FROM STORY TO TECHNOLOGY
(*or How the Fantasy Can Become Reality*)

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Abstract: *As any literary text implies multiple interpretations, the present article refers to instruments (known instruments) of the technologies that are frequently named „latter-day", thus recently made available to civilisation, two successive stages of evolution and knowledge. The author's belief is that, however, before crystallising human society, some of these instruments have also been deduced ("seen") by the primitive man, in a personalised manner, closely related to his supreme aim: projecting human universe into the duration of the perpetual future. Starting from Romanian stories (both cultural or popular), as well as from other examples extracted from old (millennial) literatures, the author focuses his observations over the role held by the fantasy, intuition, creativity, in contexts that can be interpreted as… messages over time. Into this aspect, the structures of fantasy, as well as various apparitions (in the text) of miraculous objects or phenomena, they all add a new, surprising dimension to the epic discourse. Some passages in the stories and tales grant a special dynamic to the whole, due to unusual representation factors. In the sphere of interpretation for this sort of contexts, a sort of hermeneutic adventure comes in, and it is different from what Paul Ricoeur used to call «the search for the other», but closely related to needing the other, through transcending the spatial metaphoric universe. The effect is represented by a primitive disclosure of certain constituents improperly called science-fiction constituents, because these structures have been conceived long before even science existed. As a result, the only one responsible for their existence is a genius-intuitive mind, which would deserve an increased attention in the future. We offer miraculous objects to stand as an example (mirror, dagger, knife, sword, sabre, headdress, handkerchief), that are able to send messages very similar to the ones in our days (for example, instant text messages). In this itinerary from the self to the other, in order to return to the self – the hermeneutic circle – also believed to be in the frame of the imaginary, the literary text shows unexpected functions, seemingly substituting that major dimension that builds up between the doxa and the known instruments.*

Keywords: *fantasy, intuition, the knwoledge society.*

I. The constitution of the cultural phenomenon and the edification of successive civilisations by the humanity is due to a continuous perfecting of communication, found at the origin of all instruments (thought plus languages), which are to be found at the origin of absolute discrepancy between the human and the other beings of the planet. Human's ability of socialising has given birth to a cultural patrimony, deeply rooted into… spirituality. Due to the creative inventions, which have generated increasingly performant technologies, the human being has fulfilled its aspirations, succeeding to break free from the Earth and even sending its messages into the Universe. On the other hand, lacking the social component, the other species could not beneficiate of the contribution of collective thought, neither of the experience that can be thus transmitted and accumulated, as they have not created the instruments (epistema) needed for a significant evolution. In this context, the role of communication has always been the determining factor. Due to inventiveness and creativity, through which the human has activated his imagination, he has discovered "the realms of thought", those new spaces, situated in the area of fantasy, thus in a world different from the real one. Being stocked in the human brain since immemorial times, this new

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world has constituted its constant preoccupation, under the most various aspects. Its formal manifestations, prefigured as incipient aspirations, are found in the myths, legends, stories and tales of all peoples, forming the common fund of our existing spiritual legacy.

II. The assertion above appears much more explicitly confirmed in the cult literature, through its most valuable and representative belongings. The written works contain images and metaphors, intuitions, descriptions and interpretations, which send anchors into the farthest time, which Mircea Eliade calls that of the eternal comeback (to origins). They serve the present investigation as unquestionable testimonies of the geniality of certain humans, because they can be confirmed by documents. Not the same can be invoked for the myths, legends and the greatest part of stories, illustrating the existence of a cultural "memory" from the farthest periods of humanity, yet unsupported by documents. The distinction between oral and scriptural is considered to be the border between the known and the unknown, and the methods of "research" for the first of them (the oral) cannot be assimilated to the solutions adopted by the researchers of the IndoEuropean language, those linguists who have rebuilt the so-called "unattested" words (never written) from the etimologies of the oldest languages that had alphabets. However, an effort towards the indicated direction remains one of the most inciting.

II. 1. Invoking the oral / scriptural binom again, with the intent of using the syllogistic principle, the essential role held by the great known creators of the past included in the eternal comeback is clearly observed. The special character of their "messages" is the result of the genuine qualities of their intelligence. Everytime one speaks about geniality and genii, they are granted peculiarities that go beyond the limits of clairvoyance (this context does not include the paranormal or oracular phenomena, neither those characterising anomalyes of thought or logic, which, even since those times, were considered to be manifestations of mental illnesses or insanity). One of the confirmations comes from *Epistula ad Pisones*, considered to be one of the oldest "poetic arts", in which Horace, on his turn, makes the distinction between the artistic act of creation, on one hand, and the deviations from the "norm", on the other hand, which are followed by the need to ignore the illogical, absurd speech, caused by insanity, which, for this reason, cannot be considered. In this visionary way, Horace was separating the elucubrations of the irrational thought from those questionable manifestations, as a fashion of his times, clearly establishing the rules (canon) of the era and, as an alternative, offering his readers various models worth following, aside of other blamable ones. What seems entirely surprising refers to the detail currently ignored by researchers, that fashion is circumscribed to a hermeneutic and, once its interpretative resources have been exhausted, it changes, leaving room for other practices, extremely variable in the historical time, yet capable of returning when we least expect them to. The extremely old formule, nil novi sub sole, also proves this fact. Taking into consideration the genii's ability of observing the essential in the phenomenal, Horace launches, among others, a syntagm that travels through the cultural noosphere, regardless of his work. We are referring to the syntagm *desinit in piscem*, ("ended in fish-tail"), through which he comments horrifying counter-examples for the purpose of separating the aesthetic taste from the common taste. "*Humano capiti cervicem pictor equinam / iungere si velit et varias inducere plumas, /* **undique collatis membris ut turpiter atrum / desinit in piscem mulier formosa supernae***: / spectatum admissi risum teneatis amici?*" (Horațiu, II, 1980, 80) has made a great

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career being abbreviated into the formula *desinit în piscem*, taken as an emblem of bad taste, of the unnatural, of a work with a great beginning but failed in the end. *Ending in fish-tail* is used in popular cultures, as an unquestionable mark of the reference power generated by the cultural original. If the image is not found in the literary works of antiquity, the idea of the natural unity is ubiquitous. The unity and the simplicity of the work as a whole is the main criterion of the creation process and a norm of the beauty born from imitating a natural model (Aristotle, 1970, 7).The expression has gained different acceptions with new significances, along the eras. If, during Horace's life, it had become illustrative for the questionable "common taste" (meaning the lack of culture of those with very little education), in a first comeback to actuality, it was somewhat explicit for what was called the aesthetic of the ugly, in its oxymoronic characterisations. Today, the syntagm can be considered as representative-including for the post-modern aesthetics, encouraging creating attitudes (actions) that grant it unconditional artistic statute, for the use of standards. In other words, its comeback to actuality is perfectly circumscribed to the saying nil novi sub sole. In conclusion, *Epistula ad Pisones*, enables us to see a metonymic transfer, as we can also see in the numerous examples of the same "nature" as the horacian expression, synthetising an exceptional intuition related to the birth of the kitsch (without an immediate babtism, but delayed for two millenniums). To this fact, we should also add the observation that the aggressions over the artistic canon represent the "engine" of the future conquests, and art's freedom of expression is, in fact, freedom of thought. As a result, what used to be condemned and considered to be some sort of anti-art was enabled to become, in time, a major artistic manifestation and expression.

II. 2. Other examples, dated centuries ago, are constituted by Leonardo da Vinci's inventions, those genius of the Renaissance who was able to "see" with his own mind and then projected a long series of objects (instruments) that were unintelligible for his peers, strange for the next centuries and certified by the reality today. Almost all of them have been (re)invented and perfected by the following generations, as they comprised, as a creative idea, elements of technicity through which they became usable. One would be justified to say, metaphorically, that Leonardo da Vinci was the man who invented the future. His work serves as an example of the genius intuitions and creativity of the human being. To him, we could also add the name of the Transylvanian Conrad Haas, the author of a study dated five centuries ago about the "rockets with two and three levels", and – closer in history – the name of the writer Jules Verne, whose work is filled with technological conquests that were only accomplished later than his books.

II. 3. Last but not least, we can invoke the name of our national poet, Mihai Eminescu, who intuits (describes) the intergalactic flight in the poem Luceafărul in such a suggestive manner that we could say that the authors of the first series of the science-fiction movie Star Trek (first generation) have used it: "*A sky of stars underneath / A sky of stars above/ It seemed like a continuous lighning/ Rambling through them*". As the author of the series himself relies on fantastic fiction (thus, originated in reality) it becomes amazing to note how many similarities can be found between the Eminescian lyrics and the images filmly "envisioned" by the directors. Instead of conclusions, we reiterate the idea according to which the genii's ability to "see" into the future allows us to consider that genius minds have intuitively and visionarily shared human aspirations that have become certainties.

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III. We are returning to the actual subject of our article, using the previous arguments to support our own intercede. Can this sort of elements (images, ideas, intuitions) also be deduced from farther horizons, thus before the writing would have brought its huge contribution to preserving the memory and spiritual patrimony of humanity? Where should these be searched for? In the absence of certain, relevant documentary attestations, we resort to the orality later preserved in written texts, meaning to what popular stories tell us – in the absence of … attested authors – about similar issues. A major obstacle is represented by the fact that the "messages" of the popular literature in general target a different finality. The main characteristic of this sort of texts is represented by their ability of being continuously recreated, as the initial cultural, social and/or genetic context, can be found in real performative series, (re)positioned in new temporal and situational contexts, also adapted to the contemporary realities of the story tellers. The researches carried up to the present, but also their typologies do not help too much, no matter if they are descriptive or disposed in argumentative structures, because, as it was stated, they do not suggest an approach under our angle of analysis. Neither the (decimal) classifications operated by the biblioteconomy, the branch of the bibliography that studies the organisation and administration of libraries, can ease the investigation, as the references are strictly connected to the vectorial content of the message, so that the bibliography which is thematically oriented towards supernatural phenomena does not include the present issues, but almost exclusively registers stories about dream interpretation, esoteric, magic, religious issues, being a repertoire of beliefs of all kinds, but not to the use of the idea that, in this vast field of orality, would be worth being signalled as intuitions, simple desires, in a single word "aspirations" afore the sciences.

That is why our research method becomes extremely limitative and univocal, only being interested in signalling certain structures of little and very little narrative extent, detached from the whole and whose contextual conditioning is put into brackets. In order to detect these tiny fragments, we start off from the premise that, crossing the cerebral Rubicon, the human being has discovered the endlessness of thought and that this (first) form of freedom has helped him to (mentally) overcome the obstacles of the surrounding reality, through projections of an abstracting value. Thinking free of constraints becomes characteristic for human beings, and, thus motivated, we will consider that in the oldest stories and tales it is possible to find certain cravings (to be read "intuitions", "ideas", "desires", "aspirations") which we consider autonomous in relation to the final message, incipiently contoured.

IV. Under the incidence of *supernatural literature* we have series of synonyms such as *fantastic* (this one being increasingly restrictive), *miraculous*, berserker, animated (still with the meaning of "miraculous", for the objects that in the real world do not hold those certain attributes), unusual (the latter undoubtedly proving the dichotomy between the real and the imaginary). We return to specify that they are not majoritary, but, on the contrary, in the well established formula of the popular stories, they only appear on extremely rare occasions and are intended to animate the line of the story by picturesque-dramatical situation changes, salutary intervening into the destiny of the heroes and forming genuine epic-fantastic colour spots. Their character is completely strange, miraculous, differentiative, and emphasizes the aspiration / tentation of certain forms of communication whose purpose could be interpreted in the modern sense, as a prefigurator of desires then fulfilled through the miraculous. Have these miracles (desires/aspirations) become realities of our days?

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Without considering them anything else than suppositions crowned by speculative subjectivity, we will prefigure a few examples.

IV. 1. [**Relativity of time**]. In Romanian popular stories we encounter expressions such as fast as the wind, fast as the thought, that design, in what we call real time, the maximum possible attained speed, but also the fantastic option, through transfer from the surrounding reality into the area of the unusual stimulated by the imagination ("fast as the thought"). The second part of the syntagm shows the way in which the constraints of the reality are overcome, not due to the narrative evolution based on the logic of the enounce, but by resorting to the miraculous event (fact). This one, in all the analysed cases, represents a "jump", a mutation with a single reason (purpose), which is the abolishment of the obstacle (lintel) of the constraints pertaining to reality and placing the epic in a practically infinite horizon. The mere fact that the thought (in other words, the thinking, the imagination, the aspiration as a form of manifesting the endless horizon) is taken into consideration, shows the formidable role that human thinking holds in this context. What seems worth remembering is that the authors of popular stories believe that such an accomplishment is possible.

IV. 2. [**The virtual environment**]. Another interesting aspect, precisely for the way in which it is shown, is represented by the other realm. The other realm is clearly differentiated from Heaven and/or Hell. It is a location also called the other world, through which imaginary "countries" are evoked, and they bear the name of the inhabitants, their habits, their anatomic defects or defects caused by accidents, or related to occupations, crafts that they all practice. In our opinion, the representation of "the other realm" confirms, even by (primitive) denomination, the prefiguring and even the use of some of the ingredients, the present"virtual" environment proving that, until the emergence of the technologies that made the virtual environment "visible", we have – avant la lettre - images from… there and, furthermore, that it was imagined, intuited, even before the technological accomplishments that gave it an existential statute. If we add that, today, the virtual "reality" (a rather inappropriate term) represents a stimulation of a tridimensional environment generated by a computer that allows the user viewing and, potentially, manipulation, we can observe that it represents a second "articulation" because, in itself, the story as a whole belongs to the imagination, as a first virtual environment. We believe that through the syntagm "the other realm", the anonymous authors of the oldest times have first designated the virtual reality very close to the contemporary realities, and if we are to search for the way to enter the other realm, the inciting observations regarding the present subject will be even more. As in the forementioned cases, we will agree that the obstacles of the reality, risen as a result of the emergence of a conflictual situation that must be overcome, have been removed by resorting to imagination. Imagination is only one of the qualities of the human being, an attribute that needs to be activated in order to transcend reality. The followed intuitive-logic pattern also contains certain initiations through which it is demonstrated that the time and space outside the narrative, but useful to the initiatic contexts, play a determining role for the popular narrator's aspirations. Anyhow, what is striking is that the other realm is similar up to identity to what we see today in certain "games" of the virtual environment and probably it is not very random that the games for children, in the virtual environment – the so-called computer games – hold an initiatic role and have a cognitive value, like the stories that, in their vast majority, are "trials" of moving from one stage to the other in the biological age. No matter how sophisticated they have become through technologies, they are close to the universe of the initiation through a game.

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IV.3. [**"Tuned" horses**] In popular stories the main type of transportation is riding a horse, which, instead of a flat reality, is granted new characteristics, not random at all. Can one find in them elements of evolution of the future's technologies, at first intuited and then substituted? The horses in the stories have fantastic characteristics and if we eliminate the "gift" of speech out of them, we will notice that all their other endowments match, on a wide scale, the technologies and instruments of the future. How random can it be that the *tray of embers*, a test to realise the difference between the appearance and the essence, was found at the origin of the first automobiles propelled by steam? Yet it is not at all random that the power of automobiles is measured in "horsepower". Also, we have horses with many hearts, as well as there are multiple cylinder automobiles. Other times, the strength (the "hearts") of the horses are hidden by evil characters into only one, so that we might say, obviously exaggerating, that they prefigured the "tuned" cars in the present automobile fashion. Other symbolic images of the horses in the stories show that, after passing the test of embers, they are granted wings and become flying machines. In stories we have horses with two, four, six, twelve and even twenty-four wings. Here, forcing the natural through activating the imagination sends us into the fantastic. We should not ignore that everything that was realized as technology comes from a supernatural vision of the reality. In stories, we can also find birds with metal wings, but we are tempted to conclude that the law of gravity was so later valued that, instead of the birds, the horses were the first to receive…wings

IV. 4. [**Miraculous objects**: handkerchief, whip, hat, fruit: (golden) quince / apple/ (silver) nut / pear / peach, grain: wheat / cockle, boot, (glass) bell, curl, (glass) boat, clarion, basket, furnace, nest, oven, box, knife, lamp, fireplace, ring, bin, swing, rable, grave, headdress, mirror, clock, straw, *hair*, brush, comb, pebbles, stable / house attick, (money) *pouch*, shotgun, wheel (of luck), ladder, hollow, chandelier, (house), floor, vineyard, etc. Within the body of the stories, each of these constitutes an object with miraculous functions. Adding that their number is much larger, one can notice that the respective segment does not follow the rationalist narrative procedure types, thus having an ordered character. Within all sorts of typologies operated by the researchers in the field, the objects holding the statute of lively things remain indivisualised and undivisible. They do not subject to any organisation in the system, but participate, and hold an exceptional role any time that they appear, out of the author's wish, as necessary for the narrative course. Regarding the routine trail perfectly insinuated in the reader's horizon of receptions, popular authors often add unpredicted, strange, miraculous situations, for the purpose of eliminating real obstacles and dynamising the epic action of surprising and of deceiving the expectations. A turnover of the functions structuring the reality comes up, determining the emergence of the strange, the fantastic, sometimes even up to the absurd. The function of regaining rationality, which is known to be governing the epic system, comes back at the end of the stories, when the circular character of the action (usually of the journey) is reconstructed. *In corpore*, these interventions could be characterised as *deus ex machine* types of procedures. By successive accumulations, due to their presence in oral literature, they become impressive, not only through quantity and quality, but mostly through the dispersion on the entire epic horizon. Following, we will present a few situations in which the meeting with the... future could be intuitively prefigured: **A**. [**Protocronic** *sms*] We are referring to the deals made between the heroes, usually when their roads split and they trust each other with an object (*headdress, handkerchief, knife, mirror*), about which they say that, the moment they will be spotted with blood, rust or hazy (mirror), that

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must be considered a sign from one of these. Could they be considered, due to the conciseness of the message, some sms of the oldest world, lost in time?; **B**. [**Talking mirror and information (news) provider**]. In all peoples' tales, stories and short stories, one can find magic mirrors, enabled to speak and, upon request, grant their masters precise information about other places and/or events. The same happens with binoculars, through which the heroes can see overseas or into other realms; **C.** [**The invisible man**]. In all peoples' tales and stories, a series of miraculous objects (e.g.. whip, tophat/hat, table, apple, nut) grant their early owners the possibility of hiding their own identity, making them invisible, or other facilities similar to …"room-sevice" (rich meals with exotic food); **D.** [**Plastic surgery and artificial insemination**]. The princesses become "heavy" (pregnant) after eating certain fruit or seeds, and, furthermore, the tales and stories comprise a series of miraculous fruit that can turn the heroes into handsome or ugly men, after being eaten; **E.**[**Freedom, brotherhood, equality... eternity**]. Eventually, the stories of all peoples are abundant in miraculous cures, from *live water* to *dead water*, liquids whose characteristics provide a great help in gluing together human fragments and even reviving the dead. We also note that the heroes are in search of a country/place considered to be granting *eternal youth*. The hero overcomes the hardest obstacles, but his memory cannot be erased. And neither the myth of the eternal (re)comeback cannot be cooled off, so that the hero returns to the roots, to his own human condition, apparently stronger than immortality. Us contemporaries have the same aspirations, being increasingly perceived as (medical) objectives of the humankind.

V. Conclusions. It is necessary (and it is time) to say that many of the intuitions of our forefathers needed a longer time to pass before they became revelations. That is why, during the interval between the "astrological hours of humankind" (as the Austrian writer and publicist Stefan Zwieg called it) and those of their unanimously accepted confirmation, there whould emerge intermediate situations (titles) over which we have paused several times. In tales, stories, short stories, myths and legends, one can identify "signs" of this sort of intuitions, never explicitly finished through broad digressions, but only as aspirations about which, one way or another, the future eras offer confessions, some of them becoming certainties of the present technologies. Insisting over the volatility or, in other words, over the very speculative character of the action, we will consider that these simple assumptions still represent frail connections of the mental with the desirable reality, As this sort of facts become possible, we have also tried to emphasize, in a previous study (Chişu, *Du local à l'universel* , 2007, pp. 47- 65, in which we have stated that the reality/imagination distinction bears mutual transfers of information and that, due to the human phantasy (the instrument of entering the unknown) and of the imagination as a correlative instrument between the reality and fiction, in the myths, legends and popular stories, especially in the latter, which are more diverse regarding their theme, there sometimes emerge true "samples" of genious intuition regarding the aspirations of the human being.In the specialty literature we have not encountered preoccupations regarding the aspects approached by our text and, as it was already proven, the fact is explained through the specific difficulty of the main message in these *corpus*-es, other than the one we are investigating on secondary routes, which we yet consider the only ones useful for the type of archaeology into the primitive imaginary practiced here. Establishing that for the effective break of the wall of (canonic) understanding of the epic substance, these exemplifications only hold a speculative role, we offer a general

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bibliography. In a known book dedicated to the models gained through education, stated: „Scientists work by the models gained through education and through later assimilation of the specialty literature, often not knowing and not needing to know what characteristics have these models offered to the statute of communitary paradigms" (Thomas S. Khun, 1976, p. 152). It is a conclusion that encourages us to carry future research of this kind, obviously less speculative.

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