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COMMUNICATION, ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE HUMAN BEING'S SELF-DISCOVERY IN THE DIGITAL UNIVERSE

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Abstract: In the post-truth world, Artificial Intelligence has a significant impact on communication, relationships and human identity, on spirituality, art, culture and politics. In order to understand the profound transformations that take place as a result of the development of communication technologies and the increasingly prominent presence of Artificial Intelligence, I turned to the analyses of the philosopher Aurel Codoban.

From this perspective, digital technologies determine radical changes in the way in which the human being relates to himself and to otherness, including the radical otherness represented by AI. Relating to otherness helps man to understand his uniqueness, especially in terms of personal experience and his creative function. While Artificial Intelligence can have extensive knowledge and can be a very good content generator, creativity remains, for now, the prerogative of the human being understood as a "holographic shard" that reflects the singularity of life. In the differentiations between Artificial Intelligence and the human being, I insisted on spiritual factors, on symbolic understanding and on the awareness of uniqueness built in relation to otherness.

The transformations brought by the digital world force us to rethink communication practices from the perspective of the reconstruction of the self and the recovery of the spiritual dimension of the human being, with all the symbolism implied by the image of placing man at the center of existence as such. Technological alienation must be overcome by cultivating creativity, interiority and meaning in a digital universe saturated with cultural content.

Key words: Artificial Intelligence, communication practices, symbolic consciousness, otherness, post-truth world, technological alienation, singularity, Aurel Codoban.

1. The post-truth world and Artificial Intelligence

Although it already has a cultural history (even if it does not have a personal history), Artificial Intelligence seems to be a new presence, which has taken us by surprise. Its current developments seem to be completely unexpected. In the digital age built on communication, nothing seems to escape the influence exerted by AI, be it the sphere of philosophy, spirituality, art, science, social modeling or political practices. The human being seems to live between extremes, from ecstasy to agony, the entire field of new experiences mediated by Artificial Intelligence.

To talk about Artificial Intelligence and its significance in the digital world, I will resort to the analyses of Aurel Codoban, an exponent of a fruitful tradition of analysis of the religious phenomenon developed in Cluj (Cuceu, Crişan 2007) and a pioneer for the philosophical research of religion and communication (Frunză 2023). Being a fine analyst of the evolution of mass media, of the impact that technological developments have, and especially of communication technologies, the philosopher Aurel Codoban has a very good understanding of the changes that these developments determine in the deep structure of Western culture, together with the increasingly important place occupied by AI. They are influenced not only by the transformations brought about by technology and communication, but also by the centrality that the body has in relation to the soul, by the increasing importance of the image in relation to the text, by the prevalence of manipulation to the disadvantage of persuasion, by the mental seduction exercised by communication technologies, by the positioning of each individual at the center of his or her own life – which also has an impact on the priority that the individual grants to personal, subjective truth, in relation to the meaning of objective truth offered by knowledge (Codoban 2009; Codoban 2011; Codoban 2013; Codoban 2025).

Aurel Codoban highlights a double emancipation that we must take into account in understanding the profound transformations that take place in the life of man in the digital age. On the one hand, science detaches itself from the human and transforms into technoscience, and on the other hand, communication detaches itself from man like all humans to become the prerogative of communication technicians, among whom the best known are influencers and specialists in seduction and manipulation. In the era of generalized communication, both cases put pressure on the truth, so that it increasingly appears to us in the form of what is called post-truth. The philosopher believes that this happens because the generalization of communication does not bring more understanding, as would be expected, but creates more confusion and a lot of noise, exposing the human being to excessive control by communication technicians,

techniques and technologies. Thus, following what happened to science and knowledge, it is significant to understand that “a similar evolution has also occurred in common communication. First, images imposed themselves on printed text. Then the internet, mass media and social networks and the “post-truth” they brought with them. Post-truth which is actually the truth-meaning, the valuable or significant truth for each individual” (Codoban 2025, 5). This is one of the reasons why it is difficult today to talk only theoretically about communication. It is necessary to resort to an existential practice of communication, because it is part of the logic of post-truth that we do not communicate what we know, but communicate what we are (Codoban 2025a). The post-truth world presents us with a new human reality in which the human being must face the challenges brought by the development of Artificial Intelligence.

2. Artificial Intelligence, otherness and singularity

In the era of technology, Aurel Codoban believes that dehumanization could be the most negative effect that the affirmation of Artificial Intelligence can have on the human being. The technological mutation that occurs can bring with it dehumanization and the diminution of wisdom in a context in which information flows have priority over reflection and understanding. However, in an interview with Vasile Ernu, Codoban nuances his perspective on technology, stating that we must not lose sight of the possibility that technology itself is not the main triggering factor for the individual's distance and alienation from others. We can reflect on whether technological alienation does nothing more than mirror and amplify a form of distancing that already exists within us and that manifests itself as a devaluation of personal otherness, as a lack of appetite for face-to-face encounters with others (Codoban 2025b). An entire philosophical tradition can be invoked to argue that face-to-face situating is what gives authenticity to interpersonal relationships (Mureşan 2005). With the emergence of the radical otherness represented by Artificial Intelligence, we should re-discuss the issue of otherness somewhere at the intersection of the face and the interface.

We must take into account the complex relationships that religion, science and technology have had throughout the history of Western culture. The decline and metamorphosis of religiosity in the digital age is the result, on the one hand, of a long and beneficial process of secularization of the Western world, and on the other hand, of a surplus of detachment of individuals in relation to traditional forms of religious practices and their orientation towards others, from the global sphere, with the development of social networks. At the same time, the decline of religiosity is accentuated by the very rapid development of the Internet, robotics and artificial intelligence (Preda 2024). Although these facilitate access to the

formation of new communities and the consolidation of identities, they also lead to a diminution of traditional forms of identity and community construction, a fact especially visible when we consider religious communities in their classical sense.

Proposing a clear distinction between knowledge and understanding, Aurel Codoban argues that Artificial Intelligence has no living experience and cannot understand the meanings that arise from personal experience. Therefore, it cannot be effective in situations where the configuration of meaning depends on life, on human intentionality, on the meaning that is constructed in a biographical manner. On the one hand, this can be a reason for optimism, because it reveals the fact that, at least at this stage of development, human beings cannot be completely replaced by AI, which can be an argument against the anxiety related to the replacement of humans by machines or their subordination by them. On the other hand, both the development of technologies and the increase in importance of communication technocrats lead to a standardization of communication, which empties it of nuances and meaningful content.

Dehumanization and loss of meaning, understanding and wisdom occur as a result of the fact that AI is an entity that has no personal history, no moral responsibility and no capacity to live, that is, it does not have a life. However, for Codoban we can only highlight a single singularity, which is that of life. The philosopher does not ignore the fact that there are two meanings of singularity, one theorized by those who affirm the singularity as a moment of technological development in which AI would become autonomous and even superior to the human being, and a philosophical meaning that speaks of human life as such as the only form of singularity present in the universe (Codoban 2023).

In the era of mechanical reproduction of communication, the philosopher resorts to life as a source of meaning, which leads us to the question: what does it mean to remain human in the era of AI?

Beyond the fears it can produce in our minds, we cannot ignore the beneficial influence that the development of AI brings to human existence. At the same time, it constitutes a form of alterity, which in certain circumstances, we can perceive as a form of radical alterity. The phenomenon must be viewed through the prism of Aurel Codoban's philosophical vision, according to which "We waited for the discovery of new worlds, harsher or more welcoming, on the planets of the solar system, or at least the remains of some civilizations, until we began traveling at incredible speeds to all the "corners" of our elliptical galaxy and came across aliens. But we did not get to see, like Robinson Crusoe on the beach of his island, foreign footsteps on the stellar sand. The footsteps on the sand of our beach are those of artificial intelligence, which, for us, is a kind of "alien", perhaps even the most likely variant that we will see in our lifetime" (Codoban, 2025, 11). This radical otherness must be integrated and shaped not only in its technological aspects, but also culturally.

I think it is good to repeat: "Communication introduces otherness into human relationships, because otherness is the basis of communication. In order to communicate with someone, they must be partly similar, partly different from us. If someone is totally similar, there is no need to communicate, we just transmit signals to each other, like the remote control of a smart TV. If they are absolutely different, we cannot communicate." (Codoban 2025). It is within the logic of a world built on communication that AI must be culturally integrated. Of course, the current trend among communication science specialists is, on the one hand, to privilege communication technologies and the transformation of the human under the persuasive force of communication practitioners and, on the other hand, to leave cultural, spiritual, artistic, social, political contents on a secondary level. This will predictably lead to an emptying of human content in communication and to a possible elimination of the human factor from communication creation and practices. When I talk about the human contents of communication, I mean that there are certain forms of creativity, of meaning construction and of filling with meanings specific only to the human being that act in the field of art, literature, philosophy or spirituality. These belong to the human condition and are part of the universe that consecrates the centrality of man in the sphere of existence, of life in its singularity.

I will not go against the evidence that the presence of AI produces a true revolution in anthropology, philosophy, theology, literature, art and culture in general. However, there is a particularity regarding human creation. It is one of the reasons why I have always preferred to talk about creation in the case of humans and content generation in the case of other entities. Just as, up to this point, we do not consider AI to be a moral agent, possessor of a moral consciousness, we do not attribute to it the quality of a creative subject, possessor of a creative consciousness that presupposes: intentionality (including intentionality towards communion), meaning and significance, the cultivation of a symbolic consciousness of the world, reflexivity and transfiguration, affective and existential register, etc. Without these, what can be identified as the cultural production of the entities in question cannot be included in the field of creation, as we understand it today. It does not mean that things will not be different in the future. If we keep the biblical image of man in the middle of creation, then we have the image of the only creative being. This is the standard and archetype of creation in the mundane sphere. In this context, we speak of AI rather as a very valuable tool that the human being can use as a very useful means in the sphere of cultural creation.

There is a possibility that, from Aurel Codoban's perspective, such a vision of man could be considered a form of speciesism. A way of relating to existence that is less and less cultivated due to ecological visions that determine new ways of emancipating other forms of life in relation to man. The discussion on animal rights may be relevant in terms of the

critique of speciesism. As a philosophical alternative, Aurel Codoban proposes a way of overcoming the humanist vision, a vision in which not man, but life as such must be placed at the center. He proposes the solution of a “humanism in which not man is sacralized, but life itself. Although, by the way, and from the sacralization of life, in the end, man, not life, seems to derive religious benefits...” (Codoban 2023, 171). Obviously, the benefits can only be exploited by a conscious being, a being that has a symbolic consciousness of the world, thus opening up to the meanings that can be detached and can be fruitful from the process of sacralizing life. Fixing life as the only form of singularity does not also confer on it a state of consciousness. A being is needed that relates to life from the perspective of creativity and symbolic consciousness for life to reveal itself in the splendor of its singularity. The philosopher affirms the metaphysical principle of the singularity of life, but he does not reject the fact that “from the perspective of the existent that is man, Artificial Intelligence, the original *Big Bang* or *black hole* and God are singularities outside the categories of space and time of human life, which can be understood more adequately in terms of negative theology, of Dionysius the Areopagite” (Codoban 2023, 93).

Thus, located somewhere beyond the framework of human existence, these entities acquire a supra-existential status, which then, on another plane, can be reflected on the human being, to which they can be given a form of transcendence in which their original status is reflected. With the development of science and technology, we can reach the stage of technological singularity. From its perspective, we can build a form of artificial superintelligence, autonomous in relation to human decision, which will constitute itself as a form of superior self-consciousness (Vinge 1993; Bostrom 2016). In a world populated by such entities, it is possible that “from the perspective of a future Artificial Super-Intelligence – or from the perspective of divinity – man with his life will also be a singularity” (Codoban 2023, 93). Such a future projection now appears to us as something from the realm of science fiction literature. But one should never underestimate the technological evolution and development of Artificial Intelligence capabilities, which is still proving to be spectacular.

What we can say, however, at this moment, is that “Man with his individual life remains a holographic shard of what is the incomprehensible whole of life” (Codoban 2023, 171). We cannot conceive at this moment a being or an entity that better reflects this mystery of the fragmentary that encompasses the whole, that encompasses the singularity of life. The human being reveals himself as the most authentic form of alterity not only through what he is in himself, but also through what he is in the embrace of life and as its depository, at the same time.

This is also the benchmark according to which we build the sphere of otherness. Even the installation of Artificial Intelligence as a form of otherness must be viewed from the perspective of such a philosophical-

theological representation, in which the human being is the ultimate, fundamental goal. In the logic of Western civilization, government policies have the obligation to preserve this status. Otherwise, we can end up generalizing a statement that Cristian Crăciun makes regarding communication, and especially political communication, in a commentary on the book *Communication in the Age of Its Artificial Reproduction*: "The Internet alters precisely the perception of otherness, practically abolishing it: the leveling, bubble effect of imprisonment in the Network anonymizes and leads to the twilight of classical democracies, which we have been witnessing live for several years, distorting in many ways (some difficult to identify "from the public") the usual electoral process. And a formula that perfectly summarizes the political impasse: "under the conditions of current democracy, communication is opium for the people" (Christmas 2025). When he says that the internet alters, hijacks the meaning of otherness, Cristian Crăciun has in mind precisely the technification and emptying of cultural content of communication. Transformed into instances of persuasion emptied of the content of the hierarchy of values brought with it by cultural creation, communication technologies and specifically AI can be in their action an important resource of alienation and dehumanization.

The influence that the Internet has on the life of contemporary man also speaks to us about the influence that Artificial Intelligence has on the human experience in democratic societies. It profoundly influences not only the new ways of forming human identity, but also the way of constituting relations with otherness. On the one hand, we find that in the digital age new tensions appear between religion, communication, democratization and politics, and on the other hand, we witness a continuous escalation of extremist discourse, disinformation and practices associated with symbolic violence and hybrid warfare. We should not exclude the possibility that AI is not only a neutral instrument, but also the carrier of an ideology and influences us ideologically (Lesenciuc 2025).

In such a context, in the absence of human intervention as a conscious being, Artificial Intelligence cannot be found as a source of otherness, as a conscious entity capable of establishing respect and recognition of otherness. It remains a mechanism, a communication tool that Aurel Codoban describes as lacking aura.

3. Spirituality and communication as a way of being together

One of the ways to diminish these negative manifestations is the appeal to spirituality and to action as a spiritual agent. Placing ourselves in the sphere of communication, with the generalized noise that theorists find to be a factor of its distortion, we can remember that Aurel Codoban proposes silence as a way of refusing the noise of generalized commu-

nication. Silence becomes a way of authentic relating in which exteriority can be converted into interiority, noise into active silence, communication into a sphere of collaboration and of being together, all of which function as a special type of relating of the person with himself in view of a better communication with others (Codoban 2025, 7).

From the perspective of negative theology invoked by Aurel Codoban, we can understand why silence is important and what its meaning is in a world built on communication. It is not limited to the attitude of not expressing oneself, but has a deeper meaning, related to the refusal to be absorbed by the continuous flow of communication. It is a form of resistance against the repetitive and automated nature of generalized communication. Which implies a form of authenticity in relation to the abundance of communication perceived as an infernal noise of a world that no longer seeks paths to dialogue. Human communication seems to leave too little room for wisdom and for silence (Codoban 2009a; Codoban 2015).

A dose of sacredness is associated with silence in that it refers to the aura, in the way the philosopher finds it in the thinking of Walter Benjamin (Benjamin 2002). It cannot be reproduced mechanically, it cannot be generated automatically, always preserving a mystery that orients towards an authenticity that we can associate with a sphere of the sacred linked to interiority, presence, dialogue. Silence as a practice within the horizon of the sacred is highlighted by the philosopher when he states: "It is probably difficult to remain silent in a world conquered by communication. Perhaps today silence is not a given, but a practice like meditation, prayer or contemplation of nature. It is an act of returning to oneself. It is not passivity, but a profound listening: of life, of breathing, of the moment. Self-chosen silence is not an escape from the world, but a return to oneself. Being silent becomes a form of spiritual self-defense" (Codoban 2025b).

Silence is at the heart of a strategy for affirming uniqueness and identity in a context of tautological, uncritical communication, of communication that seems to be meaningless. It is a force that acts in the sense of an inner metamorphosis of the infinite within us, which ensures our personal integrity and continuous self-discovery. Active engagement in limiting communication in the form of an active silence, a conscious silence, is a very effective tool for filling communication with meaning and significance. Putting such a strategy into practice prevents total abandonment in the flow created by communication technologies by creating an objective distance in relation to the huge production of contents that all claim to be carriers of a universal or absolute truth.

By being associated with the aura, silence acquires in Aurel Codoban the meaning of a refusal of mechanical reproduction, of automatic generation. It claims a responsible presence engaged in a process of conscious choice in a social context in which silence, like communication, has both an ethical and political significance. The human being must cultivate, in

an initiatory process of education, the skills and abilities to remain silent, in an effort similar to that which we value as the art of storytelling. The science of choosing the most appropriate moment and the way of expression are part of what we could call the art of silence. It is a requirement of the social responsibility of any person engaged in communication, understood as ethical and political communication.

Aurel Codoban builds a context for the comparison between Artificial Intelligence and God by stating that the two entities can know life, even if they cannot understand it. He states that although AI can have knowledge that may seem to be all-encompassing, it cannot account for the totality of religious experience because it cannot experience the sacred, the mystery of life, the specifically human experiences. The comparison with God is interesting here, about whom we also learn that it can have infinite knowledge, but cannot understand the human being. I think it is useful here to accept as operational the distinction between the God of theologians and that of philosophers. The way in which we conceive the action of divinity in relation to man depends on how we define religion and its representations. For example, Lucian Blaga proposes his own definition, saying: "Religion circumscribes, in any of its variants, the capacity for self-realization or self-transcendence of the human being in ideal correlation with all of existence, but, especially, in ideal correlation with the last elements or coordinates of the existential mystery in general, which man reveals to himself or considers revealed through stylistic creations" (Blaga 1996, 347). Such a definition focuses more on the human capacity to reveal the existential mystery than on a representation of divinity in the spirit of the Christian religion. God is here like a door open to man to enter and discover the mystery of his own existence.

A philosophical approach is also proposed by Aurel Codoban. It is significant to note that the philosopher works with two types of representations, different from the common approach. On the one hand, we have a representation of *understanding* that is strictly linked to human experience, corporeality, vulnerability, and the singularity of life. On the other hand, in the case of God, the philosopher works with a philosophical, ethical-metaphysical concept. He is not the God of Christianity, modeled in theandric form, humanized. For Aurel Codoban, philosophically speaking, Artificial Intelligence and God cannot understand the human being although they can have unlimited knowledge of it (Codoban 2023). Against this background, we understand more adequately the fact that beyond any false myths regarding the replacement of humans by robots or the generation of answers with an absolute truth to all human questions, AI cannot substitute for religion and religious instances, even if it can be instrumentalized in religious practices. The religious universe is a specifically human one, because only a human being can authentically understand living in the body, suffering, the inner world, empathy, and love of another human being.

This does not mean a diminution of the importance of religion in virtual space. The deepening of secularization processes cannot be avoided in the digital age. However, the Internet and Artificial Intelligence have become very useful tools for religious communities and for spiritual or secular ones, alike. We can speak of the Internet as a space for the manifestation of traditions and new forms of religiosity. The development of AI is a good opportunity for the rediscovery of religiosity and for the formation of new spiritual or cultural identities. Current research reveals that the impact of science and digital technologies, especially communication technologies, is very large and manifests itself in two ways. On the one hand, the Internet becomes a platform for the development of individual projects in the sphere of religious creativity, and on the other hand, an open space of the feeling of being together is created for believers of religious communities around the world (Shevchuk, Shevchuk, Yakunina 2024).

Moreover, in terms of the self-representation of the human being, in the context of digital culture we witness, among other things, a recovery of religious and mythological symbolism; people who inhabit the digital universe can imagine themselves in terms that we can identify as religious (Panarari, Gili 2024). The human being can not only put himself in the position of the inhabitant of a digital space full of mythological and religious representations, but can also enjoy religious services offered through AI. Representations regarding AI can come from film, art or literature that are internalized in the imagination of the man of the digital society as new mythologies of the world built on communication technologies (Dumitrescu 2025). Artificial Intelligence is already personalized and developed in the form of sophisticated chatbots capable of providing assistance and advice. However, from the perspective of providing authentic experiences, such robots should not be allowed to replace priests, pastors, imams, rabbis, or other spiritual advisors, even though robots can play a positive role in promoting spirituality. We should not go so far as to transform Artificial Intelligence into a religious institution (Cole-Turner 2025).

But the instrumentalization of AI in the spiritual sphere should not be underestimated. It can be accepted that Artificial Intelligence can contribute to spiritual well-being. It can be used by the pastoral counselor as a useful tool in counseling practice. Real-time analyses can help AI provide insights not only in terms of assessing mental state, but also on alternatives that can be adopted and followed (Kumar, Uchoi 2025). Without accepting an uncontrolled use of AI tools, recent research has shown that it can also play a significant role in spiritual research. AI can be a very useful tool in improving, shaping and communicating the results of spiritual research (Yu, Tianyuan. 2025).

As a philosopher of religions, Aurel Codoban emphasizes authenticity, singularity, presence and living with very bold lines because these are ways in which the manifestation of the dialectic of the sacred and the

profane (Eliade 1995) allows the sacred to reach us as resistance to automation and mechanical reproduction. Even if there is a risk that these manifestations appear to us as camouflaged in profane realities, as simulacra that lose their initial symbolic power (Baudrillard 2008), in the digital age symbolic consciousness, storytelling or silence remain relevant as vehicles of inner experiences that open up to the world of the sacred. The risk that AI can bring is that of enhancing the uniformity of communication by making everything a network, a digital channel, technological mediation and media discourse emptied of meanings (Codoban 2025). The emergence of the sacred takes place where the force of automation is diminished by the needs for authenticity, for self-discovery, for reflective silence and storytelling, for shedding light on the values and inner needs of the unique being who claims to be human.

4. Instead of conclusions: Towards a recovery of the human in the era of Artificial Intelligence

In the post-truth world, we do not have a loss of truth, but a reconstruction of it from the perspective of the fundamental needs of the human being. It is not a question of a relativization of truth, but of a re-situating of it in the light of an expanded rationality in which, in addition to operational logic, we also include the elements that man values in his quality as a being who possesses a symbolic consciousness of the world. When Aurel Codoban offers us the metaphor of man understood as a “holographic shard” in which the singularity of life is revealed, he has in mind not only a cosmic recovery of the relational system of the human being, but also a rediscovery of man as a man. The digital sphere becomes part of the dimensions that define the human condition.

Seen from this angle, the inclusion of AI in the philosophical, cultural and spiritual dialogue facilitates a better coexistence with it, but also capitalizes on the beneficial influence that technology has in the profound transformations of the human condition. In this context, a convergence is necessary between Artificial Intelligence, which can only operate with predefined meanings, and the construction of meaning that human beings carry out. A new way of reporting and understanding otherness and of building new types of relationships with otherness that eliminate distortions and contribute to the best possible convergence is inevitable.

Communication must be freed from the pressure of technology and must be fueled by cultural creation. Man must find himself at the center of his own life. And one of the ways in which he can return to himself is dialogue with otherness, including the otherness represented by Artificial Intelligence. In this context, cultivating Cultural Intelligence for the sake of coexistence with otherness does not only target the relational system, but also the amplification of the cultural contents of the digital universe.

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