

THE HUMAN BEING AS A PRISONER OF THE ARTIFICIAL CULTURE IN THE AGE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING ADDICTION

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L'ÊTRE HUMAIN COMME PRISONNIER DE LA CULTURE ARTIFICIELLE À L'ÈRE DE LA DÉPENDANCE AUX RÉSEAUX SOCIAUX

Au début du 21e siècle, la technologie informatique s'est développée rapidement et les réseaux sociaux basés sur Internet (par exemple, Facebook, Instagram, WeChat ou Tweeter) ont proliféré encore plus rapidement, devenant une partie très importante de la vie des gens. Mais ces dernières années, une dépendance à ces médias sociaux/sites de réseaux sociaux est apparue. Ce type de dépendance a été défini comme «l'utilisation irrationnelle et excessive des médias sociaux dans la mesure où elle interfère avec d'autres aspects de la vie quotidienne».

Dans ce présent article, nous présenterons l'addiction aux réseaux sociaux, qui peut transformer l'homme en véritable prisonnier d'un nouveau type de culture, qui, contrairement à la culture classique qui ne bénéficiait pas des «avantages de l'intelligence artificielle», peut sérieusement affecter son liberté de décision et peut lui nuire en termes de confort de sa propre vie.

Si la dépendance à la technologie définit l'humain même selon certains philosophes, il y a aussi des situations où elle se transforme en dépendance, aliénant l'homme de son essence même culturelle.

1. Introduction

Since ancient times, Aristotle, in his *Politics*, pointed out that man is a being without restraint in terms of nourishment, cruelty, lust and gluttony [1]. To be human meant for the Stagirite to be able to control by reason, by logos, this lack of a natural limitation of basic instincts. From the positions of an anthropology based on the idea of Spirit, Max Scheler believed that

the human essence consists precisely in this power that the Spirit (*Geist*) has to oppose the lack of measure that the vital drives claim on our being [2]. This category also includes aggression, which can very easily become violence, destruction, death.

Thus, in the case of man, the border, the limits between the good use of instinct and his thanatic deviation is a very fragile one. In the case of animals, such problems do not arise. In the animal kingdom there are rare exceptions and only in completely exceptional conditions, most of the time influenced by humans. It is the time when *hybris* appear, i.e. that lack of measure leading to intraspecific killing or self-destruction by disrupting a vital instinct such as feeding, sexuality, territorial dominance or extreme aggression.

Man is the exception in view of the fact that his entire evolution, based on technique, on artificial elements that he interposed as prostheses between him and nature, made him a being exposed to great risks precisely because of the loss of natural adjustment of basic behaviors, which, under the conditions of his new life, proved to be useless.

Expressions like «*the human being is an ascetic of life*» or even the famous definition of the human being as a „*Nay-sayer*” [2] or the one who can say NO! to the world of instincts, in fact show us that the danger to which man is exposed is addiction, dependence on certain behaviors that he can no longer master, he can no longer control through that *virtus estimativa*, through his reason.

In the present paper we will present the social media addiction, which can turn man into a real prisoner in a new type of culture, that, unlike the classical culture, which did not benefit from the „advantages of artificial intelligence”, can affect his freedom of decision and may harm him in terms of the comfort of his own life. We search the data base such as PubMed and Google Scholar using the key words: „social media addiction”, „social networking addiction”, „mental health”. We also used philosophy books regarding the effects of mass communication on human being.

2. The medical point of view on social networking addiction

Medical Definitions of social networking addiction

Social networking relies on mobile and web-based technologies in order to create interactive platforms between individuals and various communities. Social networking is itself a very large community that uses the Internet and a web-based installation that allows individual users to build

a profile identity and generate connections and subjective associations between him and his list of friends with whom to communicate. The individual entering the social networking universe actually builds an avatar, a new identity that belongs to a new society in which he is accepted. First, people connect with each other and then post news, information, fake news, etc., including their own or others' photos and videos. However, each network member can control the access to his profile by accepting or deleting friend request from other network members [3].

More than two decades ago, the British Professor Mark Griffiths was already drawing attention to the accumulation of numerous articles in the mass media that emphasized the existence of an excessive use of the Internet, which they called „Internet addiction”, „Internet Addiction Disorder” and „Internet Addiction Syndrome” [4].

He defined people addicted to online communication sites as those who irrationally and excessively use social networks because they spend most of their waking time „*surfing and chatting in this medium*”, neglecting other aspects of their everyday life [4, 5].

But, in recent years, numerous articles have appeared announcing the emergence of „social media addiction” or „social networking addiction” which they define as „*the irrational and excessive use of social media to the extent that it interferes with other aspects of daily life*”. Thus, in 2014, there were already around 350 million users who were addicted to social media sites [6].

Social networking addiction - the disease of the contemporary man

The symptoms of social networking overuse are similar to those experienced by people with chemical or non-chemical addictions. Addiction to social networking negatively affects self-esteem, mental health, ability to concentrate and academic performance of addicted individuals [7-9].

The higher the social networking addiction in adolescents, the more significant the stress, anxiety and depression, all of which lead to reduced academic performance and ultimately affect life satisfaction [10]. Insomnias caused by the excessive use of social networks can lead to changes in the perception of one's own person, anxiety, depressive mood and psycho-emotional lability, thus having a negative impact on the subjective well-being of pupils and students and on their relationship in the offline environment [9].

Once the user becomes addicted to social networking, he paradoxically enters a social isolation, even if he apparently has many virtual friends. The addicted user isolates himself from family, friends, and the real world.

He can no longer communicate in the real world, although he communicates very easily and effectively in the virtual world [11]. The mindset of the addicted user is changing. He lives in fantasy world. Almost half of users spy on the profile of their contacts [12] and experience the life, actions, way of behaving or dressing of others. For this reason, their self-esteem decreases if they believe that they cannot live up to those standards.

In the case of excessive use of social networks, users become too concerned with their image and especially with the response they can get after placing information on their personal profile. In the new context of social networks, especially Facebook, a new element appears, namely the evaluation of one's image through the „likes” of others. Being conditioned by permanent appreciations, the new self-image must be in a constant process of self-reinvention in order to capture the attention of other social networking users, who would otherwise be bored and no longer interested in that individual. In addition, some selfies can be associated with advertisements for certain products, becoming a source of income. Thus, a new type of image appears, this time intersubjective [13], in which the self-image is embedded in a level of expectation that puts permanent pressure on the one who actually sells the self-image.

In the age of social networking addiction, the user has even a desire to treat his own organic illness asking for medical opinions from friends on social networking list. Thus, even the doctor-patient relationship changes because, when the patient comes to the specialist, he is already informed about his illness [14] and considers that the doctor must give him the treatment he already knows about.

3. The philosophical point of view on social networking addiction *The paradox of a special case of addiction*

The addiction to social networking involves a certain paradox. If addictions to food, alcohol, sex, or even gambling are related to the disruption of some vital instincts, social networking addiction is more a lack of restraint in the plane of reason, i.e. the very element that should ensure the control of instincts. Thus, if we were to quote the French philosopher Jacques Derrida, social networking addiction, as an dependence of information, can be seen as a veritable „*madness within thought*”, born out of the natural desire, up to a point, to be informed and connected to the new, to be at the core problem, to be connected to other people [15]. This „*madness within*

thought”, transferred from the modern Cartesian man to the contemporary man, who is addicted to screens, gives the latter the feeling of being a true *Homo Deus*, possessor of a „*religion of data*”, as Yuval Noah Harari wrote in his recent Book [16].

Social networking is the direct consequence of the last great revolution in technical terms, namely the emergence of artificial intelligence. In this study we do not aim to see the impact of this revolution on the old man of the industrial age, but rather we are trying to capture the effects of the aggressive flooding of all human competencies by artificial intelligence. What interests us is to see the effects of artificial intelligence on some social categories that have developed a genuine dependence on the facilities it offers in the field of inter-subjective communication.

Such type of addiction on screens and the wonderful universe that they open can originate in the specifics of man in the contemporary post-war world dominated first by television and then by computers and, with them, by the Internet. Thus, since the middle of the 20th century, the German philosopher Günther Anders, in his work *Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen*, originally published in 1956, a period when television was beginning to assert itself in people’s homes, proved to be a visionary when he described the process of the transformation of the human being under the impact of mass reproduced images, at that time offered by television [17] and now by the screens of telephones, laptops and computers. He brought forward the idea that in the connecting to the images offered by the TV screen, of which sensational images have a priority role, there is also the source of the danger that the human being becomes unable to judge because, unlike the written text, which challenges the mind to complex interconnections and analyzes of ideational contents, images, especially when they overwhelm the viewer, offer only partial slices of the world: thus, by showing the world, they actually hide it. The world actually becomes „*phantom-like*”, unreal. Moreover, by bringing this new, technically prepared reality of the sensational image, television generates a certain type of man, a new sociological being, namely an „*isolated mass hermit*”, because, even though he is apparently connected to the whole global world, through TV screens „*the events come to us, not we to them*”, which means that the human being will be no longer „in the world” but actually they will turn into „*infantile beings, that is, into minors*” who will soon know alienation [17].

The human being as a prisoner of the artificial culture

All these transformations with the role of hypnotically connecting contemporary man to a world of images, thus amputating his reflective dimension, have led to a new phenomenon that some, such as the Italian scientist Giovanni Sartori, equate to a kind of imbecility or, in a more medical direction, it is a sort of functional illiteracy, in the metaphorical sense perhaps of a post-literary illiteracy, in which recent man can read, but he lost the ability to understand and to process the information he had read in the absence of images. *Homo sapiens* has transformed under the pressure of the mass media and more recently the Internet, which has opened „a gigantic new game”, into a *homo insipiens*, defined as a ”stupid and, as a corollary, ignorant, a being incapable of rationality and, therefore, he is a symbolic animal that is no longer able to support, much less to feed the world built by *homo sapiens*” [18].

We are discovering now, more than ever, how valid Anders’ ideas are. As 70 years ago, when man was conquered by television, today, on social networking platforms, we spend our existence in the company of fake acquaintances and continue our day under the aegis of these fake friends, but it seems that we will inevitably move towards an „*artificially produced schizophrenia*” [19].

This global phenomenon of real idiotization thanks to the screens, which offer sequences of images, is also captured by Giovanni Sartori, who launched the concept of ”post-thinking”, which would characterize the man who passes from „*the obligation to make oneself seen*” to „*the need to be seen*” [18]. This phenomenon of translation towards a priority of the image gives rise to the „pseudo-event, an event that happens only because there is a camera to record it and which otherwise would not exist” [18]. Like television, social networking offers us a new reality - artificial, technically prepared, magical in its essence, and which places us in a new space, a global one, built by the technical means of image reproduction and their transmission at a distance.

Are we returning to a new Middle Age?

The philosopher and sociologist of Polish origin Zygmunt Bauman, one of the most formidable analysts of this new global reality, considered in his book *Globalization: The Human Consequences* (1998) that being local in a globalized world is a sign of social inadequacy and degradation [20]. Now we have all entered the virtual space, where the masters are the „*celebri-*

ties” or „the few” - as the author called them, but whom we now know as global „influencers”, followed by millions of fans from all corners of the planet. Bauman compares the „celebrities” of the new synoptic world to the angels of medieval iconography, because they „hover above the worlds of the locals”. They are „simultaneously inaccessible and within sight, lofty and mundane, infinitely superior yet setting a shining example for all inferiors to follow or to dream of following; admired and coveted at the same time – a royalty that guides instead of ruling” [20]. These transformations make the contemporary era very much look like the Middle Ages, when the great mass of the illiterates was connected to religious culture only through the images painted on the walls of places of worship. Thus, the mobile or the screen acquires for the „recent man” a genuine sacred meaning similar to that of the icon in the medieval painting.

Dependence on artificial intelligence can make contemporary man a veritable prisoner of artificial culture by alienating him from his own essence precisely because he ends up abusing this essence. Social networking addiction most profoundly reflects this paradox that marks the entry of artificial intelligence into our lives by affecting our essence through our very essence. If the technique so far has replaced operations that the body did, for the first time artificial intelligence penetrates the territory of the human mind, replacing it. Thus, social networking addiction reflects man’s enslavement to a new power that is artificial intelligence, which is initially offered to him, then seduces him for his own good, but finally ends up subjugating him in a magical way.

4. Conclusions

To these recent challenges related to social networking addiction, the philosophy, medicine and psychology of the future will have to offer solutions by which man preserves his humanity and does not gradually transform into a being who comes to identify with his technical prosthesis, in this case artificial intelligence and all its gifts which can sometimes turn out to be poisoned. A separation of the apples from the basket, i.e. an orientation towards that type of social networking that really has a formative role, and this only quality education can do, would be a necessary first measure. Thus, a new type of education, in which the Internet should become an integral part of it, could be a starting solution by which the tendencies leading to an irrational and excessive use of social networking are

tempered. Man must be taught how to manage the wealth of information and inter-subjective connections that current technology makes available, how to select what is important for his life.

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IMPORTANȚA ASPECTELOR MORALE ȘI ETICE ALE BUNEI-CREDINȚE PENTRU SOCIETATEA CONTEMPORANĂ

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THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MORAL AND ETHICAL ASPECTS OF GOOD FAITH FOR CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

In this article are analyzed aspects of good moral faith and its influence on contemporary society. Are exposed to the fundamentals of moral philosophical foundation of post-modern society and the fact that in this society people recognize the need for constructing a minimal debt, weak, which extends in a negative way. The following articles a characteristic of good