# A TOTALITARIAN REGIME SUBVERTING TRADITION – FROM GEORGE ORWELL'S MODERNITY IN *NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR*, TO ANTHONY BURGESS'S POSTMODERNITY IN *1985* AND THE ROMANIAN REALITY OF THE 80'S IN I. D. SÎRBU'S *FAREWELL, EUROPE!*

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*Abstract: Our paper aims at regarding the manner in which the politics of a regime changed a tradition and imposed a new ideology – focusing on the dystopian totalitarian regime from George Orwell's "Nineteen Eighty-Four", the metafictional tribute-answer that Anthony Burgess gives to Orwell in his novel "1985" and on the reality from communist Romania of the 80's as it is reflected in I. D. Sârbu's anti-utopian novel "Adio, Europa!". Such an analysis aims at presenting the manner in which the traditional human values were abused (deleted, changed, censored) by an oligarchic system and the manner in which new totalitarian ideologies annulled tradition and individual identities.*

*Keywords: totalitarianism, control, dystopia/anti-utopia, subversion*

## I. Introduction – a society between present and future

The origins of our research lie in the reading of three novels – George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, published in 1948, for which we found the tribute-answer/ sequel that Anthony Burgess wrote in 1978, that is the novel entitled *1985*, a pair for which we literally looked for a reflection in the Romanian fiction and found it in I. D. Sîrbu's anti-utopian novel *Farewell, Europe!* finished in 1986, but published only after the 1989 Romanian Revolution. After the shock of having discovered in Orwell's dystopian novel realities that occurred in Romania in the last decades of the previous century, our vision was completed with matters concerning the exploitation of a people by an abusive regime in Burgess's metafictional retort-novel, and, on looking for a novel that would, from the same perspective of a dystopian writing, attempt to paint the "realities" of a society, we came upon I. D. Sîrbu monumental, biographic novel, a type of what we call "testimonial history" in which he unmasks the absurd, fantastically horrid abuses of the communist regime. We were amazed by the more or less accidental numerological interplay of the three novels – Orwell's novel finished in 1948 and presenting a dystopian society of the year 1984, continued by Burgess's novel *1985* in an attempt to observe how Orwell's society would continue, fortunately having as a perfect final development I. D. Sîrbu's novel finished in 1985 and given the final title in 1986 (and which declares its fictional "allegiance" to Orwell's novel by using as a motto a quotation from his *Collected Essays*, vol. II, describing the pamphlet as the "ideal form"[1]). But this is the least important fact that unites the three works, as their craft lies in presenting the culture and language, the politics and ideology, the historical stirrings and social upheavals of an age,

[1] Orwell, George, *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Essays. My Country Right or Left. 1940–1943*, volume 2, edited by Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus, David R. Godine's Nonpareil Books, Boston, 2000, p. 282.



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ultimately the subverting of tradition and the entering into modernity and postmodernity under the control of some sort of totalitarian regime.

Each of the three novels presents a society in which the people is abused (Oceania in Orwell – a new state formed through the fusion of England and America, TUK (The United Kingdom) or Tucland in Burgess's response-novel, and Isarlâk, which is a satirical remodelling of an Oriental space which is, in fact a disguised vision of a provincial Romanian city) and in which the fight and thirst for power have reached abominable levels.

Each of the three novels introduce individuals who attempt to fight the system (Winston Smith in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Bev Jones in *1985* and Candid Dezideriu in *Farewell, Europe!*), but who end up as crushed individuals, (at least temporarily) diseased victims of physical and mental torture, but most of all victims in their fight for survival caused by the tragedy of not having their voices heard. That is why they develop instruments of their indignation that are supposed to substitute their unheard cries – Winston Smith writes in a diary, Bev Jones attempts to write some articles whose function would be that of reporting "reality", and Candid escapes in his numerous parenthetic digressions which are supposed to give us a full impression upon his philosophical system of thought.

All of the three writings have as a common denominator the use of satire, allegory and pamphlet in presenting a political system which develops under the sign of totalitarianism and control of the masses and each of them can be taken as samples of social frescoes presenting the realities of a society in a certain age, be it as it is disguised in a fictional (dystopian, satirical, allegorical) manner.

## II. A triple fictionalization of an abused society

Written between 1946 and 1948, in a period in which Orwell's health was deteriorating badly, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, his most famous and equally controversial novel, was regarded by some as an example of profound pessimism influenced perhaps by his deteriorating physical condition, thus the novel would be a metaphoric fictionalization of the tuberculosis that would eventually kill him. Others have gone beyond the conditioning between state of health and state of mind and have regarded the novel as prophetic and have interpreted the dark vision painted in the novel as a prophecy that is meant to warn people what will happen if, on the one hand, a revolution is betrayed and, on the other hand, if the abusive collective power of the state will swallow the individual who will become a mere cog in the wheel of an ever turning mechanism on its way towards progress.

Orwell himself said in his letters[2] that its form is a combination of fantasy and naturalistic novel. However, the book is more than this as its methods of writing and introducing to us fragments from Goldstein's book or the principles of Newspeak presented in the appendix draw the novel closer to the historical and political essay. Raymond Williams regards the book as having three layers:

First, an infrastructure [...], in which the hero victim moves through a squalid world in a series of misunderstandings and disappointments, [...]. Second, a structure of argument, indeed of anticipations, [...]. Third, a superstructure, including many of the most memorable

[2] Orwell, George, *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Essays. In Front of Your Nose. 1946–1950*, volume 4, edited by Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus, David R. Godine's Nonpareil Books, Boston, 2000, pp. 329–330.



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elements, in which, by a method ranging from fantasy to satire and parody, the cruelty and repression of the society are made to appear at once ludicrous and savagely absurd.[3]

These three layers are supposed, according to Williams, to be regarded not only in the interconnectedness that they build, but also in close connection to Orwell's other writings that he was working on at that moment – his fictional projections are to be seen in relationship to his essays, writings in which Orwell was undoubtedly recognized far greater merits than in his fiction. Thus, the three main themes as Williams identifies them – the division of the world in the three super states that are in a perpetual state of war, the internal tyranny of each of these states, the control of a society through ideas and means of communication – form a network, a scaffolding upon which the novel moves furthermore towards other analysis areas such as relationships and human emotions, the use, misuse and abuse of language, the writing, re-writing, erasing/ censoring of history (past and traditions), the use of military technology, etc..

Another type of technique, coming from the effervescence of postmodernity is applied by Anthony Burgess in *1985* where he builds the first part of the novel as a series of dialogue-essays in which he interviews either Orwell or some fictionally created characters with the purpose of better understanding Orwell's technique, drives and justification in/for writing *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Then, in the second part of the novel, the author distils all of the intertextual references and manages to create a novel which, with a new type of authoritarianism, that of the Trade Unions, manages to paint once more an absurd British society of a closer future to that of the writer's himself (the narrating time is 1976, the narrated time is 1985) in an attempt to support Orwell's view of a subjugated society and individual. This time the absurdity lies in an endless, networked strike (the army, the firemen, the electricity workers, the postal workers, the millers, the confectionary workers, the train workers, the construction workers), situation in which firemen fail to save victims from fires and doctors fail to save lives, to mention two of the reasons which trigger the drama of the main character (whose wife dies in a fire). Thus, society becomes again "a negation of individual freedom" (*1985*, p. 66) and trade unions are an illustration of the fact that "a tyranny can be born out of any social group" (*1985*, p. 68).

In *Farewell, Europe!* the main technique seems to be that of the diary, but the novel is so much more than this. The novel constitutes itself as the story of a former teacher of philosophy, politically "exiled" in a provincial city and this represents the main event that gives the author the possibility of developing a complex plot in which characters are fighting to preserve their individualities against the oppressive measures of the communist regime. The intricate relationships, the professional manoeuvres, the historical events, the political abuses, the philosophical discussions developed in the almost 700 pages of the novel form a highly erudite novel which unfolds on more levels: allegorical, pamphletary, philosophical, political, parodic, ironical, essayistic, diaristic, chronicle and parable-like signalling one main aspect: that if the subversion of tradition by a totalitaritarian regime and a dictator.

[3] Williams, Raymond: "Afterword: *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in 1984", in Bloom, Harold (ed.), *George Orwell's 1984*, Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations, Chelsea House Publishers, 2007, p. 10.



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## III. Dystopian novels – from didactic writing, to allegory, satire, pamphlet and caricature

The origins of dystopian writing seem to be in the crises in thought of the twentieth century. The horrific, grotesque, maiming reality of the wars, or the loss of faith and the introduction of the new values, reports of power and hierarchies in the human relationships, made writers seek the refuge of another space in their fiction. This was not done in an idyllic manner, but it developed into a satire of the world as it was, condemning parts of the societal systems. At the same time, this type of writing was also triggered by the spirit of modern scepticism for which it was easier to envisage nightmares of the future than nice dreams of it. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Orwell reveals this direct intention in the episode of Winston's interrogatory by O'Brien. The latter admits that what they created is "the exact opposite of the stupid hedonistic Utopias that the old reformers imagined." (*NEF*, p. 306)

With fiction generally and with dystopian writing in particular it is obvious that literature plays a critical role having to a certain degree a didactic function of instructing by counterexamples. The writing "opposes its imaginative visions to existing or potential ills and injustices in society."[4] This kind of imaginative literature also gives any culture the possibility of investigating new ways of defining itself and of exploring alternatives to the social and political state of affairs. In the process, dystopian literature, by critically examining the conditions manifested in society and the abuses developed by the ruling class and institutions becomes an embodiment of social criticism. But it is precisely this risky position that is adopted by Orwell that raised some controversies in the age (and later), and critics have questioned the moral triumph of the book because of its "aesthetic badness"[5] or because of its being considered a book of an age. And yet this is precisely this failure that we fail to acknowledge as we can easily see the resemblance between Orwell's world of the eighties and Romania's eighties, or any other period in a communist's or ex-communist past for that matter. That is why we do not consider Orwell a "phantasmagoric realist"[6], but an intuitive force, whose creation rightfully absolutizes the negative force of an abusive regime. And this aspect is supported, and indeed recognized by critics, because of the preservation, not only up to 1984, but even in contemporary times, of some basic methods of oligarchy – the use of propagandistic endlessly repeated slogans, control of the media, censorship of news or displacement of some kind of news by another, the ever praising authority of one group (specifically a party), the public ostracization of traitors and their transformation in hate-figures, and the opposite creation of worshipped leader-figures, the maintaining of people in a state of ignorance and scarcity of supplies.

One point to start a discussion of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as a harbinger of the society of the future is science because it was the development of technology that, by lending its gains to political torture, became the trigger of a crippling view upon man, his rights and freedom(s) in particular and society, its strata, institutions and governing in general. The progress in technology is associated with the progress of the Party, but the manner in which the Party makes use of the technological discoveries is dehumanizing in two ways.

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[4] Booker, Keith M., *Dystopian Literature: A Theory and Research Guide*, Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut, 1994, p. 3.
[5] Bloom, Harold, *op. cit.*, p. 5.
[6] *Idem*, p. 3.



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On the one hand, everything becomes mechanical. Firstly, *religion* is not supposed to be spirit anymore, but mere ideology of the Party; a new religion is instated and the new clergy wear blue overalls (O'Brien declares emphatically that they are "the priests of power", *NEF*, p. 303); he even makes a comparison with other types of religious persecution among which the Inquisition and he explains that what the Party does is not just extract confessions from the sinners, but extract true confessions (*NEF*, p. 291); therefore the Party is supposed to make a change in the deep structure and its command is not "thou shalt" or "thou shalt not", but "thou are" (what the Party makes you) (*NEF*, p. 292). The only remnants of a religious spirit is the concept of ritual through the Two-Minute Hate ritual and the appearance of Big Brother as the Saviour as he proclaimed by a woman "with a tremulous murmur" (*NEF*, p. 19) or as he is described in other parts of the novel. Secondly, *art* and *culture* are meant to spread merely the propaganda of the Party or they are created by the Party itself. All cultural products are issued by the Ministry of Truth; even the pornographic lots are controlled by the Party in a false idea of some kind of freedom in the sex field. And thirdly, *sex* becomes a mere way of increasing the number of Party members but it is designed as a controlled act that is not supposed to display any feelings or pleasure. It is rather in a similar manner that these aspects are rendered in the other two novels of our discussion, reiterating the act of subverting traditional values in these fields and replacing them with false (post)modern values.

On the other hand, everything is controlled: the electronic telescreens from Oceania ensure surveillance of all Party members at all times and broadcast propaganda videos which is supposed to ensure ongoing control; the devices used in the torture sessions (both in *NEF* and in *1985*) are supposed to control the body and thus reach the control of the mind; in *F, E!* a black lorry travels through Isarlâk maintaining a general state of fear; the "instructional" lectures delivered at the Trades Union Congress Education Centre, Crawford Manor in *1985* are supposed to make people sign declarations in which they recanted the errors of the past (p. 158). At the same time, technology and science become secondary as no real advancement is encouraged but from the perspective from which it is supposed to become instrumental for the Party – as long as these discoveries served the interests of the Party they were allowed and encouraged, otherwise they were repressed.

As for Anthony Burgess's novel, he declares his own purpose in the interview-epilogue that he writes to the novel: "what fantasy-writers like to do nowadays is to imagine a past when history took a turning different from the one it did take, and then create an alternative present based on the past." (*1985*, p. 208) but a present which comes from the future because "the future's already here", "the future has become the present" (*id.*). Thus, he explains the current societal aspects are tributary to the economic changes and the appearance of the consumption society, the war pattern or the new sex war having emerged, the urban culture (with changes in infrastructure) and the rise of the mass-media (television in particular), secularization and the appearance of new religions (Marxism, communism, capitalism), the fissure in language and the ups and downs of democracy.

If *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was regarded as "an allegory of the eternal conflict between any individual and any collective" (*1985*, p. 69), *Farewell, Europe!* is an allegory which hides in its topographical references or under the names of some characters, aspects of the realities of communist Romania in the eighth decade of the previous century. It is in this decodable referencing that I. D. Sîrbu's novel distinguishes from the other two works of his predecessors



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as the reader can decipher the cities of Craiova, Cluj, or Sibiu behind the cities of Isarlâk, Genopolis, respectively Cibinium or they decode the High Porte as the capital of Bucharest or the Sublime Porte as the city of Moscow leading to the understanding of the entire novel as developing under the sign (and hammer and sickle) of communism. It is at this point that we understand that the novel circumscribes to the general function of anti-utopia, or negative utopia; that is, after X-raying the absurd, upside-down world whose image is sold by a totalitarian regime as that of a utopia, the purpose of the novel is revealed as the curing of a claustrophobic, confining contingent society[7]. In I. D. Sârbu's novel, the main characters repeated states of bemusement concerning the real and the unreal, the actual and the imagined, are a direct rendering of the manner on which an oligarchy (or more specifically a specific autocracy) draws its sap from the maintaining of the state of illusion. From this point onwards what distinguishes the Romanian writer from the other two British writers are occasional registers of caricature he falls into (see the portrayals and the self-contradictory nature of some characters – Osmanescu, Sommer, or the poet Omar Omarovici Kaimacov – or the episode with the busts being moved from one institution to another and then in a domestic household). But the roots of this device could be traced as far back as Orwell's introduction of doublethink, thus, drawing again the novels close.

One aspect in which I. D. Sârbu's novel sets itself clearly apart from Orwell's fiction (and draws closer to Swift's) is the manner in which discourse time is expanded. On the background of a rather simple general conflict, the author weaves the almost 700 pages as a fabric with complicated holes but the intricate network of events which fall most of time in the grotesque are in fact a pretext for the development of the philosophical digressions of the main characters and his friends who constitute themselves in defenders of the lost values of the past. These "micro-essays"[8] are the characters' way of escaping reality and keeping their spirits free.

Another original point is the demonization of society. The main symbols of the evil in society are the devils that the main character keeps seeing everywhere and, as Olimpia, the main character's wife observes: in a society in which God got bored and went to sleep, the Devil "builds and compromises; enlightens and darkens; repairs and destroys; awakens and benumbs; invents and discards." (*F, E!*, vol. I, p. 99)

**IV. Politics and the functioning of society**

The contemporary dystopia or anti-utopia presents a picture of a society which is not made anymore, but imposed upon. The parliament, the government or the individual have no powers in making politics as it is made, dictated and forced upon by an oligarchy or an autocracy. Thus, each of the three novels signal the fact that the government is "a mere machine for printing paper money" (*1985*, p. 116), "going through motions of delaying enactments" (*id.*, p. 190) which uses purging and vaporization as a necessary part of their mechanics (cf. *NEF*, p. 58), the parliament "has become a time-wasting formality" (*id.*, p. 144) or both of these institutions have been totally replaced by an absolute "Governor" (as it *F, E!*).

[7] Creţu, Bogdan, *Utopia negativă în literatura română*, Editura "Cartea Românească", Bucureşti, 2008, p. 205.
[8] Gavril, Gabriela *De la "Manifest" la "Adio, Europa!. Cercul literar de la Sibiu*, Editura Universităţii "Al. I. Cuza", Iaşi, 2003, p. 304.



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From its publication *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was interpreted as a denunciation of the Stalinist regime or as an attack on Britain's Labour Party. However, this is exactly what Orwell denied:

My recent novel is NOT intended as an attack on Socialism or on the British Labour Party (of which I am a supporter) but as a show-up of the perversions to which a centralised economy is liable and which have already been partly realised in Communism and Fascism. I do not believe that kind of society I describe necessarily *will* arrive, but I believe (allowing of course for the fact that the book is a satire) that something resembling it could arrive. I believe also that totalitarian ideas have taken root in the minds of intellectuals everywhere, and I have tried to draw these ideas out to their logical consequences. The scene of the book is laid in Britain in order to emphasize that the English-speaking races are not innately better than anyone else and that totalitarianism, *if not fought against*, could triumph anywhere.[9]

That is why others have seen it as a countermanifesto "concerned with improving human existence and directing attention toward the twentieth century's problems"[10] whose origins lie in the author's disbelief that man can remain uncorrupted while carrying the heavy burden of power.

This is another aspect that the three novels share. They all share the existence of an extreme authority (the Party, the unions, the dictator) whose purpose is that of exercising their power upon an entire people by annulling their individualities. The utmost weapon is that uniformization and mind control through propaganda all disguised under the veil of creating egalitarian societies: "We wish you to feel equality in your pores" Mr. Pettigrew declares emphatically (p. 146). Thus, the individuals who are either workers all wearing blue overalls (*NEF*), or mere numbers (in *1985* they are identified by their birth registration number or, worse, their union number, while in *Farewell, Europe!* their convict numbers is all that their identity is reduced to when being in prison) fight to eschew becoming types – Bev Jones in *1985* fights being typified, a "unionized sheep" (p. 138) and claims his individuality as a human being.

The novels also share the existence of physical or mental tormentors. Such figures in each of the three novels (O'Brien from Orwell's novel, Mr. Pettigrew in Burgess' novel and Tutilă in I. D. Sârbu's work) represent types of underground clerks who are supposed to perform a process of correction to the rebellious, to the ones asserting their own individualities and not letting themselves be swallowed by the pack. But then again, these are mere small scales representations of a bigger tormentor, an epitome of the absolute, absurd *autocracy* represented by Big Brother in Orwell's novel, by the Absolute, Supreme Sultan (epithets for Ceauşescu) in I. D. Sârbu's work or of an absurd *oligarchy* that the Trade Unions stand for in Burgess's response-novel.

Again a common aspect is that the individuals in these societies of these novels undergo a process of Mankurting, a wild torturing making the individual forget almost everything except the basic skills and obey his master unconditionally. The totalitarian regime in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the organization of the Unions in *1985*, the dictator from *Farewell,*

[9] Orwell, George, *Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell. In Front of Your Nose. 1946–1950*, volume 4, *op. cit.*, p. 502.
[10] Sisk, David W., *Transformations of Language in Modern Dystopias*, Greenwoodpress, Eastport, Connecticut, 1997, p. 10.



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*Europe!* attempt and succeed in imposing their ideology which leads to the castration of the individual's personality. The strongest symbol for this process of correction of the mind and spirit is illustrated through the use of language as an instrument which is manipulated, reinterpreted, corrected, falsified, marred, amputated, reduced, levelled. This is one of the strongest aspects in each of the three novels with origins in Orwell's creation of Newspeak. His general rule of regularization through which Newspeak should be (de/re)formed, or the use of what was called *cablese*, applies in the other two novels as well. Thus, in Burgess's novel, the English should come to speak exclusively what is briefly called WE (Workers English, "a rational kind of language", *1985*, p. 207) (the pronoun formed by abbreviation clearly showing the identification of the individuals with the language they use) or the author offers samples of journalistic, telegraphic style. In I. D. Sârbu's work one feels the oppressive nature of the wooden language practised by the communists, sometimes inaccessible to the main character (as it appears in the speeches of some characters, sometimes developing almost exclusively under the sign of the imperative, as Olimpia, the main character's wife observes) or, more directly, the process of correction is illustrated by the main character's job (an inspector with the orthographical aspects of language), but who, absurdly enough, is persecuted precisely for having done his job and taking notice of an unfortunate confusion between Karl Marx and Karl May in the text of a poster. He is the one being served the absolute lesson of persecution for having dared to contest the correctness of the Party officials who approved of what had been written on that poster, absurd and incorrect as it was. One other aspect which comes as a national specificity in *Farewell, Europe!* is the registering of the death of the village, the countryside, as a cradle of our language, this being probably the utmost tragedy of the novel. Language, together with the land and the peasants had represented, according to the writer's / character's voice the three forces that helped us come out of the darkness of ages. The destiny of all these are inextricably connected and, though partly poetically exaggeratedly put by the Romanian author, "if the language closes, the soul of the people closes too" (*F, E!*, vol. II, p. 171). On more occasions than one, the discussions of the novel gravitate around aspects of the existence, development, repression, and use of language whose existence is closely connected to that of the individual: the author emphasizes the importance of mastering "strong, engaging words" which would help the individual surpass the "anaemia of the soul". (*F, E!*, vol. I, p. 113)

The ultimate politics in such societies as those created in these novels is reduced to the use of propagandistic instruments and strategies for the glorifying of a figure of a regime, as absurd and as oppressive as that might be. Authenticity and individuality are denied, personal opinions and growth denied or viewed with caution. If in Orwell and Burgess the heroes try the weapon of rebellion (and fail), in I. D. Sârbu's novel, the only weapon which ensures the coming out from under the oppressive assimilatory force of a regime is that of doubling one's self and managing to preserve one's lucidity and freedom of the mind. But Orwell and Burgess, too, believe in the strength of the inner world "in a large periphery of the brain" (*1985*, p. 197) and the need for preservation of such a world "with its dreams and visions" (*id.*, p. 144): "It is good, nay it is human, to cherish this inner, private world: without it we are creatures of straw, unhappy, unfulfilled" (id.). But if this judgement is also adopted by the ruling authority, it only leads to the destruction of the individual's inner world as a first and most important target.



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**V. The history of a space (Oceania, TUKland, Isarlâk) or the past shaping the present**

The presentation of historical events, real or imaginary, recorded or fictionalized, is obvious in all the three novels. The use of history as a device to depict a society and the characters' motivations has more functions, which differ only slightly in the three novels which we discuss, and which reside first and foremost in the individual's oppression, in his desire, attempt and hope to escape, evade the history he is living. The three works record a particular decade as a projection of a more or less distant future (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, *1985*) or Xray of a current decade in which "history as a blind and cruel bulldozer keeps moving on and on" (*Farewell, Europe!*, vol. I, p. 317). The presentation of history in these dystopian or anti-utopian novels stems out of the social, economic, technological stirring of postmodernity, in which history, as we use to know it as a recording of facts, seems to have been declared dead and the individual is the one who seems to be recorded now in his writing of history.

The establishment of mutually hostile blocks of nations in the twentieth century, the steady increase in the use of the technology of surveillance along with the growing influence of the mass communications media in our lives, the ongoing erosion of traditional ethical values and the attendant rise in personal and civic violence – all these point to the real inroads that the dystopian attributes of confinement, coercion, and stagnation have already made in the contemporary world.[11]

In Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the two functions of history manipulation as viewed from the viewpoint of the abusive totalitarian authority are the following: the principle of the "mutability of the past" – the past is re-written in the attempt to control everything that had happened and everyone that had lived, in an ultimate endeavour to control the present; the controller of the past is the controller of the present. In Burgess's *1985* the past is not necessarily altered so as to fully control the present, but it is rather summoned back ("I want the past in front of me like it was all really there", "Keep the past alive", *1985*, p. 125) in order to retrieve the lost past values (justice, duty). These two functions of history manipulation as viewed from the viewpoint of the authorial "didactician" are those of making the reader identify the source of the horrors and motivating the reader towards preventing them. In a period in which people have turned their back on history (cf. *1985*, p. 104)

For these purposes, Orwell creates a country and introduces some new continents by the re-organization of the ones which we already know but the newly created alliances follow the new laws of the new politics. Thus, Oceania, Eastasia and Eurasia introduce the reader in a conventional type of space concerning location, but in a more than unconventional space concerning political relationships and belligerent relationships. Where *Nineteen Eighty-Four* ceases to be a mere science fiction work, as it was sometimes labelled, is in its social and political critique or in the extensive use of the metaphor in presenting this "brooding, faded, shabby, cruel and paranoid society".[12] That is why critics drew the novel closer rather to the concept of satire than science fiction. One way or the other, this type of "Orwellian" writing has become an epitome for what is ominous and threatening in modern society.

[11] Wemyss, Courtney T.; Urinsky, Alexej (eds.): *George Orwell*, Greenwood Press, New York, 1987, p. 124.
[12] Moylan, Tom, *Scraps of the Untainted Sky: Science Fiction, Utopia, Dystopia*, Westview Press, Boulder, Connecticut, 2000, p. 161.



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*1985* on the other hand, introduces Tucland (an altered abbreviation of The United Kingdom, but also an abbreviation of Trade Union Congress/ Centre) rendering in the very name the stirrings of society in the contemporary age, but, as a connoisseur of the Arab space, the author also projects its threats upon the English territory brought by the movements of the immigrants, or the growing powers of the oil-based economy: "London, the Great Mosque, chief Muslim Temple of all of West, is the commercial capital of Islam" (*1985*, p. 181, p. 184).

I. D. Sârbu's Isarlâk introduces a colourful, apparently Oriental world but which is in fact an allegorical remodelling of the Romanian society in its fight for power which, just as in Burgess, is seen as "the most intoxicating of narcotics" (*1985*, p. 152). On the background of the kitsch glitz, the author introduces a population of parvenus, opportunists, pseudo-patriots, corrupt clerks, perverse conspirator, ruthless tormentors, but also flat poets, or aspiring novelists. At the same time, the author registers the longing for the past in which history was not made only by the influential ones, but it is also made "by the numerous words and silences of the ones who do not have access to high courts" (*F, E!*, vol. I, p. 191), a history in which the people was as strong as an army and was not in the hands of petty dictators (cf. *id.*, p. 341). The regret that "history has ceased to be a succession of happenings which bring changes", but has become instead "a mere passing of time, in which the Power stops anything from happening, even when changes take place" (*id*.) is what triggers the philosophy of the entire novel.

While Isarlâk is an a fictionalized portrait of a perfectly historically identifiable society, despite the allegorical Orientalisation, and Oceania draws scarily close to the Romanian communist reality with its oppressive secret service (Securitatea), with its well-known political prisons and episodes of torture especially upon the intellectuals, with its controlled shortage of goods, with its destruction of churches and so on, Tucland, though apparently more historically rooted, seems the least plausible of societies from among these three spaces.

## VI. Conclusions

*Nineteen Eighty-Four* has become a hallmark title which stands as a symbol for the drama of a people which fails to react to an abusive authority and as a symbol for a type of State/Party/regime whose only goal is to remain in power. It triggered such declared sequels or admitted homages as *1985*, it acted as a metaphor of apprehension or its dystopian features could act as models for works such as *Farewell, Europe!* which managed to find their own national specificity.

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