

# REFLECTIONS ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE NATURE AND ARTIFICE

By Professor Philibert Secretan

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

I will start by making some remarks of my own from a Spanish friend:

"Today we will no longer say that there is no God, but that it is a construction of our brain, of our neural network; that moreover, we know what is the region of the brain where this invention is developed, because we can detect it in the stages of mystical exaltation. And that only neuroscience knows, if not today it will be tomorrow.

"The reason has the thickness of the flesh. For nothing that we are is external to our flesh being, our humble and wet flesh, including of course, the neural network and chemical and electrical synapses. Nothing in us, neither what we think and say, nor what we do, is

disconnected from the moods of our body. Only the science of logic would be a dry science, because it is constructed by abstracting all that is only a link of proposals; obviously essential links in the construction of the sphere of computers.

In summary, we can say that the reason is not linear, purely analytical and logical, but that it has the thickness of a network of possibilities in search of a coherence to reach the truth, and therefore the good, why what is definitely ours is the reality that is given to us. Network of possibilities, that is, the rational conjunction of lines of thought, action and life of our flesh, which converge in realities and converge towards a foundational reality. The step to make between the being - siendo- and the being - ser- is a metaphysical effort of the philosopher... Reason is not limited to[being] knowledge; it has an essential openness to the will, that is, to the desire[to be][1].

## II. REPLICAS TO TRANSHUMANISM

Several key themes will find themselves associated in a set of reflections generated by what should be called transhumanism, i.e. the prospect of a coupling between man and devices that would allow the passage of man to a way of superman. A clear-sighted recognition, even a summary one, of neurosciences, robotics and artificial intelligence should suffice for the critical inking of a metaphysical reflection.

### OVERTAKING MAN

To go beyond man can mean two things: to make man evolve in his present condition towards a better condition: to make man live longer with fewer evils, or to change the status of man in the whole of the living; of man traditionally placed between the angel and the beast (Pascal), whose body he shares on the one hand and the spirit on the other hand, but by assuming the body in the sphere of the spirit and by inscribing the spirit in the physical reality of the body.

Pascal has the wisdom to write that man is neither one nor the other, but does not expressly say that he is a living, nor that life manifests itself as much in the body as in the spirit. But when he affirms: "Descartes false and useless", I see this falseness not in the cogito, effectively carrying a first truth, but in the separation of man into two "natures": the physical body and the thinking mind, into two heterogeneous regions of being; later into two types of sciences. A generalized dualism then spreads, not without continuously seeking the points of junction, the interfaces, between the two hemispheres; or not without trying to reduce them one to the other in an idealism or a materialism each time total and unifying.

## THE LIVING

Does life hide itself under the term of the soul, under the figures of the animation of the body, of the living sensitivity, of the intelligence which gives after having received, of the spirit which creates, revolts or submits itself. I think it and believe it. Now, this profound life, when denied, leaves a body in the state of a machine, a sensitivity to the state of responses to stimuli, intelligence in the state of an algorithmic formalism, the mind in the state of a virtual self.

But the life thus manifested is irreducible to one or the other of its manifestations. It is neither purely biological nor essentially psychic. It is concretely and by definition in every living. In this sense, it is both universal and concretized in all living things. Aristotle calls man a *zoon*, a living animate, *logon echon*, endowed with speech and understanding.

It will take a long time for the first modern idea to emerge: that of the individual, but then still charged with the prejudice that this logic and this reason which make man is individualized by the body.

The third step was to recognize the whole meaning of the *individua persona*, of an indivisible and indivisible being of a being that must not be divided and that must precisely live by itself a duality of personality and rationality that no artifice can deny or imitate.

## III. LIFE AND SINGULARITY

Life does not allow itself to be locked into the material/form couple that is as valid for the living as for the machine, and whose use can lead to serious errors. Life is neither a material substrate nor an abstractible form it is not simply a set of biological facts that primarily solicits a work of abstraction, nor the dynamic side of algorithms to which everything is supposed to be reduced.

As soon as a device is presented exclusively as a material substrate shaped, or even immaterializes itself into energy to access a purely operational formality, we have excluded the profound life that justifies assimilating it to the living, and even less to the human. For it is against the backdrop of life that we must speak of a single "undivided whole", real under the double species of body and mind, but whose organ in which the body and mind interpenetrate, namely the human brain, is always better known.

Yet we must agree with what two specialists in robotics and artificial intelligence say: "Biology currently has nothing to say about the individuation or singularity of the brain that supports our individual differences. Neuroscience has no theoretical and especially experimental tool to capture and identify these biological and functional differences in brains that seem (...) to obey an univocal organizational pattern. The paradox is there: within a species like ours, biological determinism must allow the precise reproduction, between generations, of a very homogeneous organization, such as the brain. For we all perform repetitive gestures in a homologous manner, and we all feel and almost feel the same and have feelings or thoughts that may be similar. But within this common envelope, we are all singular and unique, especially on the journey of a lifetime. "»[2]

However, this singularity and uniqueness call us to ask ourselves: Do they have a principle that makes it inimitable?

#### IV. MIND & SPIRIT

Against a whole tradition which makes matter the principle of individuation, I admit that it is the spirit which is the most fundamental principle of individuation. The angel, pure spirit, is also each time unique in its essence, says the scholastic. This uniqueness of the spirit is communicated to the living, all the more singular because it is spiritual. The spiritual is not universal, as Hegel thought. We will only speak of the universal in concrete or abstract terms. The universe is first of all the concrete universal of the material nature, form of life; the abstract universal and what the intelligence emanates from the concrete as corresponding to laws of configuration that Kant was right to attribute to reason called pure.

Between intelligence and reason, there is the difference of an ordination to the cosmos and the capacity to schematize the real to the point of making it calculable. Only this rational faculty is imitable, and this only within the limits of combinatorial data processing, but not as the logic or intuitive intelligence that underlies it.

Finally, what is common to all is universal, but without this encompassing community dismantling the material concreteness of things, neither the formality of the intelligible, nor the singularity of each one.

But this status of singularity is inimitable through artifice. He is not an heir of human intelligence, in the sense that he is "of the same nature" as his author. There is no possible homogeneity between individual intelligence and artificial intelligence, between man and robot. A relationship with a robot would be less meaningful than a little girl's personal affection for her doll. The doll prepares the child. Being an adult means replacing the doll with the child. Only certain functions performed by intelligence or accompanied by intelligence are imitable. In return, we can say: We must have projected the functionality of the mechanism onto the living to reduce this living to what is a "whole" increasingly capable of reproducing all of its functions, thus imitating a way of autonomy. This reduction is now supported by the idea that science-assisted reproduction makes science the great generator - not life.

#### V. NATURE AND FUNCTIONS

Perhaps we need to learn again to distinguish between the nature of a thing and all its functions. The functions are observed in their regularities and are explained by causal sequences. However, nature is something that could be called a negative metaphysics. The nature of a thing declares itself when you know what it is not. To know her is to explain her. It is at this limit that nature and function separate. Science has had to get rid of the idea of

nature, which is not its responsibility. But her imperialism led her to see herself as the only legitimate agent of truth, which dangerously distanced her from wisdom.

Wisdom is the intelligence of the mind, science is the intelligence of reason, whose primary quality is indeed criticism. If I mention wisdom here, it is only to point out that it does not have only one form of intelligence, but that this diversity is that of human intelligence which cannot include artificial intelligence. This new modality of the so-called "intelligence is not entitled to the title of intelligence". NA's "abilities" are not of the order of intelligence. And would one compare the abilities of a robot and those of a child, that would not justify deducing the intelligence of the robot. It may be necessary to wait until a robot goes "crazy" before comparing it to a human madness.

"Artificial intelligence is not intelligence. Today nobody knows yet how to reproduce a human intelligence; it is not by aggregating specialized programs in the games or the classification of images that we will succeed there. Artificial intelligence is nothing more and nothing less than a capacity for analysis and extremely fast processing of large amounts of data in a very short period of time. A capacity dependent on content delivered directly or indirectly by man."»[3]

## VI. INTELLIGENCE AND REASON

It is here that we need to reflect on what distinguishes intelligence from reason. It is not enough to distinguish between understanding and reason, *Verstand* and *Vernunft*, but to see if understanding includes a moment that goes beyond perception and reception that places the subject in a position of passivity; if there is a moment of activity, of penetration, that German translated as *ein* - (*Einsicht*, *Eingebung*) and that Latin retains in particular intelligence and intuition. In this sense, phenomenology is a revenge of intelligence over reason.

The reason is essentially a treatment of the perceived, an organization of the given, which greatly values the rule of organization, the legislation of discourse, the police of the mind, as Alain said. In Latin the *ratio* actually says the ration, which belongs to each one, which is proportionate to his need, but it is the proportion that has taken over, because it is a measure and is easily prey to numbers.

Intelligence is alive, reason is abstract, indifferent to life and death, which is why it can be artificialized. "Artificial intelligence" is a contradiction in terms. Let us talk, if necessary, of artificial reason, starting with Pascal's practical invention, which was indeed an artifice with a view to purely rational operations. But let us not confuse the inventor's intelligence, today the genius of engineers and what robots reproduce.

But that is where the difficulty lies: robots are not only capable of rational operations, but they can actually receive something that man, too, can receive when he hears. The robot thus seems to join the understanding in its receptive passivity and in the neuronal traces that these receptions leave, which is far from the donor intelligence. I don't think that a device can ever have an *Eingebung*, an intuition that gives meaning.

To work on the idea of reason is also to be interested in what makes it worthwhile. Indeed intuition is threatened by a companionship both noble and dangerous: that of imagination, of which Pascal says with admirable precision that he lacks the sense of the true and the false. Does this mean that intuition needs another companion: that of critical reason, therefore of reason that does not only weave abstractions, but that discerns, separates, judges and in this sense supports intelligence beyond the pure act of intuition that superbly characterizes it. The reason, judge the true and the false?

It is in this sense that we say of someone that he was or is right. This does not mean that he is gifted with understanding, but that he sees, that he judges just. The reason is then this necessary rampart against the possible invasions of an imagination without rules.

We must keep reason then means: we must keep a critical distance even in the most audacious advances of intuition, which is a "practical" precept relating to the life of the mind. Sapere aude. Have the courage to think. But what is courage without prudence?

## VII. ARTIFICIAL AND HUMAN INTELLIGENCE

These multiple distinctions are essential as soon as illusions are maintained by untruths. The so-called artificial intelligence can never reach and even less surpass human intelligence; at most man will be belittled to what the machine can.

What is nevertheless true is that robots and machines capable of technical wonders hitherto unknown will considerably change not man, but the conditions in which man will evolve. But it is not man according to his nature, but man according to his condition that will evolve. But how to evoke nature outside the condition?

The Greek concept of phisique the Latin translated by natura, retains the idea of emergence, birth and thus of an origin, but of an origin that differentiates. To have a nature is to be different from.... It is identified by a common nature. The slide towards the essence is then inevitable, and towards a necessity to be this and not that. I am not afraid to say that all these metaphysical shifts have contributed to separating the nature of its force of emergence, its dynamics and its plasticity, which moreover cannot be cut off from its duration and its constant consistency. But if one moves constancy and invariance on the side of essential nature one necessarily fixes the variations on the side of conditions, and conditions of existence", forgetting that not only nature is not reduced to essential invariance and that the condition is not reduced to circumstantial, but leads in its way towards the idea of establishment and construction. Man is by nature neither a plant nor a machine, but established in the world, he lives in variable conditions and can largely modify his conditions of existence[4]. A realism will make the most honest people say that it will be for good and for evil, that rules of prudence will have to be respected, that legislation will be necessary which, they, will not be the responsibility of Science.

## VIII. TRUTH AND REALITY

These considerations will obviously not convince the scientist who has made Science a doctrine, that is, who admits, as a scientist, that there is truth and ultimately reality only

established by Science. There is a major ontological leap: not only truth, but reality. A leap and a complete reversal of the relationship to the world, because it is no longer a question of drawing from the reality of the world what is truly intelligible, but of creating scientifically another reality to transform the world. Reality is no longer called reality, but factuality, The rest replaced by data, data to be processed according to scientific requirements that are worth by themselves, i.e. are disconnected from the intelligence that produces them.

One then understands that this science disconnected from intelligence, totally self-sufficient in its dryness, is also disconnected from all wisdom. From this wisdom, which, at least in human intelligence, is a way of "good police of the mind", an agent who denounces what Jaspers calls the Unvernunft der Vernunft, the folly of reason. But here it is no longer enough to be critically vigilant about the use of reason, but to safeguard intelligence, the reason for which is only the part most apt to enter into judgment with itself. Criticism is then the moment when spiritual wisdom manifests itself as intellectual wisdom[5].

#### WHAT IS A DEVICE?

It is not enough to say that it is something that is made and therefore does not grow in nature. But one can immediately say that artifice is distinct from the work of art, which is inseparable from the life and person of a man or woman endowed with a specific know-how, and that he or she "presents" it before representing something. This "woman" is a Renoir before being a female character; this "horse" a Marc before being an animal to ride.

The so-called abstract art wants that such and such a set of geometrical figures is a Mondrian, but that this geometrism participates in abstraction which, it, is an extremely significant operation of reason. For a reason that is no longer the Greek logos, neither the scholastic ratio, nor Leibniz's understanding.

It is the abstraction of number as a number, which reduces a word to a sign, which finally makes emerge a separate universe of which mathematics is the first manager. The derealization of the abstract began his career with the admission of the zero, the 0, as an indicator of an intellectual operation, namely a multiplication by an arbitrarily selected number:  $1/0$ , itself multipliable indefinitely by itself.

Now comes the moment when this multiplication, which is still dependent on the multiple, the few or many, is in turn abstract in the non-metaphysical, purely factual equivalent of the: something and nothing - in figures:  $1/0$ . But it is at the moment when the energy of physical relaxation, think of a muscle or a spring, is replaced by that of the electrical impulse that the "pass / does not pass" takes a universal value precisely expressed by the  $1/0$ .

What we call "artificial" is the combination of two abstractions: that of operations with numbers that can be combined and controlled infinitely because they only mean themselves, and that of the drive that can be reduced to "yes or no".

But artifice only takes on a face of reality when, despite everything, electronic energy is applied to materials that can be assembled into reproductions that are themselves only like works of art. There are beautiful robots out there.

When the artifice claims to imitate or reproduce nature or the work of art, it completely forgets that the work of art is precisely not an imitation, but the expression of a soul, imaginative and sensitive in contact with reality; of a soul that the machine does not have and that no robot will ever have.

The exoskeleton is not another leg. It is a device that mobilizes a real limb that has lost its natural mobility. We're in the order of the as if. All artifice is of the "as if" order. As for the imitation; if for the possible carried always further...

If it is necessary to admire the know-how of the technicians, it is necessary to keep in front of the world that scientists imagine that a triumphant science, closed on itself and that has left any critical wisdom who evades this look of intelligence on the reason that is and remains philosophy.

#### IX. PERSPECTIVES ON A CONTROVERSIAL AUTHOR: YUVAL NOAH HARARI

Sceptical spectator of American society and science, Y. N. Harari became known through two major works: *Sapiens* and *Homo deus*. Both speak of man and humanism, and finally deplore the fact that man has betrayed nature and left the natural order to impose his law on Nature. And if it accompanies with scholarly reflections the evolution of life sciences, it is to faith to salute a victory over humanism and to fear that, again, this anti-humanism will develop new forms of destruction of nature. We must therefore read with great attention, and sometimes with a little forced benevolence, arguments that risk losing their relevance under the abundance of some 900 pages of generous writing.

After distinguishing three forms of humanism, curiously conformed to encompassing ideologies called "religions", the author advances a point to remember: "Between the (individualistic) dogmas of liberal humanism and the very latest discoveries in the life sciences, a chasm opens up that we can no longer afford to ignore. Our liberal political and judicial systems are based on the idea that each individual possesses an inner nature that is sacred, indivisible and unchanging, that gives meaning to the world and that is the source of all ethical and political authority. This is the reincarnation[Ph.S.] of traditional Christian belief in a free and eternal soul that resides in every individual. Yet for over two hundred years, the life sciences have deeply undermined this belief. Men of science studying the inner workings of the human organism have not found the soul. They are increasingly inclined to argue that human behaviour is determined by hormones, genes and synapses, rather than by free will - by the same forces that determine the behaviour of chimpanzees, wolves and ants. »

At the end of the next volume, *Homo deus*, things become clearer. He is creating a new religion for himself, just as misleading and alienating as all the others: dataism. It stems from what is imposed on the scientist as a fundamental fact. Everything is a datum, a data. Not a given, the fact of a gift as Jean-Luc Marion wants it, but a given of fact devoid of any reality of its own, without itself, pure object of scientific treatment where the computer replaces the man too imperfect to process finally unlimited information.

In this "religion" the Spirit is replaced by the algorithm. "The starting algorithm may initially be developed by human beings, but in developing it follows its own path and goes where no man has yet gone..., and where no man can follow it." (HD 423). The spirit blows wherever it wants.



And then, like any religion, dataism is naturally dominant and mystifying, and therefore fundamentally questionable:

"It is doubtful whether life is really reducible to data flows" (ibid). "... perhaps we will discover that, all things considered, organisms are not algorithms. »

What, like Noah's ark, emerges from the Dadaist flood are doubts about life and living organisms; then, curiously, about decisions, especially economic and political decisions. Are these irreducible, as voluntary facts, to yes/no decision calculations? Or is it a question of safeguarding something in social organisms that escapes the algorithmic necessity?

Dataism understands decision-making processes better and better, but it may well adopt an increasingly biased view of life (ibid). "Perhaps there is something in the universe that cannot be reduced to data. »

It is such (sceptical?) hypotheses that signal that Y. N Harari, both denounces all religion - and especially Christianity and Communism - for having gained considerable power "despite their factual inaccuracy", and seeks to safeguard something. But this something is not man under his homo sapiens modality. What we need to save is a humble relationship between man, degraded from his sapience, and a great unknown person who forces us to concern ourselves with the immediate, to concentrate on the awareness of our fragile lowliness and to regret the harm done to "inferior" creatures.

But should we simply admit that human intelligence is so totally replaceable by artificial intelligence that we have only this little defensive pride left?

Shouldn't we ask ourselves: If all monotheistic or monolithic "religions" are overwhelming by their power to impose deceptive convictions, isn't it Christianity which, by preaching a single God, but Trinitarian and incarnate, gives man the humble pride of having been joined and ennobled by a Father God - and not only Master and replaceable Tyrian from age to age? To one man, it was said, of a given nature and variable condition, including the encounter and access to surprising capacities, but carrying hopes, and obvious dangers, induced by developments of an as yet unsuspected magnitude. A man to whom good and evil will never be strangers.

Let us conclude with Professor Harari who asks: "What will happen to society, politics and daily life when unconscious but highly intelligent algorithms know us better than we do?" (11D, 427) When the last star is extinguished, the last trace of the spirit...

**Philibert Secretan**

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[1]« A. Pérez de Laborda, Una mirada al ser. Encuentros, Madrid 2013. p, 491-503

2]Daniel Tritsch and Jean Mariani, Ça va la tête? Belin, Paris 2018, p.138-139.

3] Tomasso Poggio and Frédéric de Combert, in "L'homme continue d'avoir le dernier mot", Le Monde (Hors série) March-May 2018, Dans la tête des robots, p.33.

4] In the singular unity of the person, it is the spirit that binds essence and existence in ways that do not need to be fixed here.

5] Auguste Comte's mistake was to see in criticism only the negative side, which he had to replace by the positivity of science, but then totally turned towards Being in all its aspects: religious, social, scientific.