Thierry. *The System of Comics* (N. Nguyen & B. Beaty, Transl.). USA: University Press of Mississippi, 2007.

Hammond, William M. "The Press in Vietnam as Agent of Defeat: A Critical Examination." *Reviews in American History*, vol. 17, no. 2, 1989, pp. 312–23

Hitchens, Christopher. *Why Orwell Matters*, New York, Basic Books, 2002

Hutcheon, Linda., & O'Flynn, Siobhan. *A Theory of Adaptation*. Abingdon, United-Kingdom: Routledge, 2013.

Kukkonen, Karin. *Studying comics and graphic novels*. John Wiley & Sons, 2013.

Lambert Elise. *Covid-19 : pourquoi le roman « 1984 » de Geroge Orwell est-il si souvent cité pour critiquer les mesures sanitaires ?*, France Télévisions, 2020.  
[https://www.francetvinfo.fr/sante/maladie/coronavirus/covid-19-pourquoi-1984-de-george-orwell-est-il-si-souvent-cite-pour-critiquer-les-mesures-sanitaires\\_4148999.html](https://www.francetvinfo.fr/sante/maladie/coronavirus/covid-19-pourquoi-1984-de-george-orwell-est-il-si-souvent-cite-pour-critiquer-les-mesures-sanitaires_4148999.html)

Lynskey, Dorian. *The Ministry of Truth: A Biography of George Orwell's 1984*, London, Pan Macmillan, 2019.

McCloud, Scott. *Understanding comics. The invisible art*. New York: Kitchen Sink Press, 1994.

Monssen Nordström, Dan. "Religion, sex and language: three means of governmental control in Brave New World, Nineteen Eighty-Four and The Handmaid's Tale." (2008).

Moore, Alan and Lloyd David. *V for Vendetta*, Vertigo, 2005.

Mullen, Lisa. "The Architecture of Visibility: Blitzed Modernism in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*." *George Orwell Studies* 1.2 (2017): 13-28.

Orwell, George. *Nineteen Eighty-four*. London, Secker & Warburg, 1949.

Phillips, Lawrence. "Time, Space, and Resistance: Re-Reading George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*." *Reassessing the Twentieth-Century Canon: From Joseph Conrad to Zadie Smith*. Ed. Nicola Allen and David Simmons. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

Phillips, Lawrence. "Sex, Violence and Concrete: The Post-War Dystopian Vision of London in 'Nineteen Eighty-Four.'" *Critical Survey*, vol. 20, no. 1, 2008, pp. 69–79.

*Pleasantville*. Directed by Gary Ross, New Line Cinema, 1998.

Rodden, John. *Becoming George Orwell: Life and Letters, Legend and Legacy*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2020.

Saltzman, Esther Bendit. "Novel to Graphic Novel." *The Cambridge Companion to the Graphic Novel* (2017): 144-159.

Schreiber, E. M. "Anti-War Demonstrations and American Public Opinion on the War in Vietnam." *The British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 27, no. 2, 1976, pp. 225–36

Sharma, Shweta. "The once-banned dystopian novel that has become Russia's bestseller." *The Independent*, 2022.  
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/george-orwell-1984-novel-bestseller-russia-b2246388.html>

Suri, Jeremi. "The Rise and Fall of an International Counterculture, 1960-1975." *The American Historical Review*, vol. 114, no. 1, 2009, pp. 45–68

Thomas, P. L. "Adventures in genre!: Rethinking genre through comics/graphic novels." *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* 2.2 (2011): 187-201.

Thorp, Malcolm R. "The Dynamics of Terror in Orwell's '1984.'" *Brigham Young University Studies*, vol. 24, no. 1, 1984, pp. 3–17

Vaninskaya, Anna. "The Orwell Century and After: Rethinking Reception and Reputation" in *Modern Intellectual History*, Vol. 5, issue 3, 2008, p. 596-617.

Waddell, Nathan (dir.) *The Cambridge Companion to Nineteen Eighty-four*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2020.

Walsh, John. "BBC proposes 8ft tall bronze statue in honour of George Orwell", *The Independent*, 2016.  
<https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/tv/features/bbc-proposes-8ft-tall-bronze-statue-in-honour-of-george-orwell-a6971961.html>

Zucchi Jérémy, *1984 en BD par Derrien et Torregrossa : l'illusion de la fidélité*, Culturellement votre, 2021. <https://culturellementvotre.fr/2021/02/03/critique-1984-en-bd-par-derrien-et-torregrossa-lillusion-de-la-fidelite/>



UNIVERSITÉ CATHOLIQUE DE LOUVAIN  
Faculté de philosophie, arts et lettres

Place Blaise Pascal, 1 bte L3.03.11, 1348 Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgique | [www.uclouvain.be/fial](http://www.uclouvain.be/fial)