

Unmasking the Deep State in George Orwell's *1984* and Gamal Al Ghitani's *Al Zayni Baraka*

Waleed Samir Ali
Faculty of Education, Tanta University

Abstract:

Representing a serious threat to the welfare of any society, the "deep state" is a salient feature of dictatorial regimes. Adopting a panoptic vision, the state power employs various forms of force and domination to dehumanize its citizens and violate their basic human rights. This paper shows how George Orwell's 1984 and Gamal Al Ghitani's Al Zayni Barakat, in spite of belonging to two different cultures and despite depicting two different periods, share the same vision in their exploration of the nature of totalitarian regimes and the coercive measures they adopt to maintain social conformity and control over their citizens. The unmasking of the "deep state" in both novels will be illuminated in the light of the four major theorists: Gramsci, Althusser, Bentham and Foucault. The paper emphasizes that both novels, which can be considered a prototypical example of dystopian fiction, are timeless works that reject despotism everywhere and at anytime. Presenting the world as a great prison which strips its prisoners of their intrinsic human rights, both writers yearn for a world overwhelmed with freedom, equality and justice. However, in their portrayal of this world, as the paper illuminates, both writers adopt different approaches and techniques including political allegory, parody, intertextuality and flashback.

Key words: Deep State, human rights, dehumanization, dystopian fiction, techniques

Defining the "deep state," Karatzogiunni and Robinson state:

The 'deep state' is not necessarily the visible state-indeed, is rarely so-nor necessarily a powerful group inside it; it also includes the apparatchiks of governmentality, to the extent that they act on the state role by subtracting rather than adding axioms. The position of formal rules, procedures and law is ambiguous between the two – the deep state operates on the basis of the 'exception' of laws and their subordination to exterior rights

The deep state performs solely reactive and repressive functions ... [Its] logic frequently uses its foundational status within state agencies as a means or claim on exceptional status, a kernel of suspension of other social logics, from which it periodically emerges to corrode the restrictions placed on it by means of the construction of a permanent emergency. (58)

A state within the state, the "deep state" seems to perform what the state is unable publically to do particularly in its violation of human rights and law in general. The state and its other facet, the "deep state," work successfully in totalitarian regimes as both have one common goal, i.e., power. Both are interested in maintaining their self-interests through various forms of coercive measures.

Claiming to act for the general good of the people, the "deep state," in both Orwell's *1984* and Al-Ghitani's *Al Zayni Barakat*, uses various means of force and domination to sustain the state power. Both adopt coercive measures to maintain social conformity and control over their citizens, turning their life into hell and the whole society into a big prison. Both novels offer a nightmarish vision of life under totalitarian regimes. The prophetic vision both novels give is manifest in the growth of several repressive regimes prospering in several parts of the world such as Latin America, the Middle East and South Africa. In both novels, the writers present their critique of the malpractices of the state and its representatives which are viewed, by the writers, as a great betrayal of the principles of Socialism. In both novels, too, power is centralized in the hands of few people, the Party in *1984*, and Barakat, in *Al Zayni Barakat*.

Orwell's *1984* offers an image of a totalitarian regime which is dominated by the One Party and its infallible leader. The "deep state" is represented by O'Brien and the four ministers that administer the whole life in Oceania: the Ministry of Truth, the Ministry of Love, the Ministry of Plenty and the Ministry of Peace. The social structure of Oceania is representative of any totalitarian system. It is divided into three main classes: the Inner Party, the Outer Party and the Proles. Though formulating 85% of the population of Oceania, the Proles are actually non-existent. For the Party, the Proles- as O'Brien explains- are "helpless, like the animals. Humanity is the Party. The others are outside-irrelevant" (*1984* 222).

If the Proles are on the margins of society, the Party and its members are in its center. The novel is mainly concerned with illustrating the motivation and practices of the party to preserve its interests. O'Brien explains that

the party seeks power entirely for its own sake. We are not interested in the good of others; we are interested solely in power. Not wealth or luxury or long or happiness; only power. ... We are different from all the oligarchies of the past in that we know what we are doing. ... We know that no one ever seizes power with the intention of relinquishing it. Power is not a means; it is an end. One does not establish a dictatorship in order to safeguard a revolution; one makes the revolution in order to establish the dictatorship. (*1984* 217-220)

Not only echoing the Machiavellian doctrine of the Renaissance, which the novel parodies, but O'Brien's words also reveal the ideology adopted by the Party, i.e., totalitarianism. Power is considered the ultimate end of any dictatorship. Revolutions are not made to bring happiness or

prosperity to the people. According to O'Brien, revolutions are made to preserve the self-interests of few people in power. The major metaphor implied in O'Brien's words, "if you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face – forever" (1984 220), shows how dictatorship resorts to violation and transgression of human rights to survive.

Unlike *1984*, which imagines life under totalitarianism in the future, *Al Zayni Barakat* depicts a similar image during the Mamluk era in the sixteenth century. Focusing on the causes that led to the defeat of the Mamluk rule in Marg Dabeq battle (1517), the novel is meant to reflect on the June 5th, 1967 defeat in the modern era. Analysis of the novel shows that Al-Ghitani attributes several causes, e.g. the growing influence of the "deep state," political corruption, moral decadence, social injustice, the firm grip of the intelligence, despotism and other facets of totalitarianism, for the defeat in both battles. The novel depicts the rise to and abuse of power of a group of power-hungers forming the "deep state" that dominated Egypt during the last twelve years of the Mamluk reign. The tragic irony revealed after reading the novel is that in both the Mamluk era and the modern one, Egypt was defeated inwardly through corruption and tyranny before it was defeated outwardly by the Ottomans /Israel. A strong condemnation of both regimes calls for a reconsideration of the crimes committed in the name of justice and law so as to establish a better Egypt.

The theoretical framework of the ideology adopted by the "deep state" in both *1984* and *Zayni Barakat* can be best illuminated in terms of the works of the four major theorists: Gramsci, Althusser, Bentham and Foucault. According to Mouffe, Gramsci's concept of ideology is concerned with maintaining "subjectivity". He argues that in order to maintain subjectivity, Gramsci "posits consciousness not as originally given but as the effect of the system of ideological relations into which the individual is inserted. Thus it is ideology which creates subjects and makes them act" (303). *1984* depicts the annihilation and reformulation of Winston's consciousness, the crushing of his spirit and the negation of his identity as prerequisites to the creation of a subject that complies with the ideology of the Party. O'Brien acts as the Party's main exponent who puts its ideology into practice. He assumes the same function that Gramsci attributes to intellectuals, "they are the ones responsible for elaborating and spreading organic ideologies and they are the ones who will have to realize moral and intellectual reform" (qtd. in Mouffe 303). In addition to

intellectuals, other "hegemonic apparatuses" such as churches, schools, the media, etc. are entitled with propagating the state ideology.

A successful means of maintaining the Proles' subjectivity is by controlling their memories and thought. Winston, for example, argues that "the past was dead" (1984 25) and, consequently, the future cannot be conceived. Thought is controlled through brainwashing. The Party is used to convert its opponents through brainwashing. The result is that the Party's enemies become its main supporters. The famous scene of Winston's torture where O'Brien asks him how many fingers he is holding up is a perfect example of dehumanization and brainwashing. Though holding up four fingers, Winston is forced by O'Brien to believe they are five. Whenever Winston says they are four he is hit by jolts of electricity. He is forced to believe in what the Party holds as true. His own freedom of thought is completely diminished. O'Brien, the representative of the "deep state," reminds him that "sometimes they are five. Sometimes they are three. Sometimes they are all of them at once. You must try harder. It is not easy to become sane" (1984 207).

Similarly, people are forced to believe in and adopt the Party's famous slogans such as "War is Peace," "Freedom is Slavery" and "Ignorance is Strength" (1984 17). Though contradictory, this strategy is meant to force the complete submission of the people to the Party's ideology. Moreover, the Oceanians have to accept the fact that any of them would simply vanish and his history would be simply erased as if he never existed before. Syme simply vanishes. He "had ceased to exist, he had never existed" (1984 122).

Double thinking is also a successful means of thought control. It is practised through forging documents and even deleting them if they are unnecessary. Like brainwashing, it holds the truth adopted by the Party as absolute. In this way, "the past was erased, the erasure was forgotten, the lie became the truth" (1984 64). Ironically, Winston is caught in this web of lies. Working at the Ministry of Truth, Winston's main job is to rewrite history to conform to the Party's goal. His task is to make sure that

day by day and almost minute by minute the past was brought up to date. In this way every prediction made by the party could be shown by documentary evidence to have been correct; nor was any item of news, or any expression of opinion, which conflicted with the needs of the moment, ever allowed to remain or record. All history was a palimpsest, scraped clean and reinscribed exactly as often as was necessary. (1984 36)

The Party does not only forge the past but aims to control the future as well. The falsification of history has been a main target in totalitarian regimes, a process illuminated by Orwell when he describes Winston's work: "as soon as all the corrections which happened to be necessary in any particular number of the *Times* had been assembled and collated, that number would be reprinted, the original copy destroyed, and the corrected copy placed on the files in its stead" (1984 36).

Like Winston, Julia's work is to rewrite literature. Working on book-writing machines, she is responsible for producing pornography which the Party calls "prolefeed." It aims at eliminating the moral, emotional and psychological records of humanity embodied in literature classics. So, eliminating fiction of the past is another crime committed by the Party which aims at forging and reshaping the consciousness of the Oceanians. The ongoing process of rewriting history, fiction and the past in general is also paralleled with confiscating books from the Proles' houses which is a great violation of free thought.

The task of both Winston and Julia may be seen as a perfect expression of Foucault's discourse on power/knowledge relation, a discourse which is "a reworking of Nietzsche's idea of the will to power" (Pickett 10). The Party, in Foucauldian and Nietzschean terms, holds no truth as absolute, timeless or historical. Rather, truth is subject to continuous change and modification. The Party, furthermore, has managed to affect the linguistic, moral, bureaucratic and other structures in the Oceanian society. The Party became the only source of knowledge production. According to Pickett, "Nietzsche and Foucault's views of power culminate in the claim that power produces identity. Each agent is the creation and expression of power" (11). By stripping the Oceanians of their basic human rights, the Party has controlled its own subjects. Absolute freedom is granted to the Party which can lie, twist or distort the truth to suit its own purposes. In this way, as Pickett's argues, "individuals are both the objects and vehicles of that power as they restage the various rituals and practices which created them" (17).

In *Al Zayni Barakat*, brainwashing is also used to propagate the state ideology. For example, "the spy's task... is to administer justice among the people. But he does so in a manner unacceptable to the people. ... What we see as justice is seen by others as injustice and as a crime" (*Barakat* 192). Like the Party in 1984, Barakat, in *Al Zayni Barakat*, manipulates state propaganda (sublime decrees) and media (recurrent announcements) to inform people about his plans or orders. The

intelligence system (Ibn Radi and his spies) carries out Barakat's orders. Al-Ghitani portrays the strong relationship between state power and the media to control thought in the following scene where Ibn Radi

summoned the chief of the singers and story teller in Egypt, Ibrahim Ibn al-Sukkar wa al-limun. Ibrahim is one of his most loyal underlings. He supervises the story tellers in the cafés, the rababa strummers, the chanters on saints' anniversaries and religious gatherings. Everything they told or sang ... had to be approved in advanced by Ibrahim ibn al-Sukkar wa al-Limun who would omit whatever he deemed to be against religion or morality or insinuations against notables or emirs. Ibrahim came to Zakariyya every Tuesday to repost to him on the singers and story tellers, how they were doing and what was going on among them and what each of them planned to do, be that on a personal or professional level. (*Barakat* 77-78)

Instigating people against Barakat, Ibn Radi asked Ibrahim Ibn al-Sukkar wa-Limun to

prepare a story to be told to the accompaniment of the rababa, about a man of unknown origin, without roots, on whom fortune suddenly smiled and who claimed that he was going to establish justice on earth. He told him to have four storytellers recite it that night at Lundi's and Bahguri's in Husayniyya and at Yunis's in Fustat and Abu-al-Ghayt in Bulaq. The first and the second are among the biggest fenugreek, giver and narghile emporia in Egypt and the patrons are well off men, who start smoking the real stuff after the evening prayers. As for the third and fourth, they are modest establishments, and the patrons are low-class, mostly labourers. Two days later, the story would be told in ten shops in different neighborhoods in Cairo. In one week it is going to be the talk of the town, and at that point, the spies planted among the different audiences can dot the I's and cross the t's if the idiots have failed to grasp the real meaning. (*Barakat* 28)

This passage shows the manipulation of the media by the intelligence to spread and nourish the ideas acclaimed by the state to support its ideology.

Like Gramsci, Althusser stresses the significance of hegemony and its relation to state ideology. He argues that

the school (... also other state institutions like the church, or other apparatuses like the Army) teaches 'know-how,' but in forms which ensures *subjection to the ruling ideology* or the mastery of its 'practice'. All the agents of production, exploitation and repression, not to speak of the 'professional of ideology' (Marx), must in one way or another be 'steeped' in this ideology in order to perform their task of the exploited (the proletarians), of the exploiters (the capitalists), of the exploiters' auxiliaries (the mangers), or of the high priests of the ruling ideology (its 'functionaries') etc. (206)

Althusser differentiates between state power and state apparatuses. He also identifies the "repressive" state apparatus as another reality which is not to be confused with his concept of "Ideological State Apparatuses" ISAS. According to him, ISAS includes

the government, the Administration, the Army, the Police, the courts, the prisoners, etc., which constitute what I shall in the future call the Repressive State Apparatus. Repressive suggests that the state Apparatus in question 'functions by violence'—at last ultimately (since repression, e.g. administrative repression, may take non-physical forms. (206)

On the other hand,

the role of repressive state apparatus, in so far as it is a repressive apparatus, consists essentially in *securing by force (physical or otherwise) the political conditions of the reproduction of the relations of production which are in the last resort relations of exploitation*. Not only does the state apparatus contribute generously to its own reproduction (...), but also and above all, the state apparatus secures by repression (from the most brutal physical force, via mere administrative commands and interdictions, to open and tacit censorship) the political condition for the action of the Ideological State Apparatuses. (210) (Italics are the writer's)

It is the repressive state apparatuses that protect the ruling ideology. It is only through repression that the state could function. In 1984, for example, the Party acts as both the ideological and repressive state apparatuses. It is entitled with setting and observing rules. Accordingly, the Proles are subject to all forms of repression, both physical and psychological. They are insignificant, invisible, scarcely noticed. Orwell comments that "it is probable that there were some millions of Proles for whom the lottery was the principle if not the only reason for remaining alive" (1984 73). Similarly, in *Barakat*, the common Egyptians are victims to a repressive regime that tortures them both physically and psychologically. They are manipulated as means to rise to authority.

The state ideology destroys basic units of society such as the family. In 1984, children are indoctrinated earlier into the Party. They are used by the thought police to spy on their parents. They are brainwashed to conform to the Party. Describing the reaction of children toward Winston when he went to fix his neighbour's sink, the writer narrates that one of the boys tells Winston, "You're a traitor! You're thought-criminal! You're an Eurasian spy! I'll shoot you, I'll vaporize you, I'll send you to the salt mines!" (1984 23). Explaining her children's aggressive attitude, Mrs Parson, the neighbor, says that they were upset because they could not go to witness a hanging earlier that day. Such a reaction reflects the

strong authority of the Party over the members of society especially children who become easy targets for the Party to brainwash. Moreover, children are often rewarded by the Party when they inform against their parents. Winston himself usually reads a story about a "child-hero" in the paper. Children are more loyal to the Party than to their families. The Party comes first.

In *Barakat*, the hegemonic apparatuses were also useful tools in visualizing the state ideology. Al-Azhar's students used to inform against each other. Children, too, spy on their parents. A husband, such as Abu Al Jud, is forced to be separated from his wife, denied his fortune and finally killed.

Religion is also manipulated in both *1984* and *Barakat* to propagate the state ideology. In *1984*, for example, the Party's ideology is being embraced as the new ideology. O'Brien says of himself and the Inner Party members: "We are the priests of power" (1984 217). Big Brother is conceived as the new savior. One of the famous rituals/recreation of the Oceanians is the "Hate Week" which is celebrated by them. During a "Two Minutes Hate," for example, when the Big Brother's face is shown on the screen, a woman cries "My Savior" (1984 17). She even extends her arms towards his image before she buries her face in her hands and prays. In another "Two Minutes Hate," Orwell shows the inner struggle of Winston: "In a lucid moment Winston found that he was shouting with the others and kicking his heel violently against the ring of his chair. The horrible thing about the Two Minutes Hate was not that one was obliged to act a part, but on the contrary, it was impossible to avoid it" (1984 16). It is remarkable that the ideology adopted by the Party itself is not based on love or the good of the people. O'Brien states that: "progress in our world will be progress toward more pain. The old civilizations claimed that they were founded on love and justice. Ours is founded upon hatred" (1984 220).

Religion is also manipulated by the state in *Barakat* to legitimize its repressive strategies. Quranic verses pertaining to repression and surveillance are used as epigraphs to the beginning of the fifth pavilion which depicts the Conference scene such as "Lo! Thy Lord is ever Watchful," "Verily, God is the Knower of things hidden" and "He utters no word but there is with him an observer" (*Barakat* 191). Religious accounts are also distorted to justify surveillance:

No wise man will claim the existence of a single human being who is loved by all his people. Such a person has not been created yet. Wasn't

the seal of the prophets and the Master of Mankind, Muhammad, persecuted by his people? Didn't the Jews throw stones at him from the walls of Ta'if, causing the heat to burn the bottom of his feet and his blood to flow? Didn't they conspire to kill him? (*Barakat* 192)

In fact, men of religion are presented as ineffective to make any change. The novel presents two types of them. Sheikh Abu al-Su'ud is an embodiment of the pious positive religious scholar who – though deceived by Barakat at the beginning of the novel – does not hesitate to imprison and punish him himself for his injustices. Moreover, he gathers people to defend Egypt against the attacks of the Ottomans. The second type of men of religion is Sheikh Rihan al Bayroni. As narrated in the novel, he is pleased with being near princes and statesmen. He used to go to prostitution houses when he was a young man. He is very happy to marry his daughter to a prince's son. He is more interested in seeking power than in effecting a change or fighting against Barakat's corruption. In addition, religious fatwa" is modified to justify state orders. For example, Ibn Radi convinces one of the Sheikhs to issue a "fatwa" claiming that Barakat's lanterns are irreligious. Consequently, they are prohibited by the Sultan.

Surveillance is a successful strategy adopted by the state to maintain subjectivity. Oceania and Egypt are transformed into big panopticons. Illuminating the goal of panoptical control, Strub argues that "people will obey the prevailing rules and norms when they know they are being watched" (Strub 40). Though Bentham aimed at reforming prisoners as they know they are being watched all the time, the main motive of both the Party and Barakat is quite different. Disinterested in the good of the people in the first place, they use this strategy to keep their subjects under complete control. In addition, Foucault's elaboration of the concept of "Panopticon" is based on Bentham's work. Foucault suggests a strong relationship between panopticon and power relations. In his *Discipline and Punishment* Foucault argues that

the major effect of the Panopticon [is] to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent invisibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. So to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action; that the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary; that this architectural apparatus should be a machine for creating and sustaining a power relation independent of the person who exercises it; in short, that the inmate should be caught up in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers. (Trans. Alan Sheridan 201)

Elaborating Althusser's work, Foucault argues that panopticon can "provide an apparatus for supervising its own mechanisms" (*Discipline* 204), in addition to determining and altering the individual's behavior. Furthermore, it embodies the critical transformation of repressive apparatus into a means of perception which results in instilling self-discipline. It embodies the critical transformation of repressive apparatus into a means of perception which results in instilling self-discipline and conformity in the minds of the people. As state power grows decentralized, the panopticon thrives on manipulating the individual's desire to be seen and fear of being punished. In such a society, the individual is "seen, but he does not see, he is the object of information, never a subject in communication" (Foucault, *Discipline* 200). Unlike Bentham's concept of panopticon, which is limited to the prison and devoted to criminals, Foucault extends the concept to include the whole society. Society becomes a metaphor for a big prison: "the panopticon ... must be understood as a generalizable mode of functioning; a new way of defining power relations in terms of the everyday life of man" (Foucault, *Discipline* 205).

To maintain full control over the people, the state manipulates various means of technology. For example, the telescreen is put in every house. Winston and the rest of Oceanians are watched by television sets which check their behavior and spy on them. A giant- like creature, the telescreen is on all the day. It cannot be turned off. It has only one channel. There is no way to escape its gaze or that of Big Brother who is "watching you" all day. Any facial expression is checked. Along with other media means, the telescreen is a successful apparatus for suppressing and terrorizing the Oceanians and maintaining panoptic control. The sense of privacy is quite lost as the telescreens are not only put in every house but also in public places as well as Winston's work. They are also used for propaganda.

Another method of control is the use of helicopters which can arrive and peer at people's windows. In addition, the Party has devised a new language. Newspeak, the language Ingsoc, which is successfully adopted by the thought police, is meant to be another means of thought control. In fact, Oceania has two languages: old speak, which is the language of ordinary people, and Newspeak, the official language used by the Party. Language is always being checked, revised and restructured to conform to the Party's aims. New words are always added whereas old ones are usually removed. New dictionaries are updated. Syme tells Winston: "We're destroying words-scores of them, hundreds of them,

every day. We're cutting the language down to the bone" (1984 45). Vocabularies are shortened every day. Memories are controlled, even removed if they contradict with the Party's official narrative. Syme remarks that the aim of Newspeak is "to narrow the range of thought [...]. In the end we shall make thought crime literally impossible, because there will be no words in which to express it" (1984 46). Such a process of continuously reshaping the mentality and reformulating people's consciousness had a great effect on the Oceanians. Furthermore, the success of the Party to control knowledge is a sharp example of the violation of the individual's freedom.

The culmination of the state's panoptical control in *Zayni Barakat* is the international conference for spies which is held in Cairo. Due to the success of Egypt in the field of spying, it was chosen to be the head and setting of the conference. Representatives of many nations worldwide gathered in Egypt to exchange views pertaining to the innovation and efficacy of spying methods. Proud of his achievements, Ibn Radi numerates them as well as those of Barakat. Fact and fiction blend together. Deception and illusion are effective tools. The conference discusses several issues such as the concept of spying, the tasks appointed to the spy, the best methods adopted to force a prisoner to confess the truth, the preparation of prisoners' food, the proper ways to disturb their sleep, etc. Ibn Radi also declares the inauguration of new methods of maintaining control. For example, new records of people's lives will be presented. People will be called by numbers not names. Special types of spies will be appointed according to the different classes of society. Moreover, spies are well-trained to be liked by the people. Methods of reaching the truth are also discussed. The attempt to convince people that what does exist really exists is also discussed. The conference is, furthermore, seen as a perfect example of the repressive state apparatuses (IRS) which is meant to promote security and panoptical control for the sake of the state.

To maintain control over the Oceanians / Egyptians, both the Party and Barakat resort to instilling fear and terror among their people. For example, in 1984, Winston is always afraid of being taken away in the middle of the night and never come back again. Anyone could be reported as missing, never to show up again. All records pertaining to the missed person will be erased. To overcome his fears, Winston resorts to drinking Gin which he "gulped it down like a dose of medicine" (1984 8) and to writing. He begins to write a diary – though with no definite purpose: "for whom, it suddenly occurred to him to wonder, was he writing this diary?"

For the future, for the unborn" (1984 10). Obsessed with his fears, he hides the diary behind the wall to escape the death penalty if it is discovered.

Another example of instilling fear in the minds of the Oceanians is the creation of perpetual enemies. So Oceania is in constant war with its allies/enemies: Eurasia and Eastasia. Orwell comments on these aimless wars: "the war therefore, if we judge it by the standards of previous wars, is merely an imposture. It is like the battles between certain ruminant animals whose horns are set at such an angle that they are incapable of hurting one another" (1984 164). Endless and aimless, these wars are manipulated by the Party to agitate people, creating "hate-week" sessions. Similarly, Emanuel Goldstein is depicted as a major enemy of the Party. Drawn on the image of Trotsky, Stalin's major enemy, Goldstein's photos are displayed on telescreens. He is never shown in person. Yet, he is revealed as the Party's arch enemy: "he was the primal traitor, the earliest defiler of the Party's purity. All subsequent crimes against the Party, all treacheries, acts of sabotage, heresies, deviations, sprang directly out of his teaching" (1984 14). A ghost-like figure, Goldstein can be perceived as the Party's own invention to subject people. His group, the fabulous Brotherhood, is also doubtful.

The writer describes Winston's conflicting attitude toward Goldstein at the beginning of the novel. His face

resembled the face of a sheep, and the voice, too, had a shape-like quality. Goldstein was delivering his usually venomous attack on the doctrines of the party – an attack so exaggerated and perverse that a child should have been able to see through it, and yet just plausible enough to fill one with an alarmed feeling that other people, less level-headed than oneself, might be taken in by it. (1984 14)

After reading Goldstein's *The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism*, in which he analyzes the origin of totalitarian state, Winston starts to see him as an intelligent man with great intellectual insight. Describing Winston's attitude after reading Goldstein's work, Orwell writes:

After reading [extracts from Goldstein's book] he knows better than before that he was not mad. There was truth and untruth, and if you clung to the truth even against the whole world, you were not mad. [...]. He was safe, everything was all right. He fell asleep, murmuring 'sanity is not statistical,' with the feeling that this remark contained in it a profound wisdom. (1984 179)

However, Winston's feeling of sanity and comfort are aborted by O'Brien's claim that he himself had written much of Goldstein's book. Thus, in Dalvai's view

Winston (and the reader) will never know whether Goldstein really exists or whether he is yet another ruse used by the Party to keep the population of Oceania under control. There is a slight possibility that there exists a Brotherhood in Oceania, that all is not lost, although this seems unlikely. Tellingly Winston does not learn anything new, as he is interrupted in his reading just as he is about to start the section on the Party's ulterior motives. (391)

So, Winston is thrown once more in a perpetual abyss of uncertainty and frustration. Yet, the significance of Goldstein's book is that it

helps Winston realize two things: that he is not alone and that he wants to be actively involved in the resistance. Whether the book is a genuine political manifesto or a fake used by the Party to lure potential dissidents out of hiding, ultimately is not the issue.... Along with the appendix the *Principles of Newspeak* [Goldstein's book] constitutes a more theoretical and philosophical framework that complements the narrative parts of the novel. Goldstein's book and the appendix relate to topics that George Orwell showed a great interest in – that is to say, social changes and the relationship between language and politics. (Dalvai 392)

The most effective example of practicing fear to dehumanize people is the torture scenes in both *1984* and *Barakat*. O'Brien explains the ultimate goal of torture saying: "the goal of torture is torture" (*1984*, 217). The effect of torture on Winston is great. It shows how the Party can change people's minds to conform to its ideals. Winston is even made to believe that he is insane and that only brainwashing could cure him. The dehumanizing effect of this process on Winston as an individual is shown by O'Brien:

Never again you will be capable of ordinary human feeling. Everything will be dead inside you. Never again will you be capable of love, friendship, or joy of loving or laughter, or curiosity, or courage, or integrity. You will be hollow. We shall squeeze you empty, and then we shall fill you ourselves. (*1984* 211)

These are the same feelings which arouse in the reader when he/she reads the several methods adopted by Ibn Radi when he was torturing Ibn Abi al-Jud. Echoing the famous scene of Winston's torture in *1984*, Ibn Radi narrates the strange methods adopted in torturing Ibn Abi al-Jud whose crime is that he refused to tell "where he hides his money:"

His whole body shook. Suddenly a strong hand gave him a blow on the neck, producing sparks and blue stars in the dark emptiness

surrounding him. Three blows created a hot belt round his neck. And here begins the actual details of the torture

The first day: they bushed the underside of his feet with water and salt. They bought a small black goat with a white spot in its head, and it began to lick the salt and water slowly. His lips twitched, his ribs trembled. He started to scream. His screams turned into laughter until he fainted. They poured cold water on his face. (*Barakat* 115-116)

In the second day, Barakat himself supervised the torture process. He "kept pressing his middle finger into Ali's chest: at the same time one of his men raised a pitcher of water and caused it to drip: one drop at a time, at regular intervals. Before long, his neck shuddered and his whole body shook as if it were about to split into two halves" (*Barakat* 116). In the third day, they brought a "forgotten" prisoner and threaten Ali to be tortured like him: "They produced two red-hot horseshoes, which they began to nail to the heels of the terrified peasant. The screams of the peasant go to Ali's ribs, and whenever he tried to close his eyes, Uthman slapped him on the back of the neck with a piece of leather" (*Barakat* 116). In the fourth day, they slaughtered three "forgotten" prisoners and put their heads on Ali's chest. In the seventh day, they brought him his youngest son. Ali's reaction was strange: "He appeared to be distracted and in a daze, but when Khalil screamed, his father's eyes grew wider and he didn't hear the screams of his son" (116). Commenting on the effect of such methods of torture on Ali, Ibn Radi says:

what is amazing ... is that, after a certain period of time and after the variety of new torture methods which Zayni calls 'unconverging the truth', Ali Ibn Abi al-Jud is healthy again. The only change is what has happened to his eyes: now he looks only straight ahead, as if he were blind, except that he is sighted. When somebody calls his name, he does not answer; rather he bends down and lets his tongue drop like a dog. (*Barakat* 117)

Finally, an announcement declares that the sultan has ordered Ali Ibn Abi al-Jud to be executed: "he will dance like a woman, throughout the procession ... whenever he stops, slap him" (*Barakat* 117).

The fact that Barakat himself supervises the process of Ali's torture unmasks his real character. Rather than being a symbol of justice and piety, Barakat, like O'Brien in *1984*, epitomizes absolute power and retributive justice. Ironically, the sub-title of the third pavilion states that "We are against torturing the body. We will never allow burning a part of a man's body whoever he may be or to be nailed in his heels like a horse" (*Barakat*, 1988. 83 My translation). The statement is a complete falsehood, as the detailed description of Ibn Abi al-Jud's torture reflects

the utmost violation of human rights. The humiliation of Ali ibn Abi al-Jud and Winston is best portrayed by O'Brien himself:

We have beaten you, Winston. We have broken you up. You have seen what your body is like. Your mind is in the same state. I don't think there can be much pride left in you. You have been kicked and flogged and insulted, you have screamed with pain, you have rolled on the floor in your own blood and vomit. You have whimpered for mercy, you have betrayed everybody and everything. Can you think of a single degradation that has not happened to you? (1984 225)

The recurrent use of the pronoun "we" implies that O'Brien has identified himself as the Party, speaking for it and acting on its behalf. He is proud of dehumanizing and annihilating a fellow human being for the sake of power. Like Barakat, O'Brien is a perfect embodiment of the abuse of power. Dalvai remarks that "Orwell is a master at pointing out a defining quality of human beings: their innate tendency to abuse and pervert the power they are given" (402). Speaking for the Party, O'Brien says that "the Party seeks power entirely for its own sake" (1984 217).

Like O'Brien, Ibn Radi is proud of the effect of torture on Said al-Juhayni. He tells Barakat:

None of his movements escapes us. We know him better than he knows himself. After his beloved's marriage, he was very sad. We thought he was going to jump into the Nile or swallow some poison pill Addiction to tobacco and the new drink that we got from Yemen: coffee ... he began to frequent the house of Saniyya ibnat al-Khubbaiza. (Barakat 163)

Both Said and Mansour, who used to believe in Barakat as the hero and symbol of justice and equality, are persecuted for their dreams. Said is not only forced to be separated from his lover, but – as Ibn Radi's words show – is put under constant surveillance. Mansour, too, has lost all hope to change society. He asks Said:

Why do we keep hitting our heads against the obstinate rocks? Said, no intercession for people is to be hoped for; even our beloved prophet were to come back and try to fill the earth with justice and peace instead of the injustice and oppression with which it is now filled. Oh, Said, I have given up hope for the long-awaited, Mahdi, if he were to rise and come from the Kaaba, brandishing his golden sword, Zakariyya will confront him, ban him from entering the country, arrest him and throw him in the Maqshara prison, the only reality in the world. The first and last reality is Maqshara: all else is vanity. (Barakat 176-177)

Furthermore, the imprisonment and persecution of Said and Mansour have made them passive and alienated subjects. Said even legitimizes torture. Describing those who torture him, Said says: "they are trying hard to straighten him up and discipline him; doesn't a father beat and harshly discipline his children?" (*Barakat* 216). The patriarchal perspective in which Barakat's absolutism is conceived is adopted by the totalitarian regime ideology which depicts a tyrant as a father; therefore, violation of human rights is justified. The brainwashing process is complete when Said comes to the conclusion that his torture, the loud cries of his fellow prisoners, the rotten air of the cells and the marks of the chains in his hands are dreams not reality.

A study of both *1984* and *Al Zayni Barakat* shows the world as a nightmare. The vision of both Orwell and Al-Ghitani is anti-utopian in that it deconstructs all the ideals and notions associated with utopian literature which depicts a perfect society based on justice, equality and freedom, a society that respects human rights and holds the individual as a dignified, noble creature endowed with great capabilities. Both novels, in this way, parody utopian fiction. Whereas *1984* presents a totalitarian regime in the future, *Al Zayni Barakat* offers its vision of a similar one in the past. Both novels depict a regime that thrives on oppression, surveillance and adopts various means of persecution and torture – mental, physical and psychological – to preside over its subjects, and force them to comply with the state ideology. The Oceanians, in *1984*, and the Egyptians, in *Al Zayni Barakat*, are forced to adopt the state discourse of knowledge and to disregard their own beliefs, feelings or perspectives. Winston, for example, is forced to reject his entire past as "false memory" (Goltlieb 270-271). He adopts the truth advocated by the Party as the absolute one. Similarly, Said, Mansour and Ibn Abi-al Jud are forced to perceive their torture as dreams. All are forced to conceive Big Brother / Barakat, Ibn Radi as their beloved rulers.

The genre that both novels best fit in is dystopian fiction. Claeys defines dystopia as "inverted-mirror, negative version of utopia" (14). He argues that "if 'utopia' entails the distinction of any kind of idealized society regarded as superior to the present by its author, 'dystopia' implies its negation, or any kind of society regarded inferior by its author" (14). Illuminating the nature of dystopia, Davis says:

It is possible to interpret dystopia not simply [...] as a parodic inversion of utopia that must necessarily discredit the genre as a whole but, rather, as a generic form which combines satire on existing society with a parodic inversion of transcendent or controlling utopian

aspirations. It does so characteristically by reasserting the connection between utopia and history that the transcendent utopian imagination obscures. (26)

Similarly, Rooney argues that “though often satirical, dystopias are specifically futuristic, typically employing a plot that culminates in disaster or catastrophe, the prospect of which is terrifying to contemplate” (70).

Both Orwell's *1984* and Al Ghitani's *Al Zayni Barakat* could be considered dystopian fiction. The society both depict is not imaginative in the sense that it is unrealistic. Rather, both novels are embedded within their historical context that they cannot be fully appreciated without considering the ideological and intellectual contexts of the 1930s and 1940s in *1984* and the Mamluk/Nasserite eras in *Barakat*. Both emerged during periods of intensive struggle and intellectual and socio-political instability. Both came as a direct response to the turmoil going on in their world. For example, *1984* was written after the massive destruction caused by the Second World War which resulted in the dismantling of several regimes. Though creating a fictional world in *1984*, Orwell, according to Tyner, “incorporated contemporary events to create an atmosphere of documentary reality” (132). Furthermore, “the imaginary world of *1984*,” in Tyner’s view,

is of a totalitarian society modelled after the(real) fascist state of Mussolini’s Italy, the nationalist state of Hitler’s Germany and the Communist state of Stalin’s Soviet Union. The form of social control, accordingly, is manifest more broadly of thought and the destruction of memory, history and the debasement of language, and thus speaks to totalitarian systems in general. (135)

Similarly, several critics draw strong affinities between the world created by Al- Ghitani in *Al Zayni Barakat* and the Nasserite era during the 1960s. In his forward to the translation of *Barakat*, Edward Said states that

Al-Ghitani’s disenchanted reflections upon the past directly associates Zayni’s rule with the murky atmosphere of intrigue, conspiracy and multiple schemes that characterized Abdel Nasser’s rule during the 1960s, a time, according to Ghitani, spent on futile efforts to control and improve the moral standard of Egyptian life, even as Israel(the Ottomans) prepared for invasion and regional dominance. (viii)

Mehrez adds that the success of the novel is due to “the richness and experimental nature of the narrative itself, as well as its immediate relevance to the contemporary political situation of the Middle East in

particular, and authority- people dynamics in their relation questions of power and knowledge in general” (1994, 96). The fact that both Orwell and Al- Ghitani draw on or incorporate elements of their socio-political milieu into their works should not lure the reader to perceive both novels as mimetic representations of reality. Rather, both novelists employ parody – whether through creating an image of the world in the future- as in *1984*- or delving into the remote past- as in *Al Zayni Barakat*- to comment on the present. The novels, in this way, raise questions about the nature of representation and reality itself. Supporting this point, Meyer argues:

Ghitani does not attempt to represent specific figures on the Egyptian political scene in a veiled way in his novel, but rather only to create a general picture of a society that resembles the Egyptian society of his day. It is not so much that the repressive conditions of his fictive historical Egypt is seen as equivalent to that of his present- day model. Rather, by means of his fictional account the reader grasps the nature and mechanism of power, and the way it is used for repressive ends. At the same time, however, Ghitani builds a mood of uncertainty, gloom and cynicism. (58)

It is by perceiving the novels within such a framework that the unbelievable nature of Oceania or Mamluk Egypt becomes the inevitable outcome of the working of totalitarianism gone to its extreme; hence the significance of employing the form of dystopian satire which, in Gottlieb's view, has an important function:

It may ask fundamental questions about the foundation and the limits of our humanity, but does so within a societal framework. Unlike tragedy, it is not satisfied within asking the question; it also has a message, a didactic intent. Consequently, as a cerebral genre, it makes a more direct appeal to the rational thought process, and the nature of catharsis must be appropriate to the genre. (272-273)

Didactic in function, both *1984* and *Al Zayni Barakat* warn against the impending dangers of totalitarianism. Unlike the previous utopian writings which "expressed the belief in mankind's constant progress toward a better life" (Dalvai 388), both *1984* and *Al Zayni Barakat* present humanity at stake. The Oceanian/Egyptian society will never achieve progress or develop as long as it is controlled by the Party/Barakat.

The didactic message of both novels is illuminated through the use of satire. Both novels satirize the totalitarian ideology and its manipulation of state apparatuses to maintain subjectivity and safeguard its interests. In *1984*, O'Brien and the members of the Outer Party are

satirized for betraying the ideals of the Revolution. They are depicted as power-hungers who are too weak to challenge the state power. The manipulation of language and the distortion of history are also condemned. Crick remarks that “the destruction by the Ministry of Truth of any objective history and truth ... [is] a satiric exaggeration of how historical figures like Trotsky and Bukharin had simply vanished both from the Soviet historical and even photographic archives” (147).

A satire on totalitarianism, *1984* is also a parody of European intellectual and philosophical history of the 1930s and 1940s. Orwell unveils the intellectual fallacies of totalitarian society by parodying older utopias, thus fulfilling the goal of parody, as Hutcheon perceives, i.e., to raise rage against the social order and to teach the reader about the shortcomings of the state ideology. *1984* is, in Hutcheon's terms, a parody, an “imitation, but imitation characterized by ironic inversion” (8). It succeeds in creating a "critical distance" by employing various techniques such as parody and intertextuality. The reader is aware of the great connotations and identification of Oceanian society with the totalitarian regime of the Soviet Union and Big Brother as Stalin. The reader is well aware of the critical implication of the often references and allusions to the intellectual framework of European thinking of the 1930s and 1940s through occasional references to Trotsky, Marcuse, Burham, Malthus and others. By reversing other utopias, *1984* encourages the reader to criticize and evaluate dominant ideologies and realize their danger.

The Appendix, in *1984*, is an example of parody. By displaying the principles of Newspeak, the novel parodies the destruction of language. Unlike some critics who argue that the Appendix is irrelevant, Gottlieb argues that it is "an organic part of the novel" (266-267). Like Goldstein's book, Gottlieb maintains that the Appendix “helps create a sense of emotional distance between the central character and the reader. It allows us to take a purely cerebral overview of the satire's target, the totalitarian mentality” (267). In addition, *1984* is a parody of man's endeavor to avoid his tragic doom, his vain struggle with merciless powers that undermine and strip him of his dignity. Unlike classical tragedy in which the hero acquires self-knowledge, Winston fails to grasp that moment of enlightenment.

A parody of the narrative accounts of the last years of the Mamluk reign, *Al Zayni Barakat* is not meant to be a mere imitation of medieval chronicles. Rather, it is addressed to 20th century Egypt. It satirizes the

loss and betrayal of the old ideals of July 1952 Revolution, the Arab Nationalism dream which ended with the June 5th 1967 defeat and the Israeli occupation of many parts of the Arab countries. In addition, *Barakat* satirizes the growing influence of the Nasser's Intelligence system which aimed at maintaining state ideology by using force. *Barakat* is also a parody of 16th century Egypt as registered in old chronicles. Al-Ghitani is thus imitating history, inverting it to investigate the 1977 defeat, and consequently complying with Hutcheon's definition of parody. In this way, the novel could be interpreted as a political allegory which shows political corruption, despotism, the struggle of statesmen over power, and self-interests as the main causes for the 1516 Marg Dabeq/June 1967 defeat.

Furthermore, Al-Ghitani's employment of parody, in Mehrez's view, could be "identifiable on the level of style, where some of the most prominent stylistic characteristics of medieval Islamic historiography are reused to create the 'fictional world' of the novel"(1994, 103). To promote that 'fictional world,' Al-Ghitani resorts to narrative structure which would create 'detachment' and 'objectivity.' Mehrez argues that "both narrated discourse and variations on passive constructions are means by which a historian can demonstrate his 'detachment' and 'objectivity.' At the same time they are 'non-incriminating' devices. They do not allow for a reliable source of information" (1994, 103). Therefore, they could be successful means of communicating the writer's message and escaping the firm grip of censorship.

Zakariya Ibn Radi provides a great source of irony in *Barakat*. As Meyer points out:

Irony pervades the nature and methods of the police state run by Zakariyya. He is a perfectionist, dedicated to his profession, viewing it as both an art and a science. His ambition is to create the ultimate spy organization to serve the cause of the stability of the state, yet in the type of system which he imagines the state itself would be subsumed by its own security apparatus. (56)

Zakariya's oppressive strategies are often satirized. For example, his letters are often headed "May God keep this land secure" (*Barakat* 143) which implies piety, integrity, security and justice but which are contradictory with the inhumane means he employs to maintain that safety. The letters also abound with stories of torture and imprisonment. In the fifth Pavilion, for example, he gives a full description of the nature and qualifications and tasks of the "great spy" (*Barakat* 194) which

provides a great source of humour. Other strategies such as using numbers for people and spying on other spies are not only ironical of the inhumane means of totalitarian regimes but also recall to the reader's mind the bizarre ways the Party uses to maintain the subjectivity of the Oceanians in *1984*. However, the greatest irony is when Ibn Radi discovers that Barakat does not have a spying system of his own:

He realized that Zayni had never created a special team of spies to gather its own information; not a single spy worked for him. It was just the regular *Muhtasib* staff. Zakariyya has been working very hard all these years, leaving no stone unturned to find a single spy working for Zayni. His men couldn't. He was certain that Zayni's men were unparalleled when it came to camouflage and he held them in the highest esteem. Then Zakariyya realized he had been duped in the worst way. Zakariyya wished that there actually were a spy team working for Zayni; as it was, he had to admit that the whole matter was nothing but a rumour started by Zayni. He built a whole system in the air; he created it and didn't create it. (*Barakat* 225)

The great discrepancy between reality and appearance is also another source of irony. Al-Ghitani's device of employing several narrators helps intensify this irony. None of his narrators can claim to hold or present the ultimate truth. The traveler, for instance, whose claim to record Egyptian life and conditions, is only one side of the truth. Al-Ghitani satirizes the traveler's inability to grasp other facets of reality. So, while the traveler/narrator is preoccupied with describing the procession of the Mamluk Sultan, the reader, Mehrez argues, "turns the page to find that something equally significant is happening within Egypt. A summit meeting is being held for police chiefs from all over the world" (1994, 108). Similarly, the traveler is quite ignorant of the inhumane means Ibn Radi and Barakat employ to torture prisoners. Moreover, to quote Mehrez's words,

it is the traveler's genuine unawareness of the contrast between appearance and reality that makes him ironic. On the other hand, al-Ghitani, the silent ironist par excellence, makes the traveler the victim of irony by a simple juxtaposition of the letters memoirs and the secret letters of the authorities. As readers we have this totality of vision because we have the text. (1994, 109)

In order to intensify the dystopian vision of their novels, both Orwell and Al-Ghitani resort also to intertextuality. In *1984*, for instance, Goldstein's book represents not only a parody of the intellectual and ideological context of the 1930s and 1940s but it is also a successful example of Orwell's employment of intertextuality. It also formulates the theoretical frame for his dystopia. A book within the book, Goldstein's

The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism is also meant to be a metafiction, a comment on fiction as well as a satiric critique of European intellectual history. The mysterious nature of Goldstein's character, whether he is actually a real person or a fictitious one invented by the Party and whether he actually wrote his book or it was attributed to him reflects the uncertainty in Winston's mind which the Party has instilled in his mind through perpetual rewriting of history and deleting past memories.

Meant to explain the dominance of totalitarianism, Goldstein explains that compared with Oceania, “all the tyrannies of the past were half-hearted and inefficient” (1984 214). It also gives a justification for the Party’s centralization of power and property as it realizes that “the only secure basis for oligarchy is collectivism” (1984 214). It is for this reason that only the ruling class dominates the majority of Oceanians. Moreover, the Party manages to make full use of technology advances to spread its full control- mental, physical and psychological. All forms of life are controlled and watched. The Party forces subjectivity and general consent on the Oceanians.

In its illumination of the nature of the world structure depicted in 1984, Goldstein's book also refers to James Burnham's *Managerial Revolution* in which he divides the world into three super states. Dalavai explains that “Burnham imagines the world divided into three large parts, equally strong, each ruled by a self-elected elite, and thus to a certain extent predicts the bipolar world of the cold war” (399). Similarly, the Orwellian world is divided into three super states: Oceania, Eurasia and Eastasia. Orwell satirizes the endless and aimless wars and the growing powers of his time. He also explains that “none of the three super-states could be definitely conquered even by the other two in combination. They are too formidable” (1984 154). The irony implied in 1984 is that war itself has become a successful tool of propaganda used by the Party to instill fear and terror in the minds of the Oceanians. Like Goldstein, the news about the war is given to justify exerting more control on the Proles.

Malthus's ideas on population growth and death rate check, expressed in his *Essay on the Principle of Population*, are strongly adopted by the Party in its subjection of people's basic emotions and needs. Sexuality is also checked. Love is insignificant. The members of the Outer Party do not marry for love. They resort to preventive checks. Syme has only two children. In his discussion of war, Goldstein's adopts

Malthus's concept of preventive checks. Similarly, the Party cuts down food rate because plenty of wealth threatens hierarchical society:

It was possible, no doubt, to imagine a society in which *wealth*, in the sense of personal possessions and luxuries, should be evenly distributed, while *power* remained in the hands of a small privileged caste. But practice such a society could not long remain stable. For if leisure and security were enjoyed by all alike, the great mass of human beings who are normally stupefied by poverty would become literate and would learn to think for themselves; and when once they had done this, they would sooner or later realize that the privileged minority had no function, and they would sweep it away. In the long run, a hierarchical society was only possible on a basis of poverty and ignorance.
(1984 156-157)

The success of the Party to control not only Oceania's resources but also the Oceanians minds and thoughts and establish dimensional society ironically echoes Herbert Marcuse's belief that a highly industrial society is one dimensional in thought. Feeling that they are constantly watched all the time forces the Oceanians comply consciously or unconsciously with the Party's demands.

The success of the Police Control to spread its constant surveillance is a reincarnation of Jeremy Bentham's views of panoptical control. The Oceanian society has become a great panopticon. In the Oceanian police – state, behavior, thought and emotion are controlled. As O'Brien says:

Already we are breaking down the habits of thoughts which have survived from before the Revolution. We have cut the links between child and parent, and between man and man, and between man and woman. No one dares trust a wife or a child or a friend any longer. But in the future there will be no wives and no friends. Children will be taken from their mothers at birth, as one takes eggs from a hen. (1984 220)

Moreover, Strub argues that “the telescreen is the primary conceptual analogue of the panopticon's observation tower. In its all seeing function, it was vastly more sensitive, surpassing the panopticon's potential of achieving power over minds” (44). Yet, in Strub's view, *1984* represents a complete inversion of Bentham's utilitarianism. While Bentham rationalized all of his efforts at legislative and prison reform as an attempt to arrange for the greatest good of the greatest number, to maximize pleasure (good) and minimize pain (evil); *1984* depicted a government committed to stamping out pleasure and multiplying pain. Thus the world created in *1984* was utterly unfit for human beings to live in and quite antithetical to Bentham's philosophy of life. (45)

Rather, it is by parodying and satirizing Bentham's work that *1984* attains its nightmarish vision of a world stripped out of its humanity.

The ending of *1984* has also its intertextual overtones. Milner suggests that Orwell was familiar with four texts with the same "ending problem": Zamyatin's *We*, Cauvet Duhamet's French translation as *Nous autres*, Huxley's *Brave New World* and Solver's British translation of Capek's *R.U.R.* Milner argues that Orwell is much affected by the ending of *Nous autres* which consists of forty chapters and ends with a Note "LA FIN": "but it actually continues for a further six pages after 'LA FIN', just as the first edition of Nineteen Eighty-Four continues for a further fourteen after 'THE END' " (114).

In order to confirm the authenticity of his work, hence intensifying the dystopian vision of his novel, Al-Ghitani relies heavily on intertextuality. The novel is based on the historical accounts narrated in the chronicle of Muhammad Ibn Iyas's *Bada' al-Zuhur fi Waqa'I al-Duhur* which mentions Al Zayni Barakat as the successor of Ali ibn abi al-Jud who was hanged a few days after his arrest. Mehrez argues that

Ibn Iyas's chronicle provides al-Ghitani with an inexhaustible repertoire of historical data (bureaucratic and popular traditions. Furthermore, the medieval historiography provides him with specific stylistic and formal characteristics of historical discourse, which he draws upon constantly in others of his works as well. (1994, 101)

Like Ibn Iyas's chronicle, Barakat was the Inspector/Muhtasib of the last two Mamluk Sultans: Al-Ghuri and Toman Bey as well as Salim, the first Ottoman Sultan to rule Egypt. Like Ibn Iyas's narrative, Barakat – according to Abdel Wahab in his Note to the translation of *Al Zayni Barakat* – is "shown to be ambitious but fair, efficient and well-liked by the people as well as by the Mamluk and later on, the Ottoman rulers" (xvii). Similarly, Al-Ghitani borrows two other historical figures from both Ibn Iyas's narrative: Sheikh Abu al-Su'ud and Abu al-Khayr al-Murafi. The other characters such as "the Venetian traveler (...). Said al-Juhayni, Amr ibn al-Adawi, Shaykh Rihan and Zakariyya ibn Radi - are fictitious" (xix). Like Ibn Iyas's chronicles Zayni Barakat is also divided into pavilions. Al-Ghitani also succeeded in enriching his novel with the 16th century flavor by depicting Egyptian customs, beliefs tradition, and language of that period, which add to the illusion of reality to his work.

However, such adoption of events and form of Ibn Iyas's chronicle does not mean that *Barakat* is a historical novel. Meyer argues that *Barakat*'s "chief significance is its use of the form of the historical novel for the purpose of commenting on the present" (55). Furthermore, according to Meyer, "Ghitani does not attempt to represent specific figures on the Egyptian political scene in a veiled way in his novel, but rather only to create a general picture of a society that resembles the Egyptian society of his day" (58). In other words, it is by resorting to Iyas's medieval chronicles and creating a quasi-historical novel that Al-Ghitani is able to question the police state of modern Egypt. The chronicles also suggest that Egypt has been suffering from oppressive regimes for centuries, something which adds to the reader's feelings of fear and terror. The reader is forced to be involved in a world of, to quote Clark's words, "menace and uncertainty: political power may suddenly collapse, no person is safe from arbitrary arrest or torture" (n. pag.). Such milieu is not different from the one prevalent during the Nasserite era of the 1960s. In both the medieval and the modern eras, it is the individual who is suffering. Clarks suggests that the novel is "more than a document of the times. There are echoes of Kafka. The individual, at whatever level of society, has limited control over his destiny, his economic security or his personal liberty" (n. pag.). In this way, *Al Zayni Barakat* ceases to be an authentic documentation of the Egyptian suffering under totalitarian regimes whether during the medieval Mamluk reign or the modern Nasserite one. Rather, it becomes a strong commentary on and condemnation of repressive regimes of all times. Hafez adds that

the use of historical mask in *Zayni Barakat* is not synonymous with writing historical works that shed light on the present. For in this novel, ..., Al-Ghitani did not write historical narrative in the strict sense of the term, and many of the speciously historical events, characters, or locations are more or less of his own invention. He only uses the the mask of historicity to penetrate the present reality more effectively and to distance the situation from readers so that they can rethink it for themselves. (307)

In addition, *Al Zayni Barakat* shows the influence of European fiction on Ghitani. There are intertextual references to George Orwell's *1984* and H.D. Well's *Time Machine*. For example, in the international conference, Ibn Radi congratulates a fellow foreign Head of Spies for succeeding in making children spy on their own parents. In the same conference, Ibn Radi wishes to invent a time machine that could restore a criminal's past life so that he would be forced to confront the defendant with his guilt.

Both *1984* and *Al Zayni Barakat* display different structures. *1984* is divided into three parts. The first part depicts the daily life of Winston Smith, a typical Orwellian hero, who rejects the despotism of the ruling party. The beginning of his tragedy starts with his desire to keep a diary. His feelings of loneliness and insecurity are stressed in the first part. The second part of the novel shows his love affair with Julia who works in another department. The significance of this love affair is shown in the fact that it is considered a betrayal and a sin. Human emotions are constantly checked by the Party. The second part also marks Winston's introduction to Goldstein's book which transformed his life. The rebellion of both Winston and Julia is manifest in their attempt to join the opposition represented by the Brotherhood group. The third part of the novel displays the arrest and torture of Winston by O'Brien, who succeeds in brainwashing Winston's mind, and Winston's final rehabilitation and declaration that he loves Big Brother.

The narrative explores the dilemma of the individual under repressive regime from Winston's perspective. The narrative is told in the third person which, in Rooney's view,

allows the reader almost(though not quite) direct access to Winston's feelings and thoughts. It is not only that the reader seems to stand in very close proximity to Winston, but also that the reader shares or bears witness to his thoughts as they happen. Consequently, the reader is positioned to regard the world of the novel very much from Winston's own angle of view. (72-73)

Such "identification" with Winston's perspective is, in Rooney's view, "an important way in which the narrative engages the reader's sympathy, making Winston the main conduit. Through him, the narrative represents and dramatizes what resistance to the Party's impersonal, inhuman powers means, conveying physical sensations- as they occur" (74). Accordingly, the reader's access to reality is limited by Winston's vision which intensifies the air of terror, fear and alienation promoted throughout the novel.

Unlike *1984*, *Al Zayni Barakat* is distinguished by its multi-narrative structure which allows the reader to have a wider perception of reality. The reader's vision of reality, for instance, is partly formed by the Italian traveler's accounts which he records during his visits to Egypt. According to Mehrez, the Italian traveler provides "the view of the outsider who has access primarily to a public reality" (1994, 101). Other facets of reality are presented through Ibn Radi who represents the deep state and police oppression. The voice of dissent is represented by Said

al-Juhayni, the Azhar student, who was deceived by Barakat and was later imprisoned and tortured for his beliefs. Seen as the victim of both Barakat and Ibn Radi, Said embodies the moral dilemma of the young intellectuals during the 1960s. Mehrez adds that Said may be identified with “a whole generation of young Egyptians, among whom is al- Ghitani himself- a generation that grew up with the slogans of the new regime only to be oppressed by this very same regime” (1994,102).

It is remarkable that the feelings of doubt and uncertainty which arise in the reader’s mind due to the limitation of the narrative to Winston’s vision in 1984 are also evoked in the mind of *Al Zayni Barakat*’s reader due to the multiplicity of narration- through offering reality from various dimensions. The narrative discourse in *Barakat* is, in Mehrez’s words, mainly revealed through “the juxtaposition of the major blocks, i.e. the memoir sections and the suradiqat (pavilions) sections” (1994, 104). Both complement each other. The memoir section which represents the traveler’s own version of reality is often narrated in the first person and, thus, is incapable of rendering the whole reality to the reader who has to rely on other sources of information which he gets from the pavilions part. The novel includes five memoir parts and seven pavilions which describe important events in the novel such as the arrest of Ibn Abi al-Jud, Cairo’s former Muhtasib, the story of Barakat’s rise to power, etc. Each pavilion is further sub-divided into distinct parts headed by the names of important characters, times or places such as Said al- Juhayni, Kom al- Jarih, Sublime Decree, Zakariyya ibn Radi, Wednesday, 10 Shawwal, Daybreak, and Letter to Al Zayni Barakat from Ibn Radi. All incorporate public announcements, royal decrees and appendixes to endow the novel with its historical aspect. Events are not chronologically ordered. The novel is further distinguished with its circular structure. The last part of the novel is entitled “Outside the Pavilion” (*Barakat* 238) which ends the novel with the traveler’s account of the conditions in Egypt after the Ottomans’ victory. The excerpts of the Italian traveler thus begin and end the narrative. For example, at the beginning of the novel the traveler remarks:

the land of Egypt is in a state of turmoil these days. The face of Cairo is that of a stranger, one that I hadn’t encountered on my previous travels here. I know the language of the city and its dialects, but the people seem to be speaking a different language. I see the city as a sick man on the point of tears, a terrified woman afraid of being raped at the end of the night. Even the clear blue of the sky is thin, with clouds laden with an alien fog that has come from distant lands. (*Barakat* 1)

The traveler records this excerpt in 1516 AD/922 AH. The narrative closes with a similar excerpt recorded in 923AH:

In my long travels, I haven't seen a city so devastated. After a long time I ventured out into the streets. Death, cold and heavy, hung over the air of the city. The Ottoman troops roamed the streets, stormed into houses. Walls have no value here, doors have been eliminated; security is lost and no prayer or supplication will do any good. No one is certain that they will see another day. In a narrow alley I saw a woman who has been slaughtered and her breast cut off. I looked around me: floor tiles and dust in a faraway house; a child cries; I do not know whose child it is. (*Barakat* 239)

The same feelings of fear, terror, devastation and death hovering all over Egypt evoked in the first excerpt are dominant in the second one, which implies that Egypt's suffering is endless. The Egyptians have moved from one oppressive regime to another. Their suffering and ruin encompass them just like a pavilion surrounds its holders. There is no escape or exit. They are completely ruined as Said's last words express "OH! They ruined me and destroyed my fortresses!" (*Barakat* 235). The metaphor of Egypt as a sick person on the verge of breaking down invoked in the first excerpt is stressed in the last one, which shows the mass destruction caused by the Ottoman invasion. Such feelings which are summed up in Said's words describe the feeling many Egyptians had after the 1967 defeat. Moreover, the word pavilion has strong metaphorical significance. It refers to a large tent or building used for public occasions such as funerals, weddings and ceremonies. In Arabic culture, the Quranic meaning of the word "suradiq", pavilion, implies encompassing people as hell surrounds its inhabitants suggesting no way to avoid or escape it. Similarly, political corruption, injustice, despotism enveloped the Egyptians. The pavilion encircling Egypt allows no escape for its citizens to live a better life, thus suggesting loss of hope. Moreover, despite the fact that the pavilion is devised to gather large number of people, hence the strong possibility of communication and effecting change, the Egyptians suffer from alienation due to being subject to long decades of oppression, injustice and despotism.

Distinguished with its various versions of truth, the narrative discourse of the novel, which might foster doubt and anxiety in the reader's mind, may also encourage him to question the reality of representation itself. Mehrez argues that by using historical accounts and reports, which are 'objective' tools of historical accounts within a work of fiction,

Al- Ghitani challenges such claims to objectivity and invites us to reread the representations of both our present and our past. In doing so, *al- Zayni Barakat* becomes a revolutionary document, not only for its experimentation with form, structure, and technique, but also because it embodies, in Barthes's words, that 'signature one affixes at the foot of a collective proclamation one has not written oneself.' (1994, 118)

In her Egypt's *Culture Wars: Politics and Practice* (2010), Mehrez adds that Barakat's narrative strategies were adopted to shed light on its main theme, i.e., "the field of power" (61). Yet, Barakat himself who embodies this theme "remains invisible, inaccessible, and elusive throughout" (61). The reader's only access to his character is through the information he gathers from the other characters and narrators in the novel. Barakat never narrates his story himself. According to Mehrez,

The text is constructed out of the constant juxtaposition of public and secret docu-fictional forms (memoirs, spy reports, public announcements, royal decrees, etc.) that generate two levels of reality in the text: a reality for popular consumption and other that circulates among those in power. Some of the docu-fictional spy reports are at times labelled 'top secrets' and made unavailable even to the reader who predominantly occupies a far more informed and privileged position than that of the other characters in the text. (61-62)

In this way, *Al Zayni Barakat* raises important questions about representation reality, history and power. Indeed, according to Hafez

Zayni Barakat creates a metaphor of the obsession and corruption of political power rather a mimetic representation of reality in which history is used as a narrative device. It is a metaphor born out of a new aesthetic that distinguishes between experience and the literary representation of this experience. The multiplicity of narrators creates a type of polyphonic narrative in which the novelistic space becomes a battle-ground of opposing ideologies contending to invalidate one another. This polyphonic representation implies a clear rejection of the ideologically authoritative voice which long dominated both the narrative structure and the political arena, and at the same time posits the independence of characters and the separation of their voices from that of the author. (307)

The "fragmentary structure" of the novel, the "quasi- documentary data" and the multiple narrators, in Hafez's view, "enable the novel to touch upon some of the taboos of the Arab world: the monopoly of political power, the growth of corruption in the highest quarters, the ubiquity of secret intelligence, the pervasiveness of political intimidation and the swelling of detention camps" (307). It is by resorting to the Mamluk era in *Barakat*, and the future Europe in *1984* and adopting various narrative

strategies that promote fear and terror in the reader's mind that both Al-Ghitani and Orwell could present their own condemnation of the oppressive regimes of their time in particular, and totalitarianism in general. Furthermore, Al-Ghitani's narrative techniques help engage his reader in his work and force him/her to reconsider reality.

Al-Ghitani is not only interested in depicting historical events but he also gives due care to recording the daily life of the Egyptians in such an era. The Egyptian habits, their daily life affairs, costumes and language, problems, poverty, the daily life of Al Azhar's students, mosques, cafes, social customs such as bringing some one into disrepute by forcing him to ride a donkey backward, Egyptian weddings, etc. Such meticulous description of the social aspects of the 16th century Egypt endows the novel with great authenticity and credibility.

As Orwell chooses Winston Smith to depict the effects of totalitarianism on the Oceanians who are seen as helpless victims, Al-Ghitani chooses to depict the state conflict from the perspective of the evil doer. Barakat's life story, his rise to power and his deception of the people who saw him as their savior, his despotism, his collaboration with Ibn Radi, his defeat and ironically final victory, represent not only the rise and development of the "Deep State" but an image of the rise and establishment of the authority of any tyrant. His life story is illuminated through flashback and the narrators' accounts as he is not allowed to tell his own story himself. In addition, Barakat is a contradictory character. It is claimed that he rejected the post of "Muhtasib" offered to him by the sultan. It is narrated that he even wept and pleaded to the Sultan not to have this post as it is a great burden. He feels that he is incapable of performing his task properly. He is afraid of God who will not forgive if he fails to undo the injustices the people are subject to. Such decline hails him as a hero in the eyes of the Egyptians who see him as their savior. So they go to Sheikh Abu al Su'ud to help them convince Barakat to accept the task. Also deceived in Barakat, the Sheikh also does his best to legitimize his post in his religious sermons. He claims that Barakat is entitled to his job by the power of religion. He also narrates that Barakat was forced to accept the post because of his love for Sheikh Abu Su'ud. He is depicted as the ultimate symbol of dignity, integrity, justice, piety, firmness and selflessness. He was entitled as "Zayni," i.e. surpassing all virtues. Yet, the reader is shocked by the information confirmed by Ibn Radi that Barakat paid three thousand dinars to a Mamluk prince to buy this post. So from the early beginning of the novel, the reader is warned against the deception practiced by Barakat. Moreover, the fact that

Barakat decides to have his own brigade of spies frightens Ibn Radi as Barakat is directly interfering with his business. So, he decides to spy on Barakat himself. The novel conveys a strong resemblance between Barakat and Nasser. Barakat's elusive nature and the controversy raised about his character are interesting. Mehrez adds that both Nasser and Barakat "seem to elicit the same controversial questions: are they good or are they evil? Are they working for the people or simply manipulating them? Are they villains or are they heroes?" (1994, 102). By raising these doubts, the reader is encouraged to be engaged in interpreting the text and constructing its meaning.

Al Zayni Barakat may be approached as a post-modern novel. Attempting to probe the causes that gave rise to the 1967 defeat, Al-Ghitani does not make the same mistake of totalitarian regimes, i.e., monopolizing the truth. In fact, he presents various versions of reality; hence the significance of the multi-narrative structure of the novel. He does not claim absolute truth, nor does he assume the role of omniscient narrator. He only narrates a part of it. The Italian traveler gives another version of reality from the Other's perspective. Al-Ghitani also gives the "Deep State," Ibn Radi as an example, the chance to present its own narrative itself. The novel thus is narrated in the first, second and third singular pronouns. Besides, the fact that the novel has many narrators does not mean that we have contradictory versions of truth. Rather, they complement each other. All attempt to answer the question raised at the beginning of the novel: why did what happened happen? The novel, in addition, is distinguished by its dialogical nature. Interpreted in Bakhtin's terms, various voices, besides the author's, are heard, all displaying different perspectives/ideologies, thus promoting the reader's critical appreciation of what is displayed.

On the other hand, despite revealing different perspectives/ideologies, the novel rarely shows dialogue due to the suppression of free thinking and freedom of speech. The violation of human rights forced the characters to withdraw inwardly and practise internal monologue instead. They are afraid of exchanging views with each other. The novel draws, sometimes, on the stream of consciousness technique and internal monologue to reveal what is going on in the minds of its characters. Describing the arrest of Ali ibn Abi al-Jud, his public disgrace and the anger of the people, Said dwells in imagining the sight of ibn Abi al-Jud:

Said was now seeing Ali in his mind's eye. There he was, riding a horse with a golden saddle, passing in front of the houses of the

Shaykhs and the emirs, proceeded by drums ... he was, walking in the street, surrounded by an escort of tough guards. When he persuaded the Sultan to impose a tax on salt, he did great harm to the Muslims, and salt became a very rare commodity. When Ali ibn Abi al-Jud walked, no one dared raise his eyes to look him in the face. His turban dazzled the eyes. Then, in just a few hours! Look at him riding a donkey backwards, utterly humiliated. Young and old alike were now slapping him, the women spitting in his face (*Barakat* 16).

It is remarkable that the torture of Ibn Abi al-Jud and the decree stating his punishment are actually narrated in the third pavilion whereas the internal monologue submitted by Said is narrated in the first pavilion which shows that the writer is not mainly concerned with arranging the events of his novel chronologically. He is not writing a story or a historical account. He is forcing his reader to be involved intellectually to reconsider the causes of the June defeat. So he moves freely backward and forward in time capturing certain moments in the history of Egypt to uncover the truth.

The writer also uses various levels of Arabic language in his novel. He moves smoothly from old formal Arabic, which he borrows from Ibn Iyas's style, to modern standard Arabic and sometimes to modern colloquial Egyptian language. The purpose is to endow his novel with authenticity and credibility. He also uses different forms of Arabic calligraphy as well as images depicting Egyptian life in the 16th century by famous printers to confirm the novel's authenticity.

The novel has also its naturalistic overtones. The Egyptians are born in a tyrannical environment which is full of social injustices, economic decline, diseases and grinding poverty, a perfect milieu for dystopian society. They are doomed to perish. This fact is also emphasized by the use of symbolism particularly in the titles and subtitles of the pavilions. For example, whereas the title of the third pavilion denotes the "Beginning with details of the imprisonment of Ali ibn Abi al-Jud," the subtitle ironically emphasizes that "we are against torturing the body. We shall never allow burning a part of a man's body, whoever he may be, or to be nailed in his heels like a horse" (*Barakat* 83. My translation). Such a statement is meant to shock the reader who is faced with the dilemma of the discrepancy between what the state says and its practices, the contrast between fact and fiction, bare truth and the acclaimed propaganda, hence the satirical significance of the subtitle and the novel in general as a political allegory. The last pavilion, entitled "OH! They ruined me and destroyed my fortresses," (*Barakat* 235) has

strong symbolic significance. Though meant to express Said's tragedy, it refers to Egypt as a whole. The title is supposed to answer the question raised throughout the novel "why did what happened happen?" The pronoun "they" here refers to the ruling class, the disloyal princes who betrayed Sultan Al-Ghuri and then Toman Bey and the betrayal of Barakat who turned out to be the Ottomans' spy. A perfect Machiavellian, Barakat's loyalty is not for the Sultan, Egypt or people. He is mainly after power. Other traitors are Ibn Radi who ruined Egyptians' life, greedy merchants, men of religion such as Sheikh Rihan, informers of all classes of society who spy on their friends such as Amr al-Adawi, and the Mamluk princes. Political corruption, despotism, declining role of education, religion and culture all contributed to ruining Egypt and destroying her fortress both in the past and the present.

Transforming Egypt into a big panopticon, the Intelligence, corrupt businessmen and disloyal politicians formed a state within the state and worked for their own sake. The strategies adopted by Barakat and Ibn Radi to maintain control such as constant surveillance, violation of human rights, persecution of intellectuals, brainwashing, manipulation of religion, language, the media (rababa singer, reports, pigeons, etc.) and other state apparatuses, in addition to forcing children to spy on their parents, are all manifestations of totalitarian ideology. A satire on totalitarianism, *Al Zayni Barakat*, like *1984*, has a didactic function, i.e., to warn people against absolutism and the impending dangers of despotism.

Like *1984*, *Al Zayni Barakat* parodies man's attempt to avoid his tragic doom as futile. The cyclical structure of the novel and its division into pavilions suggest that hell/despotism encompasses Egypt. The Egyptians are doomed to tragic ending. In both versions of historical accounts Marg Dabeq and June 1967, the Egyptians are entrapped in a vicious circle from which they can never escape, hence the pessimistic tone of the novel. Ironically, Said, like Winston, does not acquire self-knowledge or approach the moment of enlightenment, for as Mansur suggests, nothing will ever change (*Barakat* 167-177).

The society depicted in both *1984* and *Al Zayni Barakat* is dystopian. Like *1984*, *Al Zayni Barakat* suggests that hope lies in the hands of the people who gathered around Sheikh abu al-Su'ud to defend Egypt. They are no longer deceived by Barakat. However, despite their dystopian vision, both *1984* and *Al Zayni Barakat* reveal that Orwell and Al-Ghitani are utopian at heart. By parodying the loss of ideals of

freedom, justice, equality, both writers yearn to restore them as the ultimate basis of a better society. The analysis of both *1984* and *Al Zayni Barakat*, despite the fact that both writers belong to two different historical epochs and two different cultures, shows that they share the same vision. Both are preoccupied with condemning totalitarian regimes. Both unmask the practices of the state power and condemn the growing effect of the "deep state" on the whole society. In addition, both writers present a dystopian vision of a society on the verge of breaking down because of oppression and injustice. It is the absence of values which both Orwell and Al-Ghitani consider salient to the progress of any society that would turn the world into a nightmare. Belonging to dystopian fiction, both novels are timeless works that reject despotism everywhere. The writers are also ethical socialists who dream of equality, freedom and justice and long live in a better society.

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