

THE POLITICAL ROLE OF MEMORY AND IDENTITY IN DYSTOPIAN SOCIETIES

Mihalache Delia Doina

PhD Student at Doctoral School of Literary and Cultural Studies
University of Bucharest
ROMANIA

ABSTRACT

Memory, both individual and collective, has always played an extensive role in maintaining the core and unity of the society, as it constituted the binder, the common denominator that "glued" together a nation. This concept is closely related to that of identity, which justifies its importance that much in the spaces deprived of these two structurally inherent components of the individual, seen as an entity that defines himself through its "adherence" to certain values. But human identity cannot be outside or in the absence of memory, as a continuity factor. We discuss in this paper these two extensively problematized concepts, in relation to dystopian fictions presenting the world as a totalitarian universe, among which we enumerate "We" by Yevgeny Zamyatin, "1984" by George Orwell, "Brave New World" by Aldous Huxley, but also more recent creations like "Fahrenheit 451" by Ray Bradbury, or even "Divergent" by Veronica Roth. We have chosen here some of the most prominent fictional stories, centered on totalitarian societies, pertaining to different time periods – from the post-World War I dystopian fiction of Yevgheny Zamyatin, a declared dissident against the Communist Party in Former Soviet Union to present film adapted novel of Veronica Ruth: "Divergent" – to explore the role of the memory (and implicitly the identity) in an attempt to discover the manner in which they can be exploited in order to reconfigure the society according to the necessities of a totalitarian government.

Keywords: memory, identity, totalitarianism, dystopia.

INTRODUCTION

In the article "Les Lieux de mémoire" (Sites of memory) Pierre Nora discussed the memory in relation to history and society and the issue of current historical memory loss. If in the past, memory was a social practice and the past of the ancestors was always reactivated through rites and rituals with their own specific significance, currently the past is treated as such and definitively considered to be "in the past", as a result of what Nora calls an "acceleration of history". He argues that in the present "there are *lieux de mémoire*, sites of memory, because there are no longer *milieux de mémoire*, real environments of memory" and attributes that to the "irrevocable break marked by the disappearance of peasant culture, that quintessential repository of collective memory whose recent vogue as an object of historical study coincided with the apogee of industrial growth." (Nora, 1989: 2) Pierre Nora also discusses the issue of mnemonic energy that certain objects possess. This aspect is approached in many dystopian fictions, like "1984", "Fahrenheit 451" or the more recent "Equilibrium". In Orwell's version, the possession of forbidden objects that could revive memories of the pre-party past constituted a crime punishable by death. Such objects could vary from a diary to an artisanal object, like a glass globe that Winston buys from the antiques shop merely for his aesthetic value. If in Bradbury's "Fahrenheit 451" books and anything related to them constituted an offense against the law, in "Equilibrium" (2002) all objects resembling art become forbidden, given their power to awaken sensitivity in humans.

The same leitmotif of the glass globe appears in a scene where the main character, John Preston, rediscovers his capacity to feel in a room filled with artefact objects. The mnemonic power of this object is reiterated as well in the cult production “Citizen Kane”, for which the famous “Rosebud” becomes a symbol, an emblem of his life in blessed innocence and ignorance, before becoming a feared media mogul.

This foray in the issue of memory in the dystopian fiction cannot be done without relating to the concept of identity, as a primary factor for individuality – i.e. the prime “enemy” in any totalitarian regime. Resuming John Locke’s theory on memory as a criterion of personal identity, Paul Ricoeur discusses this relation in his book “Memory, history, forgetting”: “As the primary cause of the fragility of identity we must cite its difficult relation to time; this is a primary difficulty that, precisely, justifies the recourse to memory as the temporal component of identity, in conjunction with the evaluation of the present and the projection of the future.” (Ricoeur, 2009: 81), which is nothing else but the theorization of the famous Orwellian dictum:

‘Who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past’

We thus infer that one of the most efficient control mechanisms in the effort to subordinate the will of the individual to party ideal is the constant change and influence of the collective memory, which affects in the end the individual memory. The mind of individuals is gradually replaced by the “official” memory, which is in fact nothing else but a gross distortion of reality, a total reinvention of it, with the purpose to serve the totalitarian doctrinaire and centralizing interests. In Orwell’s novel we find numerous references to the constant effort of the authorities to eliminate any certainty regarding what happened or what might have happened in reality. The main character is – at least at the beginning – relatively aware of his identity, in relation to others and the totalitarian state. This is also due to his function inside the Party, which allows him direct access to the way history and reality are modified and falsified every day. A clerk between ages, Winston had been a witness of the great transformations leading to the regime in which he now lived, but his memories were faded:

He must, he thought, have been ten or eleven years old when his mother had disappeared. She was a tall, statuesque, rather silent woman with slow movements and magnificent fair hair. His father he remembered more vaguely as dark and thin, dressed always in neat dark clothes (Winston remembered especially the very thin soles of his father’s shoes) and wearing spectacles. The two of them must evidently have been swallowed up in one of the first great purges of the fifties. (Orwell, 1991: 28)

In an effort to remember past events that he experienced, Winston found that they were too inconsistent and had major gaps:

Winston could not definitely remember a time when his country had not been at war, but it was evident that there had been a fairly long interval of peace during his childhood, because one of his early memories was of an air raid which appeared to take everyone by surprise. Perhaps it was the time when the atomic bomb had fallen on Colchester. He did not remember the raid itself, but he did remember his father’s hand clutching his own as they hurried down, down, down into some place deep in the earth, round and round a spiral staircase which rang under his feet and which finally

so wearied his legs that he began whimpering and they had to stop and rest. (Orwell, 1991: 31)

However, his subjective memory retained disparate issues, but without being able to put them into context because the truth was lost (actually had been stolen deliberately) by those who ruled in this narrative present:

Since about that time, war had been literally continuous, though strictly speaking it had not always been the same war. (...) But to trace out the history of the whole period, to say who was fighting whom at any given moment, would have been utterly impossible, since no written record, and no spoken word, ever made mention of any other alignment than the existing one. At this moment, for example, in 1984 (if it was 1984), Oceania was at war with Eurasia and in alliance with Eastasia. In no public or private utterance was it ever admitted that the three powers had at any time been grouped along different lines. Actually, as Winston well knew, it was only four years since Oceania had been at war with and in alliance with Eurasia. But that was merely a piece of furtive knowledge which he happened to possess because his memory was not satisfactorily under control. Officially the change of partners had never happened. Oceania was at war with Eurasia: therefore Oceania had always been at war with Eurasia. The enemy of the moment always represented absolute evil, and it followed that any past or future agreement with him was impossible. (Orwell, 1991: 33)

The principle Orwell applies on his characters is the attack on collective memory in the effort to provoke an identity crisis and, finally, its annihilation, the disappearance of consciousness. The methods the Party uses to achieve this are numerous: the cult of personality, the de-individuation, the dehumanization of the opponent, the terror, the absence of intimacy, the perpetual crisis and war, the manipulation through information, education and language control etc. The two brainwashing mechanisms directly related to the idea of individual memory control are the so-called “*memory hole*” and “*Newspeak*”. In the opinion of the writer, these methods had a proactive nature, going beyond censorship, i.e. the simple prohibition of certain publications. Everything was printed at the Party’s order. Wilson’s job was to readapt the past numbers of different published information to current reality or, better said, to the current necessities of the Party. The modified numbers were reprinted and the old ones were thrown in what Orwell calls “*memory holes*” – tubes leading to huge ovens permanently burning. History was falsified in every aspect. This process of continuous change not only applied to a newspapers, but also books, magazines, pamphlets, posters, leaflets, films, recordings, cartoons, photographs, text or any document that could have as little political or ideological significance. Interesting to follow here is the attitude of Winston in face of this masquerade at which he took part every day, forced to act and look like he were absolutely ignorant to what was going on:

But actually, he thought as he re-adjusted the Ministry of Plenty’s figures, it was not even forgery. It was merely the substitution of one piece of nonsense for another. Most of the material that you were dealing with had no connexion with anything in the real world, not even the kind of connexion that is contained in a direct lie. Statistics were just as much a fantasy in their original version as in their rectified version. A great deal of the time you were expected to make them up out of your head. For example, the Ministry of Plenty’s forecast had estimated the output of boots for the quarter at 145 million pairs. The actual output was given as sixty-two millions. Winston, however, in rewriting the forecast, marked the figure down to fifty-seven

millions, so as to allow for the usual claim that the quota had been overfulfilled. In any case, sixty-two millions was no nearer the truth than fifty-seven millions, or than 145 millions. Very likely no boots had been produced at all. Likelier still, nobody knew how many had been produced, much less cared. All one knew was that every quarter astronomical numbers of boots were produced on paper, while perhaps half the population of Oceania went barefoot. (Orwell, 1991: 39)

In his book „Manipulation Techniques” Bogdan Ficeac makes a reference to the fictional reality of “1984”: “In fact no one knew exactly what had happened in reality. The past was adapted to justify the actions of immediate reality, but also to justify their actions in the future. At the same time, another army of people were working on recreating the present. In order to justify one action or the other, constantly were invented enemies, conflicts, disasters. Nobody knew what was exactly going on. The very idea of reality had been annihilated and replaced with the appearance of reality.” (Ficeac, 2004: 37)

Here we are bound to ask the question - to what extent identity is defined and determined solely by the process of memory. There is no doubt that the two coordinates are mutually determined and interdependent. Our hero's sense of identity is due precisely to the fact that age allows him a limited access to the reality preceding the current regime – yet maintaining the temporal parameters of the action takes place in the novel, i.e. a fictional 1984. This fact, together with his job in the field of history falsification (counterfeiting) and the falsification of other falsification, that puts him in the centre of a vicious circle, offers him some perspective, enabling him to commit the one mortal sin corresponding to the totalitarian regime in which he lived: *thoughtcrime*. In other words, it allows him, at least in a limited manner, to see that there is an empirical reality beyond the counterfeits promoted and imposed by the system. But there is a third aspect that contributes to defining the identity of the character, i.e. self-awareness, and this is not related to memory, but the will of the individual and the dare to indulge himself to think beyond the given barriers. With awareness comes a sense of identity:

He was already dead, he reflected. It seemed to him that it was only now, when he had begun to be able to formulate his thoughts, that he had taken the decisive step. The consequences of every act are included in the act itself. He wrote:
Thoughtcrime does not entail death: *thoughtcrime* IS death. (Orwell, 1991: 28)

In his notes in the diary, Winston Smith demonstrates self-reflexivity, an indicator of the identity awareness. The writer only gives vague specifications – except his hero – on the way other characters think, if they ask themselves the same questions or if they are just a little aware of their status, their true identity in the world described. From this we can conclude that the sense of identity depends equally on self-awareness and choice. However, in the totalitarian society described by Orwell, either one of them represented deadly sins, social plagues that needed to be eliminated at all costs. Hence the effort to constantly change reality: to create a state of confusion in which the individual becomes so disoriented that he doesn't even know with certainty the year in which he lives and the reality transforms into a chimera, while the truth and falsehood become interchangeable. In such a state, the individual becomes more susceptible to suggestion, he loses the sense of reality and comes to believe and accept without question everything it's been said to him. If initially was a voluntary subjugation accomplished by appealing to fear, over time it becomes a mental conditioning so profound that people “under thirty” are totally under the spell of the ideology. The truth has no meaning for them anymore, as the only really accepted truth becomes the doctrine. In the

case of older persons, such as Winston, keeping the truth in relation to memory was a matter of individual will, being therefore subjective.

The *principle of Newspeak* is the second control mechanism of consciousness and memory that the writer describes in detail in the Appendix of his novel. The manipulation through language control is the method that applies the philosophical theory according to which the language is in direct relationship with the process of thought, having the ability to change (alter) the state of consciousness. Orwell led to totalitarian utopia a step further. Taking advantage of this connection of the two factors that influence each other, he developed a theory of language change by reducing it to the minimum, both by reducing the number of words and by removing all abstract meanings or semantic nuances of the remaining words, with the purpose to alter the thought and reduce it alteration to the basic needs of survival, because, as he himself describes:

The purpose of Newspeak was not only to provide a medium of expression for the world-view and mental habits proper to the devotees of Ingsoc, but to make all other modes of thought impossible. (...) Newspeak was designed not to extend but to diminish the range of thought, and this purpose was indirectly assisted by cutting the choice of words down to a minimum. (Orwell, 1991: 263)

Furthermore, the writer offers details about the way the new language was conceived:

In addition, any word — this again applied in principle to every word in the language — could be negated by adding the affix un- or could be strengthened by the affix plus-, or, for still greater emphasis, doubleplus-. Thus, for example, uncold meant 'warm', while pluscold and doublepluscold meant, respectively, 'very cold' and 'superlatively cold'. It was also possible, as in present-day English, to modify the meaning of almost any word by prepositional affixes such as ante-, post-, up-, down-, etc. By such methods it was found possible to bring about an enormous diminution of vocabulary. (Orwell, 1991: 266)

In Orwell's novel, the means for transformation are the terror and the extreme mental and physical torture. Here are described in detail the ways to create a "new man", an opposite of "Pygmalion". The efforts of the torturer are successful, as we assist at the end to the total transformation of Winston in an individual primarily characterized by recklessness and total disregard to any existential problems, a robotized individual, indifferent to his condition.

In the novel „Fahrenheit 451” by Ray Bradbury and the dystopian film „Equilibrium” we find the same leitmotif of the „danger” of feeling. Here rational memory is allowed, but the object of reprisal becomes the emotional memory, considered to be even more dangerous to the rational „equilibrium” of the new, civilized – yet totally controlled – society. In these cases, while the „memory” of the past is kept untouched, as a reference of what was worse in humanity, comparing to the advances and advantages of the present society, the memory of emotions is completely forbidden, thus recognizing its potential for developing independent, self-conscious human beings.

The political purpose of collective memory in post-dystopian worlds

In novels like Zamyatin's "We" and Huxley's "Brave New World", the relation between memory and identity changes in the sense that instead of being forbidden, memory is

incorporated in the public knowledge as a counterargument for the way of life already implemented. It varies primarily due to the timely zone in which each of the authors place his action. In case of Zamyatin's novel, the events occur in a post-humanistic world, in which the ideal is that of "non-liberty", located in a distant future – more than one thousand years - as it is revealed at the beginning of the novel:

We

One thousand years ago your heroic ancestors subjected the whole earth to the power of the United State.
(Zamyatin, 1991: 5)

Brave New World

"Once upon a time," the Director began, "while our Ford was still on earth, there was a little boy called Reuben Rabinovitch. Reuben was the child of Polish-speaking parents."
The Director interrupted himself. "You know what Polish is, I suppose?"
"A dead language."
"Like French and German," added another student, officiously showing off his learning.
(Huxley, 2003: 94)

In case of „We“, the hero of the book, D-503, appears to be relatively aware of the historical truth of the world before the creation of the "United State". In the novel there are numerous references to traditions and way of being of "ancestors", but in Zamyatin's dystopian vision, the deliberate and collective manipulation collectively is almost perfect. The official ideology has already been implemented and the individuals have already assumed the role of simple parts into a machine. Moreover, the control apparatus was so persuasive that in the present imagined by the author people do not need to be motivated by fear or terror tools. They not only have accepted the condition, but consciously and willingly embraced the belief in non-freedom, considering it the multi-millenary ideal towards which human race aspired from its very inception. Unlike Winston Smith (Orwell's hero), D-503 is perfectly aware of the historical changes occurred and their absolute necessity. He is so convinced of the truth of his "Weltanschauung" that he always finds new ways to justify and idealize this way of living, organized and controlled to the smallest details. Often he compares it to the "primitive", "uncivilized" society that preceded his era:

We

I thought: how was it that the ancients did not notice the utter absurdity of their prose and poetry? The gigantic, magnificent power of the artistic word was spent by them in vain. It is really funny; anybody wrote whatever happened to come into his head! It was as foolish as the fact that in the days of the ancients the ocean blindly splashed on the shore for twenty four hours a day, without interruption or use. The millions of kilogram meters of energy which were hidden in the waves were used only for the stimulation of sweethearts! we obtained electricity from the

Brave New World

On their way back across the Channel, Bernard insisted on stopping his propeller and hovering on his helicopter screws within a hundred feet of the waves.
The weather had taken a change for the worse; a south-westerly wind had sprung up, the sky was cloudy.
"Look," he commanded.
"But it's horrible," said Lenina, shrtnking back from the window. She was appalled by the rushing emptiness of the night, by the black foam-flecked water heaving beneath them, by the pale face of the moon, so

amorous whisper of the waves. We made a domestic animal out of that sparkling, foaming, rabid one! And in the same manner, we domesticated and harnessed the wild element of poetry. Now poetry is no longer the unpardonable whistling of nightingales, but a State Service! Poetry is a commodity. (Zamiatin, 1991: 53)

haggard and distracted among the hastening clouds. "Let's turn on the radio. Quick!" She reached for the dialling knob on the dashboard and turned it at random. "The skies are blue inside of you," sang sixteen tremoloing falsettos, "the weather's always."

Then a hiccough and silence. Bernard had switched of the current.

"I want to look at the sea in peace," he said. "One can't even look with that beastly noise going on."

"But it's lovely. And I don't want to look."

"But I do," he insisted. "It makes me feel as though ." he hesitated, searching for words with which to express himself, "as though I were more me, if you see what I mean. More on my own, not so completely a part of something else. Not just a cell in the social body. (Huxley, 2003: 160 - 161)

In *Brave New World* not only the inhabitants of "civilized society" were aware of humanity's past, but they were also convinced there can be no better way of living than the one promoted by them:

Mother, monogamy, romance. High spurts the fountain; fierce and foamy the wild jet. The urge has but a single outlet. My love, my baby. No wonder these poor pre-moderns were mad and wicked and miserable. Their world didn't allow them to take things easily, didn't allow them to be sane, virtuous, happy. What with mothers and lovers, what with the prohibitions they were not conditioned to obey, what with the temptations and the lonely remorse, what with all the diseases and the endless isolating pain, what with the uncertainties and the poverty-they were forced to feel strongly. And feeling strongly (and strongly, what was more, in solitude, in hopelessly individual isolation), how could they be stable? (Huxley, 2003: 112)

In another context, the D-503 discusses about the trajectory that led to the way of life specific to his time, in terms of Hegelian dialectic, implying the fact that totalitarian government represents the final scope and the end of history:

It is clear that the history of mankind, as far as our knowledge goes, is a history of the transition from nomadic forms to more sedentary ones. Does it not follow that the most sedentary form of life (ours) is at the same time the most perfect one? There was a time when people rushed from one end of the earth to another, but this was the prehistoric time when such things as nations, wars, commerce, different discoveries of different Americas still existed. Who has need of these things now? (Zamiatin, 1991: 12)

If we are to analyze the two novels from this perspective, we find that the focus is different in each of two coordinates of the memory-identity binomial. This way, in the novel "We" the real issue isn't the absence of memory, but the lack of identity. Here the collective memory wasn't falsified, only reinterpreted from the perspective of the official doctrine.

Meanwhile, the individual became a futile notion. People were indoctrinated from the early childhood to renounce the individual component and to assume the role of simple cells of the organism entitled the "United State":

We

Brave New World

Fahrenheit 451

The Tables transformed each one of us, actually, into a six-wheeled steel hero of a great poem. Every morning, with six-wheeled precision, at the same hour, at the same minute, we wake up, millions of us at once. At the very same hour, millions like one, we begin our work, and millions like one, we finish it. United into a single body with a million hands, at the very same second, designated by the Tables, we carry the spoons to our mouths; at the same second we all go out to walk, go to the auditorium, to the halls for the Taylor exercises, and then to bed. (Zamyatin, 1991: 13)

Bokanovsky's Process is one of the major instruments of social stability!" (...) Standard men and women; in uniform batches. The whole of a small factory staffed with the products of a single bakanovskified egg. Ninety-six identical twins working ninety-six identical machines! (...) He quoted the planetary motto. "Community, Identity, Stability." Grand words. "If we could bakanovskify indefinitely the whole problem would be solved." Solved by standard Gammas, unvarying Deltas, uniform Epsilons. Millions of identical twins. The principle of mass production at last applied to biology. (Huxley, 2003: 77 - 78)

We must all be alike. Not everyone born free and equal, as the Constitution says, but everyone made equal. Each man the image of every other; then all are happy, for there are no mountains to make them cower, to judge themselves against. (Bradbury, 1953: 28)

A testimony of the identity loss is also the fact that individuals are assigned letters and numbers automatically. The idea of name, so connected to the concept of identity, has been lost in time. Moreover, the concept of family was dissolved, and everything related to sexuality and maternity is controlled and regulated by the State:

We

Brave New World

Further, is it not absurd that their State (they called it State!) left sexual life absolutely without control? On the contrary, whenever and as much as they wanted ... absolutely unscientific, like beasts! And like beasts they blindly gave birth to children! Is it not strange to understand gardening, chicken farming, fishery (we have definite knowledge that they were familiar with all these things), and not to be able to reach the last step in this logical scale, namely, production of children – not to be able to discover such things as Maternal and Paternal Norms? (Zamyatin, 1991: 14)

Then, turning to his students, "What I'm going to tell you now," he said, "may sound incredible. But then, when you're not accustomed to history, most facts about the past do sound incredible." (...) "In brief," the Director summed up, "the parents were the father and the mother." The smut that was really science fell with a crash into the boys' eye avoiding silence. "Mother," he repeated loudly rubbing in the science; and, leaning back in his chair, "These," he said gravely, "are unpleasant facts; I know it. But then most historical facts are unpleasant." (Huxley, 2003: 95)

Therefore deprived of the warmth and closeness of a family, the children (i.e. “numbers” in Zamyatin’ novel) find comfort and reason to exist only by identifying - to the quasi total annihilation of the self – to the United State:

We

Divergent

Here we have our scale: on the one side an ounce, on the other a ton. On one side “I”, on the other “we”, the United State. Is it not clear? To assume that I may have any “right” as far as the State is concerned is like assuming that an ounce may equilibrate a ton in a scale! Hence the natural distribution: tons-rights, grams-duties. And the natural road from nothingness to greatness is to forget that one is a gram and to feel that one is one millionth of a ton!
(Zamyatin, 1991: 87)

The faction system is a living being composed of cells: all of you! (...) Faction before blood. (...)

In our factions we find meaning, we find purpose, we find life. (...) Apart from them, we would not survive.

(Roth, 2012: 40)

If in the recent dystopian novel “Divergent” concept of identity is closely related to that of “factions”, the identity component is also not entirely absent in the novel “We”. Zamyatin, like Freud, his contemporary, the Russian writer whom apparently was influenced by, values above all the constant search of the mind, as opposed to intellectual fossilization. This in itself is enough to say that a certain coordinate of the character’s identity have not become lost. Although D-503 possesses the conscience of his non-identity, he is in a permanent state of reflection. Furthermore, although the hero declares from the very beginning that freedom is a foreign concept to him, as it is programmed to embody “mathematically infallible happiness”, he demonstrates throughout the novel, one fixated on the mother-child relationship and longs for maternal care. In fact, the entire state of uncertainty and immaturity he demonstrates are the result of the fact that his self is deprived of mother’s memory, whose image was replaced in the eyes of the child with the image of the United State. This reminds us of the Jungian archetypes and induces the idea that their memory is transcendental, replacing conscious memory when, by different circumstances, the child was deprived of it.

We have seen here a few examples of novelistic fiction - (though, although it is reassuring to call them fictions, the given models of totalitarianism can always be inspired by reality or become the inspiration for it!) – in which there are strong internal conflicts that put our heroes in paradoxical situations. In two of these novels (“We” and “1984”) we learn to know the two characters through the diary they kept and we can observe their evolution. Thus we can indicate the time when the seed of rebellion was planted and started to grow. We witness their transformation as individuals, in an attempt to recover their lost identity. In both cases, the environment through which they reach that state of “awakening” is love, the Eros, the relation with each other. In both cases, their efforts are cut short by the intervention of the authorities, whose sole endeavor is to remove any trace of consciousness of self-identity from the minds of individuals. The only thing that differs here are the means used: in the case of Zamyatin's novel, there are mechanical means to remove the self-consciousness, i.e. the actual intervention, achieved by physical or chemical means, in the human brain. Aldous Huxley tries to answer the question *why this it is so against nature*, by giving a very clear reason:

In the course of evolution nature has gone to endless trouble to see that every individual is unlike every other individual. (...) Physically and mentally, each one of us is unique. Any culture which, in the interests of efficiency or in the name of some political or religious dogma, seeks to standardize the human individual, commits an outrage against man's biological nature. (Huxley, 1958: 10)

What lies behind this claim of the unique state is the idea of creating a society like the beehive or anthill. The problem is that no matter how much we can admire the operability of such animal societies, human nature does not lend itself to such ventures:

However hard they try, men cannot create a social organism, they can only create an organization. In the process of trying to create an organism they will merely create a totali-tarian despotism. (Huxley, 1958: 11)

CONCLUSIONS

Generally there are two approaches towards memory: in first case, memory and all items related to it are banished, forbidden under severe punishment, while the present is reinterpreted and recreated until nothing remains untouched and undistorted. This is the case of Orwell's dystopia, "Fahrenheit 451" or "Equilibrium", a dystopian film, written and directed by Kurt Wimmer. On the other hand, there are fictions which go beyond that, in which the totalitarian construct and the society are so profoundly implemented in the conscience of individuals, that there is no need any more to conceal the past. These are the cases of the novel "We", by Yevgeny Zamyatin, "Brave New World" by Aldous Huxley or "Divergent" by Veronica Roth. The reason for this separation is the degree of manipulation the two societies have reached and the effect of memory over identity and individuality, as the two of them are closely related. If we are to examine the degree in which personal or collective memory can influence the character of a persona, we discover that some of these totalitarian-like societies fear memory, as it can offer a point of stability for the individual, making him less malleable and harder to manipulate, while others prefer to disseminate and keep the memory of the past as a counter-example for the present generations of civilized people, facing the "savages", the "ancestors", the "old people", as they are called in in different versions. The relation with the past, although maintained, is presented in an antagonized light in order to induce a certain attitude in the present, thus as a means of manipulating.

In conclusion, the relation between memory and identity it is a given that characterizes human being – according to John Locke -, inherent to it and in the lack which the individual becomes without root and psychological support, losing the meaning of life. However, the trend is the same: the individual, in order to become mass of maneuver, must be dispossessed of these two attributes defining for the human condition, by attacking memory. It is the only way to get that perfect soldier, devoid of self-consciousness and the sense of individuality, man reduced to a tabula rasa, and then "re-created" from scratch by rules of centralizing power. The essential and existential significance of these two coordinates becomes more apparent if the analysis focuses on fictional situations describing a framework in which an attempt is been made to their integrity. In fact, the very premise and the purpose for creating such works (dystopias) is to make people aware, to warn humanity of the dangers that lurk, because, ultimately, the collective memory is our only shield against repeating the mistakes of the history .

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work was supported by the strategic grant POSDRU/159/1.5/S/140863, Project ID 140863 (2014), co-financed by the European Social Fund within the Sectorial Operational Program Human Resources Development 2007 – 2013.

REFERENCES

Books

- Ficeac, B., (2004) *Tehnici de manipulare*, București: Nemira.
Huxley, A.L., (2003) *Minunata lume nouă și Reîntoarcerea în minunata lume nouă*, Iași: Polirom.
Orwell, G. (1991) *O nouă sute sute optzeci și patru*, București: Univers.
Zamiatin, E. (1991) *Noi*, București: Humanitas.

Journals

- Nora, P. (1989) Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire. *Representations*, 26, Special Issue: Memory and Counter Memory, Spring, 7 – 24.

Website

- Bradbury, R. (1953) Fahrenheit 451 [Accessed 02th August 2014] Available from World Wide Web: <http://lhsblogs.typepad.com/files/complete-text.pdf>
Huxley, A. (1958) Brave New World Revisited [Accessed 02th August 2014] Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.huxley.net/bnw-revisited/>
Ricoeur, P. (2009) *Memory, History, Forgetting* [Accessed 02th August 2014] Available from World Wide Web: http://www.google.ro/books?hl=ro&lr=&id=c5xpXw-szuAC&oi=fnd&pg=PR11&dq=memory+history&ots=IwD8PbWnib&sig=XvkiRv-lkLN3lymOC0V8hDV2PBQ&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=memory%20history&f=false
Ruth, V. (2012) *Divergent* [Accessed 02th August 2014] Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.pdforigin.com/divergent-pdf/>