LITERATURE IN IS-CS – CHALLENGES AND TEMPTATIONS

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Abstract:

This article is grounded on the findings that the functions of human communication have been at the origin of the progress of mankind throughout the successive ages. This has been made possible by the evolution of tools (alphabets, writing, equipments, new media) falling into this field. Together with thinking/speaking as oral aspects, writing on various materials has generated a parallel universe: literature. It has drawn our attention to our inner imaginary world, a product of pure fiction or a result of fantasy. Its impact has been so strong that it seems to be… demiurgic. Promoted to the rank of art, developed on aesthetic and stylistic principles, imbued with spirit, literature has become a luminous path to the humanity within us. Literature is revealed to us as "the Bodiless Beauty", because it exists in a virtual environment. The revolution of the communication technologies and the invention of intelligent, information-providing media have triggered a complete reconfiguration of human society. The consequences of this evolution include the displacement of the existing barriers and, strictly speaking, the blending of habits, rules, and cultural, ethical, moral, religious, juridical, economic and culinary codes. The entrance to the *Information Age* and the phenomenon of globalization are also the centre of attention of contemporary debates, eliciting numerous answers to questions regarding the future of society. In this new context, literature faces its own challenges.

Keywords:

"The new man", evolution, literature, globalization, technologies, IS-CS, utopia.

In accordance with the theme of the present conference, we intend to approach the role and the place of literature within this context, by addressing both evolutive factors and contemporary aspects, some of them having a projective nature, according to which we will consider: (I) The concept of "the new man"; (II) Literature along the evolution of society, from an elitist culture to the cultural industries; (III) The revolutions in the field of communication technologies, globalization and the changes in all

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domains, culture (literature) included; (IV) The social impact of VR (virtual reality) and its resemblances to the sphere of literature; utopia and dystopia in the XXIst century; (V) The Romanian literature in the transition from communism/capitalism to cultural globalization; (VI) Conclusions.

I.1. Despite the aura which the syntagm "the new man" seems to be continuously refreshing as a result of the semantic updating of its first term, which bears significations such as "evolved", "improved", "recent", "original", "novel", "up-to-date", "contemporary", "modern" [1, 531], it is almost two millennia old. "And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God [2, 4.23-24] has been created", this is the first attestation lying at the origin of this type of occurrence, which illustrates the inner irrepressible, yet desirable impulse, which animates the permanency of the thinking being. History has added ever more details to the concept of "the new man", increasing its degree of credibility as a result of the development of knowledge and of human consciousness. The following ages have resumed them from the start, in accordance with the data and the elements added meanwhile. Hardly any well-built society has missed the construction of a "new" type of man. The initiative of his improvement has been extended to the social sphere. Plato's *The Republic* is a *primum movens* in the landscape of utopias-to-be. Later on, Cicero wrote about *homo novus* [3, I, 39] in the Roman society, insisting on qualities such as acknowledging the merits and their utility in front of one's peers. The architect Vitruvius, contemporary with the famous orator, managed to draw the prototype of "the new man", an idea taken over by the Renaissance artist Leonardo da Vinci, and contracted, in full anatomic equilibrium, in the term *the vitruvian man*. The vitruvian/davincian/ planetary man was to become the messenger of the intergalactic space. This endless adventure involved Salvador Dali too, with his painting Geopoliticus Child Watching the Birth of the New Man *(1943)*, an opportunity for us to notice the inconsistency of all forms of arts as well as the public taste, something which we will address in the following pages

I.2. Beginning with the second half of the second millennium of the Common Era, the role played by man in society enthralled the authors of those visionary writings, the famous utopias. Among the most noteworthy of them, one can enumerate Thomas Morus (Utopia, 1516), Giordano Bruno (*The Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast*, 1584), Thomasso Campanella (*The City of the Sun*, 1602), Johann Valentin Andreae (*Christianopolis*, 1619),

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Jan Amos Comenius (*Labyrinth of the World and Paradise of the Heart*, 1623), Francis Bacon (*New Atlantis*, 1626). These writers had in common the belief in the possibility of the structural transformation of the human being, and the advent of a new man, completely different from the old one, a man of certainty and enlightenment. Approximately in the same period of time, the philosopher, mathematician, and writer René Descartes was crystallizing the content of the enlightened ideas in his famous Cartesian adage: dubito, ergo cogito, cogito ergo sum

I. 3. The issue of the new man became ever more complicated and entailed other patterns in the XXth century: the fascist, iron-guardist, communist new man (homo sovieticus). The approaches to the "new man", with their visionary yet unverifiable character, place in a difficult relation theory (according to which everything is possible) with the unquestionable reality. The most important consequence highlights the chimerical, illusory character of these approaches, yet, despite all that, it is not surprising that, after numberless failures, utopias seem more necessary than ever. They belong to our genetic endowment. "The new man" has become an ideologeme [4, 185-206] within which the destiny of the human being becomes an essentially allegorical presence.

II.1. The role which literature has lost along the evolution/involution from the an elitist type of culture to the cultural industries requires a short return to history. For ages, against the background of the evolution of society, the humanities, such as philosophy, literature, justice, arts, aroused the first interests, through which the populations, which were to become nations, built their spiritual heritage and their material civilization. Once the first forms of communication had appeared, the writing had been institutionalized, and the printing press had been invented, the humanists – writers, philosophers, scholars – held pride of place in the attempt at creating the paradigms for the cultural space and the projections of "the new man". Their messages, sent via linguistic codes, pinned on supports ever more insusceptible to the destructive action of time, had a huge cultural value, because they were promoted by a part of the elite and addressed to the elite, the relatively small category of the connoisseurs. Throughout the centuries, the elites contributed to the development of the incipient stages in the accretion of knowledge about man and environment. It was fundamental, however, that, together with the above-mentioned accretions, the same representatives of the elite should have continuously improved the

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tools of communication and established them institutionally. In other words, they contributed to the establishment of national manifestations as literary languages, to their refinement into stylistic varieties; they established norms and canons which impose models, in their turn disseminated by schools, universities, and culture in its broadest meaning.

However, the prestige of this establishment was to decline, to fade away once the cultural phenomenon had become industrial. Beginning with the XIXth century, the technological revolutions in the field of sciences have decisively contributed to the development of the social phenomenon of communication. Culture has become an individual stake. Conversely, civilization has developed social opportunities as common goods. This first breach made by sciences and technologies in the elitist wall has facilitated the creation of an efficient system for the communication among millions of people, eager to know, to be informed. In the new context, the press has become a redoubtable avenue of approach, a cheap way compared with the book, and, in order to increase its (economic) efficiency, the diversity of its topics is limitless. Concomitantly with the right of man to be informed – a sacred principle – the diminution of canons and (ethical, moral, juridical, deontological) rules has contributed to the birth of the alternative concepts of cultural industry and mass culture, formulated by Th. Adorno and Max Horkheimar. Slowly but surely, the mass media system has ceased to be a tool of communication, its vector undergoing a noticeable transformation, signalled by Marshall McLuhan in his famous statement: "the medium is the message"

II. 2. Nevertheless, during the 19th and the 20th century, writers and literature enjoyed the highest cultural prestige. If this was possible for a long period of time, it was because of what linguists call the inferential relation. It defines the competences of users, distinguishing between what the linguists call *the sentence meaning* and *the speaker meaning.* Both of them use language, the former legitimating the (theoretical) pre-eminence of the code, of the language as an almost (grammatically) abstract aspect, and the latter designating the direct derivation of an utterance from another, through the common and continuous meanings in the mind. It is only the latter, because of its connection to an instance of communication that can provide the routine elements and the means of meaning construal, by referring to something familiar. Literature preserves and perpetuates this biunivocal type within its artistic heritage, satisfying the condition of the communication of ideas, values, emotions, and other feelings, as a common good preserved

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through the reading, sometimes centuries afterwards, of the most representative works of universal or national literature. To stay close to the example Chomsky uses in his studies, nobody, except those engaged in a dialogue, which has its own history, will know what, for instance, the utterance "He told me that too late" will mean, while a sentence such as "To be, or not to be, that is the question" will reverberate culturally, triggering philosophical, religious, dramatic echoes about a cultural symbol belonging to everybody. Literature offers to its connoisseurs more than the inference relation, namely the adequacy to the artistic and literary content, which is to say that, by resorting again to Shakespeare translated into Romanian, all those who are familiar with the great Will's works will consider the translation "cuvinte, cuvinte, cuvinte" improper, instead of the already accepted version "vorbe, vorbe, vorbe". To put it differently, the artistic values inculcated in the literary text represent a critical and aesthetical examination for the initiate into the subtleties which a text illustrates, even when translated. Although it may sound a truism in the postmodern world, our cultural metabolism has been regulated by literature as a spiritual food for ages on end.

III. 1. Against the background of the events in the last three decades, much has been said about the future of our planet, especially at the threshold of the third millennium, heralded by Malraux's prophecy about religion and the human being. The most spectacular and challenging event of this period has been the revolution of communication technologies, which have brought about the phenomenon of globalization, a radical change in all areas, from economy to society and culture. The fundamental role has been played by science and its robotized prostheses. Once they have been used, the first steps have been taken into the *Information Age*, into the information society (IS), which supposes the extensive use of information in all spheres of human activity and existence, with an important economic and social impact. It corresponds to the first attempts at using the artificial intelligence. The use of *the second system of alphabetization*, i.e. the passage from the analogical to the digital and its practicability, represents a challenge for billions of users. The invention of information-providing machines has triggered a thorough reorganization of the social space. It has become global, it has added a new dimension, the virtual environment, and it "has erased" the otherwise well-guarded boundaries of the previous systems, causing the displacement of former barriers. Strictly speaking, it has

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annihilated customs, rules, (cultural, ethical, moral, religious, juridical, economic, eating) codes, and has determined real clashes in the transition from the old, pre-eminently cultural establishments. This passage showed its first effects as early as the transition stage from the modern (industrial) society to the postmodern era. As an economic consequence of the revolution of technologies, the phenomenon initially identified as "the global village", takes the shape of conurbations connected by information highways. The formulation "the medium is the message" has, indeed, uncontrollable manifestations. The explosive progress of transportation and telecommunication infrastructure, convergent on the model generated by the new communication revolutions, is woven with the expansive economic factor. National "barriers" give way to international flows (technological services, goods, and capitals), while the profit – which does not fall under the scope of this article – permits the advent of a fabulously rich oligarchy. Lacking steadiness, the economy and the finances behave as real meteorological phenomena in the universe of communication, which is to say that they can bring about either disasters or prosperity. In the new reality, a wealth of "moving" situations live together, such as the aleatory diversity of value components, the elite culture *versus* the media culture, the threefold ubiquitous relation public space/private space/virtual space, the relation man/society, the relation physical strength/intellect, the relation national/global with its identity aspects. What is more, despite the fact that some specialists speak about the creation of a super-elite, the notion of "elite" becomes derisive.

III. 2. *The Information Age,* assisted by machines and intelligent media, represents the point of maximum conjunction with literature, more specifically with its functional principles, and is placed in a buffer zone, at the intersection of the two universes, following the means of progress selected by technologies. As we have briefly shown above, the human imagination was the first to prospect the virtual environment, the space without "topography". We cannot chronologically establish the date of this invention – it belongs to a protohistorical genius – and, with no connection with the present dominated by so many "copy rights", there is no patent document to attest its age. In the nineties of the previous century, the (re)invention of this environment entered the common language as *Virtual Environment* (VE) and *synthetic environment*. Like literature, this universe is a fiction and can be exploited using the senses/sensations which stimulate

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our imagination. VE suggests a credible reality, although physically nonexistent. This is what literature, too, proposes, ruled as it is by a similarly effective organization. Closely connected with this, another, somehow inappropriate, term begins to be used: *virtual reality* (VR). Virtual is what exists as an effect and not as a physical object, and virtual reality refers to an ”image” of reality where there is no need of physical objects or anything else to construct this reality. The definition is pretty complementary to literature and describes its effects, in the sense that the “reality” we perceive (in literature as well) is not based on what we call physical outer world. Yet, for all that, the advances in the field of technologies have their say. In the case of computer-generated VR, effects similar to tactile, pressure, weight and spatiality sensations are obtained, as if the (im)material universe were tridimensional [5, 67]. Thus, VR distances itself sensorially from the effects engendered by literature and, one may suppose, it will draw it into a competition, which is not favourable to the latter. However, all the descriptions regarding the way communication functions, the codes it uses and the mediation from one consciousness to another, from one thinking being to another, are peculiar to intelligent machines (computers), programmed to recover, in their own manner, the communication routes. They allow the apparently physical visualization in what we inappropriately call virtual space. The virtual reality provided by the computer is, in fact, a second route for arriving at the same ends. It is like a second solution for solving an exercise or a problem.

In order to be transferred from the inner world of the virtual environment to the actual world, literature was pinned on a physical support. In the information era, the function of the support is taken over by an accessory which facilitates the visual or acoustic contact and plays the part of both the medium and the receiver. The linguistic code used by literature is made up of grammar and its sets of rules, by means of which the human beings encode and decode – at a linguistic level – the most important format of communication: the logical discoursivation of thinking, capable of imagining literary and artistic constructs, bearing long-term significations. Yet, “Thoughts are not objects in the physical meaning, they cannot be sliced like bread or publicly used like the underground.” [6, 198]. Thoughts are abstractions, which are born and live inside our brain, without being physically materialized; they only exist under the form of various behaviours, which can be externalized. Besides the above-mentioned similarities, which are self-evident, against the background of the relation spirit/matter (intelligence), the differences, too, are explicit. The literary

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work and art, in general, are unique; they belong to one single author. The products of the information era are mainly the result of collective actions.

That is why literature has always been one of the first brilliant inventions of mankind, announcing the existence of the "virtual space", long before its contrivance, first theoretical, then put into practice. The phrase is an oxymoron and is, in fact, a denial of the idea of space, because the stocked information becomes available through a complicated equation of technological contraction of the canonical formula sender-message-receiver. If it is carried out in the case of inter-human oral communication, it becomes materialized with the help of some prostheses, either on a physical support or in a different environment. Paradoxically, those who reproach an absence to the new society, refer to the absence of spirit. The humanist essence of the writer is axiomatic. So is the technicist essence of the computer. It follows that there is an exclusion relation between literature and technologies. Many writers and scholars foretold dehumanization as a result of the unleashed progress and intuited, one might say, what was to happen. The individual existence loses its personality. The individual melts into the social and is appropriated by a system in which everything is meticulously controlled by technologies. The latter do not possess the most important binder: the soul.

III. 3. As for the development of technology-based services in geometrical progression, and the way they influence human life, the agreement is unanimous. Nevertheless, the opinions about their social effect vary. At the same time, it is difficult to accept that the information society (IS) should have been assimilated, classified, historicized, and have yielded, besides consequences, viable conclusions. Thus, there are two types of scenarios, optimistic and (very) pessimistic, the latter greatly outnumbered by the former because of the great number of non-specialists, users of the system[1].

[1] Andrew Shapiro coined the terms Cyberkley and Cyberbia, which were used in an article published in *The Nation* in 1995. Andrew Shapiro wrote: "Consider two models of cyberspace that represent what total privatization deprives us of and what it leaves us with. In the first model - this is what we are being deprived of - you use a computer and modem to go online and enter a virtual world called Cyberkeley ... You encounter vibrant public spaces ... In the second cyberspace model - which is the one we're getting - you enter an online world called Cyberbia. It's identical to Cyberkely with one exception: There are no spaces dedicated to public discourse. No virtual sidewalks or parks, no heated debate or demonstrators catching your attention ... You can shape your route so that you interact only with people of your choosing and with information tailored to your desires ... Unfortunately, cyberspace is shaping up to be more like Cyberbia than Cyberkeley ... These extreme alternatives prevent us from moving toward [a] ... hybrid vision [without which] it is unlikely that we will realize the democratic possibilities of this new technology."

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IV. 1. On the other hand, IS invites utopia. For example, some of the noteworthy studies in Romanian culture bear the signature of Mihai Drăgănescu (1929-2010), former president of the Romanian Academy, one of the promoters of IS-KS (the second term is an abbreviation of the compound knowledge-based society), author of the concept of ortophysics[2]. Summarizing Mihai Drăgănescu's opinion about IS-KS, one can notice its visionary, projective character. "The knowledge society supposes: (a) the development and expansion of scientific knowledge and of truth about reality; (b) the use and management of existing knowledge under the form of technological and organizational knowledge; (c) the production of new technological knowledge through innovation; (d) an unprecedented dissemination of knowledge towards all people (users) by new means, mainly by Internet and the electronic book…; (e) a new type of economy, in which the innovation process becomes essential; (f) it is fundamentally necessary in order to ensure an ecologically sustainable society; (g) it has a global character and is a constituent of globalization; (h) the knowledge society represents a new stage of culture [7, 32-47]. The study *Societatea informației și societatea cunoașterii* (2002) (*The Information Society and the Knowledge Society*) puts forth three axioms of Drăgănescu's theory: (a) The society of consciousness will be a spiritual society; (b) Spirituality will become an essential factor in the history of society; (c) The spiritualization is a process which begins with the awakening of consciousness (therefore, it is a long process); (d) *The Knowledge Society* prepares the ground for the *Consciousness Society*. The author of *Filosofia societății conștiinței* (2007) (*The Philosophy of the Consciousness Society*) believes that, in the CS, the consciousness will play an essential part in the next historical stage. The role of morality is mentioned, together with other important factors of social evolution. The morality typical of the spiritual man goes beyond the historical forms of morality, and expresses "the entire complexity of a fulfilled spiritual life" [8, 145]. Thus, the information era is just the first stage in the sequence of evolution stages towards the CS.

[2] Mihai Drăgănescu, Ortofizica. Încercare asupra lumii şi omului din perspectiva ştiinţei contemporane, Bucureşti, Editura Ştiinţifică, 1985. Other works published in the same period are: *Știință și civilizație*, Bucureşti, Editura Ştiinţifică şi Enciclopedică, 1984; Spiritualitate, informaţie, materie, Bucureşti, Editura Academiei RSR, 1987; Informatica şi societatea, Bucureşti, Editura Politică, 1987; Informaţia materiei, Bucureşti, Editura Academiei Române, 1990.

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Mihai Drăgănescu is especially preoccupied with the relation between culture and the CS[3] and, among other things, he underlines the fact that, if the artistic production is not accompanied by civilization, culture does not accomplish its ends. Arguing that the cultural institutions converge on information and communication technologies, the author equates the new economy with the new culture. For the time being, we confine ourselves to noticing that, in daily life, while we encounter the new economy everywhere, there is hardly any trace of the new culture. The cleavage between economy and culture corresponds to the relation between matter and spirit, lying at the foundation of this relation. We titled the present article *Literature in IS-CS – Challenges and Temptations* because, on a close analysis, Mihai Drăgănescu's theory is highly utopian, a fact which has caused controversy[4]. In order to bring his demonstration to an end, Mihai Drăgănescu shows that the opening to science, and especially to the new technologies generated by science, cannot do away with consciousness and its values[5], a contention we agree with.

The CS is highly predictable, due to its solid scientific organization and its being future-oriented. It has no past, it only has present. While the past is a notion which separates, the future is proximity. Although we are not on the utopian land of the CS yet, without being distrustful, we find that, if we type on one of the search engines – for instance Goole, - the name of Leonardo, the user-friendly information system will rapidly offer us

[3] See Mihai Drăgănescu's book *Noua cultură a secolului XXI*, București, Editura Semne, 2004, in which he is especially interested in the relation between culture and the knowledge-based society. In his opinion, the correlative of the new economy in spirituality is the *new culture*. Observing the convergence of cultural institutions, and information and communication technologies, the latter being used for preserving cumulated cultural goods, to yield various new values, or to use the scientific and artistic creation in new lucrative activities, the author highlights the role of some industrial or service-providing organizations, characteristic to this type of economy, in creating, distributing and mediating the process of the use of cultural goods, by providing assisting information tools for the purpose of rendering efficient the tie between the producer and the consumer of various values.

[4] See, in this respect, the articles written for *22* magazine by Adrian Miroiu (Dincolo de diletantism) and Gabriel Andreescu (Academia României nu Academia R.S.R.) (February 16th, 1990, pp. 4-5) and Andrei Bârsan (Magnum Mophtologycum) for the same publication (March 2nd, p. 2).

[5] The writer shows that any science, so much the less any science-oriented philosophy, will not be able to bracket off the world of consciousness, just like the research and reflection-prone man cannot detach himself from his own consciousness.

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anticipations, in order of their occurrence. In this situation, the famous actor Leonardo Di Caprio outruns Leonardo da Vinci, the most important representative of the Italian Renaissance, a creative genius and inventive spirit, who left his mark on his epoch, as well as on the future, being considered the archetype of the Renaissance man. Leonardo da Vinci was the most inventive spirit, endowed with an unparalleled imagination. He "saw" in his mind's eye, and then designed, a long series of objects (instruments), which looked incomprehensible for his contemporaries and still strange for centuries to come, at present validated by reality. Almost all of them were (re)invented and perfected by the next generations, because they encompassed, as a creative idea, technical elements which made them usable. One can rightfully say, metaphorically speaking, that Leonardo da Vinci was the man who invented the future. We might be reproached for being biased in our above commentaries, yet we would agree that it has to do with the annihilation of qualitative principles in favour of the quantitative ones, and the lack of values scales[6]. That is why, according to the same work methods, at first sight just for the sake of amusement, media competitions such as *Great Romanians, Englishmen, Hungarians, Frenchmen,* entertain the confusion between value and notoriety, reverse the relation between competence and performance, and turn them into principles. These mass cultural competitions give us unusual bird's eye view on contemporaneity. Thus, we should point out the marginal position of literature, despite its glorious past. The names of the great cultural personalities have been eclipsed by footballers, fashion designers, cinema stars, celebrities from music and show-biz, etc. This example reveals the nature of challenges literature is faced with. The European cultural heritage, built along several millennia, and lying at the foundation of universal culture and literature, is being quickly replaced by the landmarks of the globalized model. The way these landmarks are promoted in the communication mainstream and the feeling of indifference towards human spirituality cause an overwhelming sadness. In other situations, havoc seems to be worked upon traditions and culture. The refusal of the heritage is

[6] Money has become the equivalent of all the other values. It is in its name, and not because of their importance or prestige, that national and international classifications are established. The term VIP (Very Important Person) loses its significance in favour of MIP (Money Important Person), a term we have coined after VIP.

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simply strange. The banning of culture from society is disturbing, a fact which has been signalled by specialists from several countries. After only several decades of evolution, globalization has encompassed us all. The communication bio-sphere of instantness, infused with *multiculturalism*, *inter-* and *transculturalism,* tends to become apocalyptically all-conquering. We feel that we witness a change of wheels of a running train, an operation which requires people who like risk. In other words, the power growth of networks and of intelligent machines has also a destabilizing effect[7].

V.1. As far as the cultural and especially the autochthonous literary phenomenon is concerned, the picture is very complicated. In Romania, now an ex-communist country, built on the soviet model, a cultural revolution took place. Within the socialist realism, the literary character peculiar to the new type of man, "the communist man", had been introduced and used. Following the adjustments characteristic to utopian models, he would become "the Ceausescu type of man", who promised, in an authentic nationalist-triumphalist style, that he would reach "untrodden peaks".

After 1989, when Romania passed to the democratic system of the rule of law, it became a member of the European family. Its priority was to become attuned to the member states from a political, economic, cultural and juridical point of view. The globalization phenomenon, as a result of technological revolutions, is superposed, as a third layer, to the social realities. These aspects live together and lend an original aspect to the present discussion. They can be encountered in the contemporary literary dialogue. Their polarization engenders spectral effects.

The first impact was represented by the transition of culture from the canonical, coercive communist system to the liberties of mass culture, a transitory stage during which the role and position of the writer declined steadily. One must say, however, that during the last stage of Romanian communism, culture and literature had generally succeeded in regaining their authentic heritage. Although there are conflicting opinions, this was possible because of the honest contribution of scholars and writers, in the

[7] The prestigious magazine *Le Monde* closes its second millennium issues with two special editions, subtitled *The Century* and *Future*, released on December 31st, 1999. They contend that "between progress and regress, modernity and barbarity, hope and anxiety, dramas and pleasures, rich and poor, grande histoire and petite histoire", the balance sheet does not offer too many reasons to be optimistic.

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first place, to the perpetuation of an elitist type of culture. It offered models widely disseminated by education and culture establishments for propagandistic rather than advertising ends. The contribution of an entire infantry – and by that we mean tens of thousands of people involved mainly in the education system – was decisive for shaping the public taste of future culture and literature consumers, thus an effective relation being established between the culture of the elites and the public taste. Literature played a vital part in establishing this coherence.

V.2. The fall of this canonical format took place against the background of the liberalization of cultural and therefore literary market, leading to a diminution of interest in artistic literature. This seems logical, as long as the mechanisms of censorship of the communist system ceased to subdue literature lovers, who now had an option. They turned to other offers, especially to the written press, which became very diverse compared to the former party press, and we may rightfully wonder about the extent to which this means turned into an instrument manifested its neutrality (see "the medium is the message").

Closely connected to the above commentaries, we must admit that the literary production also grew rapidly. Thousands of publishing houses and hundreds of cultural magazines were set up, the production of fiction grew, but the "production" of canonical readers decreased. It became the elites' mission to develop indices of classification and the consciousness of groups through discourses. During the decades to come, although there have been such attempts, they have no longer been visible. Moreover, the formation of the elites' consciousness is a slow process, and the feeling that national literature preserves our cultural heritage has been fractured.

The diminution of the number of readers has become ever more severe because of the users' turning to digital formats in the virtual environment. All forms of information (without any value discrimination) live together on the Internet, granting privilege to a certain incoherency, in clear opposition to the institutional type.

V.3. The presence of Romanian culture and literature within the phenomenon of European integration involves both the analysis of the European cultural model and the identification of values, by means of which our culture has the chance to be individualized. The general perception of the European community is that of a mosaic of nations and an alliance of interests. Although, at present, the way the new European bodies work is

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essentially influenced by institutionalized polyglotism ("the principle of languages of the same rank"), one cannot deny the privileged use of English, French and German, with an increased use of English, a process which has not reached its climax yet. Aspects such as the state and the nation should be reanalyzed within a historical paradigm, at whose origin lies, besides the geographical position, the nation with its distinct values (language, religious beliefs, traditions). The harmonizing of the state with the (cultural) nation is, in itself, a historical process, which will strengthen "the European spirit" within community, a spirit which Romanian literature does not value yet. At this moment of great confusion of values, when the systematic culture and education policies have hardly produced any effect, the Romanian language and literature are rather marginalized. If institutional factors have private initiatives, this demonstrates precisely the advantages of the information era. In this respect, as an isolated example, we could cite Viorella Manolache's seminal work Signs and Designs of the Virtual(izing) E@ST, Lambert Academic Publishing, 2013, which identifies us as a *cultural nation*, under the auspices of the revolutionary technologies in the service of culture. There are, obviously, many other examples, but they constitute a minority compared to the institutionalized potential made rigid by the bureaucracy of the Romanian official environment.

V.4. One should also include in the present discussion English as the language of globalization and its overwhelming influence on the Romanian language. Last but not least, it is the language of technological advances, the greatest part of information terminology being of English origin. The British linguists are ever more aware that British English is becoming a dialect of literary English. Jean-Paul Nerrière[8] speaks about a *basic* format, of around 1,500 words, which makes up a dominant form of *English light*, a *Globish* language, an expression of the philosophy of the planetary way of living. The advent of RomEnglish confirms this tendency and places under the sign of pure utopia the discussions about "the new man" and the way in which its projection would be possible.

VI. Conclusions

In disagreement with the theme of this year's conference, we believe that it is counterproductive to speak about "the new man", because the information era we have entered, does not propose a new

[8] Jean-Paul Nerrière, *Don't speak English, parlez globish*, Groupe Eyrolles, 2006.

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man, but a new world in statu nascendi. We witness an unprecedented situation in the world history, when all categories, classes, human groups, no matter their social status, have access and can participate into knowledge/communication/ information, apparently without restrictions. The effects have been felt in the quick changes in society as a result of technological revolution. The most stringent problem refers to the neutrality of technologies, simultaneously regarded with trust and with fear[9]. In close connection with the old establishment of culture and literature, famous theoreticians are pessimistic about the direction society is heading for. They have shown that it is becoming mcdonalized (G. Ritzer), that it is invaded by media culture (Douglas Kellner), which privileges consumerism(Jean Baudrillard), that art manifests itself ”alive” aesthetically (Richard Shusterman), thus giving birth to the mass superhuman (Umberto Eco). There is, written by different hands, a real chronicle of the announced death of culture, especially of literature, intended to draw attention on the inauspicious relation between economy and culture. Cultural ages used to be measured in eons, a time unit which is no longer used. The economic values derive from financial resources. Within the economic circuits, their demand and volatility are so great that they are smashed into smithereens and become insufficient for the great industries, let alone the cultural projects. Culture, devoid of its elitist meanings, manifests itself through surrogates. What it apparently lacks most is its human dimension. Leibnitz's memorable saying, "the future is pregnant with its past", is no longer true because processes take place at such rapid pace that it is hazardous to make predictions for more than five years.

Nowadays, the future seems to have no connections with the past, and we could say, confirming the expectations of the yet unsaved pessimist or skeptical, that "the future is pregnant with unpredictability".

[9] "The technologies are not neutral. An important erroneous belief nowadays is the idea that the technologies are completely unbiased. Because they are lifeless artefacts, they seem not to impose certain types of behaviour. In fact, the technologies are socially, politically, and economically loaded, both intentionally and unpredictably. Each tool endows its users with a certain way of regarding the world, and with certain ways of interacting with the others. It is important that we take into account the bias of various technologies and look for those which reflect our values and objectives." *Manifestul tehnorealist* in "Secolul XX", 4-9, 2000 (421-426), p. 307.

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That would not necessarily mean that "unpredictable" has completely negative connotations.

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