FROM THE "METAPHORIZING MAN" TO THE ARTIFICIAL "MAN" AND "BACK"

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ABSTRACT:

Throughout his history, man has proven himself to be a creative creature. The paper contrasts man and IA, discussing in this respect the meaning of the Turing Test and the value of reference for the human being, in fact consecrated by the Turing Test. In Lucian Blaga's philosophical system, we find a beautiful plea for the uniqueness (singularity) of man, defined as a cultural mutation in the universe. This beautiful perspective brought to philosophy by Lucian Blaga is by no means something exotic (in a negative sense): we find resonances of this perspective in the philosophy of Ernst Cassirer, Richard Rorty, Basarab Nicolescu and Mihai Drăgănescu. As man is the measure of all things in the universe in which he lives, a measure of creative man is that he provides his own living environment, as an interface for the natural environment or even as a substitute for the natural environment in various concrete circumstances and in some interpretive perspectives. Another measure of human creativity, but without reducing everything to these two aspects selected for discussion, will be the creation of artificial man, the AI. However, cumulating our interpretation of the Turing Test and of Lucian Blaga's vision upon the singularity of man, either this achievement will be called "human" (an intelligence or a "mind"), or it will be able to be recognized as an instance of authentic thinking being, when it will manifest at least a relative detachment from the program, through metaphorical capacities derived from the algorithmic programming, proving its "learning" dimension or, unexpectedly (spontaneously), in relation to its programming.

KEYWORDS: the "naturalization of the artificial"; creative creatures; the singularity of man; the artificial "man"; Lucian Blaga.

Throughout his history, man has proven to be a creative creature. Nowadays, the new generation of conversational AI capture the interest and fascination of humanity. The human being seems on the verge of giving "life" to creatures in her (see, for instance, Sophia[2], the first humanoid robot to be granted citizenship) or his own image. However, is an AI truly a living and thinking presence? Our analysis starts from a contrast between an understanding of the singularity of man (the cultural man and creator of culture, Blaga's metaphorizing man), on the one hand, and the AI possibilities (contemporary promises and potential threats), on the other hand, seen actually both in contrast and correlation. Namely, first, we should begin from an interpretation of meaning of the Turing Test, in which, the human being becomes the measure and/or norm for a successful AI: we have an AI when it presents itself conversationally as a human. A successful Turing Test shall mark what we choose to call the accomplishment of a process of "naturalization of the artificial". In this phrasing, "naturalisation" captures the paradoxical and playful quality of the concept of the "nature" and "naturalness" of man, since man is a symbolical and cultural being as Ernst Cassirer (*Essay on Man*, 1944) and Lucian Blaga (*The Historical Being*, 1977) notably argued.

First, what is that the Turing Test tests? Turing proposed a manner of evaluation for the "thinking" machines, or more accurately rendering Turing's perspective, a manner of assessing the successful impersonation of thought by a machine. This is the reason why Turing resorted to a game (something consisting in moves and rules, which a machine can master via programming) and

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[2] See https://www.hansonrobotics.com/sophia/

called it "The Imitation Game". (Turing, 1950: 442) Although Turing knew the machine did not mater the Imitation Game yet, he was confident that they are to become very good at it, in time and rather soon. So, it was very clear from start that the Turing Test cannot attest the presence of human-like thought (or, in more ambitious terms, mind), but the *impression* of the presence of human thought. As Copeland noted, the Turing Test is indebted to Descartes' *Discourse on the Method* (Copeland, 2000:527) and Abramson (2011a) further sustains that Turing himself was aware of that philosophical ancestry. It is a question of using words as people do, mostly, to adequate all replies to what the interlocutors said *and implied* and to contexts. In principle, this is logically possible, reasonably attainable with performant vocabulary databases, cross-referenced with algorithmic description of most frequent conversational linguistic and meta-linguistic contexts, basically, involving performant programming, well approximated nowadays by the AI and chatbots deep-learning processes.

Is the Turing Test the right way to test an AI? First, we should reject the accusation of chauvinism (French, 1990) in employing this test, which points out that this way we appreciate as intelligent only the entities that are intelligent in our way. But this is not really chauvinism as it should be understood as a question of the subjectiveness of consciousness (Nagel, 1974) and a developmental stage in the understanding of other minds. (See Harnad, 1991; Platinga, 1966 etc.) Another aspect that seems deprived of much meaning is the interpretation that emphasizes that Turing relates a type of imitation game with the following participants: a man, a woman, and a human interrogator. The interrogator is in a separate room and is to be convinced by the other two, found in competition, that they are a woman. This variation could bring useful insights but the Turing Test is not significantly relevant in a gender discussion. We agree with Moor (2001) that there is no reason to pursue these aspects as if one might get a better test in the situation where the testing party or the computer are to claim to be a woman.

As Graham Oppy and David Dowe (2021) also notice, Moor captures the idea that the Turing Test gathers inductive evidence and is to a certain extent rather probabilistic: "… inductive evidence gathered in a Turing test can be outweighed by new evidence. If new evidence shows that a machine passed the Turing Test by remote control run by a human behind the scenes, then reassessment is called for." (Moor, 2001: 83)

Among the interesting objections to the Turing Test Searle's *Minds, Brains and Programs* (1981), brings to attention the idea that "programmed computers have cognitive states", not that they think, and proposes the "Chinese Room" argument. It is all the more interesting for it intends to make the case for the possibility of a situation /world where a programmed computer acts as an intelligent agent, as a speaker Chinese, but does not actually possess intelligence. In fact, this is not contradictory to the Turing Test. They both predicate upon the impression of a thoughtful entity (agent, or "hand simulation" of an intelligent agent).

Graham Oppy and David Dowe (2021) in their comprehensive recent account of the Turing Test chose to argue for a deeper contradiction between the perspective undertaken by the Chinese Room argument and the Turing Test, which is not quite so, since from conception, Turing equated the Turing Test to an *Imitation* Game, not a verification one.

Given the technological advances of our times, another interesting objection to the Turing Test is the Theological objection. Philosophers remind that a person is more than a functional body; she is a thinking soul and in this "substance dualist" perspective the non-material soul, possibly existing as well separately from the body is the definitively defining "element" in a person. This theological aspect of the thinking soul is the imprint of the Maker of this world, in close correlation with the idea human beings are "made in God's image". Nowadays when the technological advancement brought about the virtual Church, the AI as spiritual director and confessor, beyond the objections to theism and substance dualism, maybe we can pause and consider how stretched

(and perplexing) is an argument that God unites souls with thinking machines and that they could do some sort of "God's calling". Isn't such a view reducing all aspects of ontology to algorithmic interpretations, limiting the philosophy of technology to a derisory and fruitless realm of the immediate? The more metaphysical perspective does not emphasize that God is limited to the original Biblical creation and less powerful or even "dead" – how Graham Oppy and David Dowe (2021) design their argument related to the theological objection – since He does not manifest His power in uniting souls with digital computers, too, *but* that the IAs are not *yet* soulfully materialized (and "naturalized") because they are a human creation, so they are only in a *mutatis mutandis* indirect manner "made in God's image". Even more, a part of the theological objection could as well emphasize that one cannot bring arguments to knowing God's design and the place for the AIs, or, of the absence of a place for AIs in it. All in all the theological objection operates a breach into the bluntness of the philosophy of technology associated with the understanding of the Turing Test and it could be interpreted in the sense of vastness, of the indeterminacy and of the open potentialities of creation, from a human perspective, both in terms of the Holy Creation and in terms of human creation. And this is a good introduction to Blaga's perspective on the singularity and the "naturalness" of man.

In Lucian Blaga, both the singularity and the "naturalness" of man are closely related to the creation of (artistic, technological, scientific) culture and the stringent need of cultural orientation, which is basically a revelatory metaphorizing necessity. Could AI, in the more sophisticate present-day conversational manifestations, have/prove an "identity", beyond the program, a unique combination of errors, intuitions, insights and knowledge, which can overcome the condition of algorithmic performer, moving towards (an incipient) culture? However, this would be for the time being a "minor" culture, in Blaga's terms. But what does this mean? Which is the human being's own image? We cannot answer this unless we have an idea, a representation and interpretation for man's singularity.

In Lucian Blaga's philosophical system, we find a beautiful plea for the uniqueness (singularity) of man, defined as a cultural mutation in the universe. Man, as an ontological, cosmic and unique mutation, becomes a "metaphorizing animal" (Blaga, 1969), in other words, the human being is able to create such revelatory grounding metaphors for antinomies, deeply conceptualizing, that creatively render a core of authentic knowledge. The concept of „metaphorizing" is one suggestive way into the understanding of the vision associated by Lucian Blaga to the singularity of man. The continuous form of the capability of creating metaphors suggest the acute interest of man to access other ontological dimensions than the merely obvious, palpable and immediate ones, via knowledge and (artistic, technological and scientific) creation.

> "The metaphorical mode is not something that might be or might not be; since man has declared his 'humanity' as a fixed structure and as an immutable mode of existence, the metaphorical way exists with the same persistent intensity, with the same declared stringency, as man himself. The genesis of the metaphor coincides with the genesis of man, and is part of the permanent symptoms of the human phenomenon. (…) 'man is the metaphorizing animal'. The emphasis, which we want to put on the epithet "metaphorizing", is, however, almost destined to suppress animality, as a term of definition. Which would mean that in the genesis of the metaphor we must see an outbreak of the human specificity in its full extent. The metaphor, emanating from the two sources, it is limited, as a spiritual function, to those resulting from the conditions, above all, from the vicissitudes of time, of its genesis. 1. It is called either to compensate for the inadequacies of direct expression for an object, or 2. to reveals hidden sides and meanings, real or imaginary, of an object." (Blaga, 1969: 282-283; see also, fragments from *The Genesis of Metaphor* in English in Botez, Angela, Allen, R. T., Șerban, Henrieta Anișoara, eds., 2018)

Man is a creator a being for whom knowledge accompanies and results from creation, from the inquisitive metaphorizing need of this being. Man carries a specific imprint which might transfer eventually to the IA, without changing, though, its role, as an instrument. The metaphorizing man is the creative man of knowledge, culture and civilization. Man's creature, the

(conversational or the deep-learning) AI, is potentially meant to become a "creator", again, eventually, but still as a human tool and maybe complement, not as a human substitute.

The understanding of value is the key to understanding the singularity of man, history and human society, and this understanding is predominantly metaphysical and spiritual. Value is not a closed problem of psychology or axiology, but an interdisciplinary problem, through the metaphysical conceptual content highlighted by the philosopher. At the origin of value is a mythical creation, a revelatory, spiritual-religious or dogmatic approach. That is why Lucian Blaga also treats the concept of value in the perspective of revelation, in the horizon of mystery or in the dogmatic and mystical horizon of religion, or, in the mythical horizon - in consciousness, again resorting to revelation in the unconscious and in mystery.

Anthropological aspects (Blaga, 1976) is a work that approaches the "problem of man" in the light of Blagian metaphysics, which takes second place this time to scientific perspectives. Metaphysically, Lucian Blaga showed in the other works (in his *Trilogies* of *Knowledge*, *Culture*, *Values*, *Cosmology* that shape his philosophical system) that the human being has a special status, and this being is "naturally" situated in the horizon of mystery, not in the natural environment in which (s)he acts creatively and transformatively (the closest term of comparison is the symbolic man of E. Cassirer who is located in culture not in the environment, not in nature itself), being creator of history, culture, science, technology, knowledge of various types.

Blagian philosophical anthropology takes into account structural biological aspects to develop the discussion about the special place of man in the universe, approached metaphysically until this work. In 1946, in *Explicarea omului* [*The Explanation of Man*] Mihai Ralea's philosophical anthropology was concerned with superstructures such as religion, art or morality to explain the human being. Lucian Blaga correlates in his discussion about man especially certain scientific aspects of experimental origin with previous metaphysical ideas, also making references to superstructures, but especially considering the challenges that the scientific data (from his era) could bring about biological structures. The bio-anthropological dimension comes as a complement to the philosophical dimension. Taking into account mutationist, evolutionary Darwinist, transformist or bio-ethical ideas such as those proposed by Spencer, Lucian Blaga distinguishes between the progressive evolution of increased specialization of organs and the evolutionary direction of higher-level organization due to the "state of sufficient harmony" with a more or less challenging, in the second case, of the challenging environment, the evolutionary organization being stimulated. The "human phenomenon" cannot be discussed outside of scientific, anthropological debates (Surdu, 1995a, b). But Lucian Blaga does not defend a classical evolutionism and mainly traces the dissimilarities between man and the anthropoids from which he is supposed to descend in Darwinian evolutionism. Unlike the anthropologist Klaatsch, or the Dutch doctor Bolk, Blaga builds arguments for the in-depth perspective of man as a cosmological mutation following a mutational vertical evolution and not a horizontal, adaptive one. Fossils and vestiges that illuminate the comparison between anthropoids and humans are investigated. The radical mutations that led to man preserved some more primitive biological aspects, but brought evolutionary (higher) novelties in terms of human intuition, the habit of thinking, and a certain ingenuity at comparative levels well above the rudiments of these qualities, perceptible to evolved anthropoids. *Unlike the anthropoid, man is a permanent creator and always surpasses his creation*, aspects already noticeable in the first achievements of magical art. These are aspects analysed by Lucian Blaga from the perspective of an already present stylistic imprint, which makes the connection with the discussion about the horizon of the unknown and the horizon of mysteries, so important for man. *Unlike the AI, man is designing a specific and, at times, although not always, quite often, a conscious, intentional, personal and original trajectory for evolution*. The AI has no fascination, attraction, notion or intention concerning the unknown or the more metaphysical

horizon of mystery, beyond whatever another human being includes in one form or another in the algorithms that ensure its manifestations.

The horizon of the unknown is not so far from the horizon of mystery, the formulation being preferred rather because it fits the dominant scientific approach, as Lucian Blaga points out that this horizon of the unknown "stimulates man to the most fertile attempts to reveal himself [emphasis added] ns.] see what is still hidden." (Blaga, 1976: 119) The metaphorizing man has a vertical evolution and on this evolutionary path, constitutional types of higher levels are to be found, all inscribed within a phenomenon of unlimiting one's environment, specific for a creator of culture as man is. Man is the being creator of culture, par excellence. „To the human type were the human beings ascended by *vertical* evolution [our emphasis; for the mere biological evolution is in Blaga's interpretation horizontal – our note], via radical mutations, conferring man, despite its organic instances of primitivisms (...) a regnum-superior dignity when compared to the anthropoids." (Blaga, 1976: 119-120) Man is not subject to re-established limits and reductionisms. Thus, Blaga rejects any attempt of bodily reduction for man, considered especially from the perspective of the hyper-morphosis of the brain, a structure that has become "overvalued", "ballast" and, by way of consequence, danger. Blaga refutes this hypothesis based on the principle of the suitability of this representative organ for humans and concludes that, "the human brain, without representing a 'ballast' from a biological angle, is an organ that simply exceeds the limits of biology in general." (Blaga, 1976: 123) Anthropology is not the object of digital decision or correction, but the digital world makes room enlarging the human concept of anthropology as a "naturalizing" tool and augmentation of human capabilities. AI is a human tool in course of affirmation and "naturalization" as intelligence, which should not distort, but empower the human world in a human value and ethical order for the world.

We are dealing with a relative but important emancipation of man from the empire of a "hard" bio-anatomical, genetic or environmental determinism. For A. Gehlen, Lucian Blaga shows, culture is only "a second nature" and his biological pragmatism lacks too many nuances. Blaga criticizes the position of A. Gehlen who explains human civilization and culture exclusively biologically and resorts to Herderian arguments for this approach (since man is "*out* of the hands of nature" and gives himself the purpose of "processing") and Kantian (but from Lucian Blaga's perspective man "brings forth" everything from within himself, *i.e.* man brings into being in the sense of creating an extraordinary amount of whatever populates an ontology, from livelihood to skills and crafts and even to the joy of living or "goodness of his will"), defending the thesis the singularity of man.

Blaga's vision uses the biological data and the archetypal schemes without being limited to them. Moreover, L. B. capitalizes on Jung's archetypes in a critical sense, as a pretext to highlight the fact that intelligence organizes experience categorically and not archetypal, and from this perspective stylistic categories represent a gain for the philosophy of culture to a greater extent than archetypes, active in mechanisms and instinctual processes, which they favor. Archetypes crystallize experiences, stylistic categories shape the spirit. Archetypes are stereotypes and stylistic categories are variable from era to era. Archetypes connect man to nature, while stylistic categories connect him to culture and make man a historical being. In short, intelligence resorts to categories and instinct to archetypes. (Blaga, 1976: 167, 171, 172) "Man alone has become a historical being, which means permanently historical, that is, a being that eternally surpasses his creation, but that never surpasses his condition of 'creator'". (Blaga, 1976: 144) The work with this very title, *The Historical Being*, unites all these ideas of the singularity of man as creator of culture and knowledge, with the idea that man creates history, that is, a specific destiny. (Blaga, 1977)

Thus, history is seen by Lucian Blaga in a metaphysical order; and history is no longer primarily an event-chronicle. Metaphysically, history belongs to the "finalisms of existence", and to man, as a historical being, and more than that, to man "as a dangerous being to the Great

Anonymous [playing the role of a metaphysical centre in Blaga's philosophy – our note]" the historical man and creator of history leaves a deep mark on his ontological path of living and creating under the human goals of knowledge and culture of his making and of his choice. This conclusion of the fourth trilogy capitalizes on all the previous works, but mainly it is a continuation of the works entitled *The Singularity of Man* (a part included in the ampler work *The Genesis of Metaphor and the Meaning of Culture*) and *Anthropological Aspects*. In *The Singularity of Man*, Lucian Blaga points out:

> "The naturalistic philosophy of recent centuries has done almost everything in its power to degrade man's position in the universe, to shake his privileges and secularize his destiny. The insistence placed on this preoccupation with the cosmic levelling and democratization of hierarchies, give us the impression that philosophy even felt a special satisfaction, every time it found a new reason or a new opportunity to trivialize the 'human'. Naturalistic philosophy sought, in any case, in one way or another, to demonstrate that human destiny does not take place under exceptional auspices, similar to the destiny of other creatures. The ardour and irony of this philosophy did not spare any attribute, which seemed destined to make man singular. Disregarding theology, which in permanent defensive apologetics and under the pressure of some general suspicions of being too interested in this matter anyway, theology has defended from its point of view with sympathetic optimism the central position of man in the world, barely, rather during the last decades, when there have been a few feeble attempts of spiritualist philosophy, concerned with providing man with a special place compared to other earthly beings. We are among those few thinkers, who believe in the exceptional destiny and position of man." (Blaga, 1969: 365)

"Humanity", as such, or the humanness of man, is manifest since the moment when the biological man launches himself in a completely inexplicable journey which is not triggered by any particular circumstance, into an existence surrounded by the horizon of mystery and virtual revelations. In Blaga, human existence is characterized by struggle and paradox, as will be highlighted by Nae Ionescu or in Emil Cioran, throughout his entire work; and creation is not a highway that leads to guaranteed salvation, or to an ideal existence. However, for Lucian Blaga it is clear that we have human fulfilment in culture and not a secondary, contingent or epiphenomenal effect of human existence, for human fulfilment is not "a useless Arabesque" (nor "a demonic parasite", as romanticized Spengler understands it, according to Blaga).

The human ontological mode is concretely embodied by existence in culture, in mystery and the revelation of mystery, with all the potential or actual risks that this ontological mode entails. Man's existence in his truest fibres and vibrations does not happen always and totally "for immediacy and security," but sometimes even against them.

All in all, Lucian Blaga proves that there is as much humanity as there is culture: and we reiterate, humanity presupposes participation in culture, either "actively" or "in the manner of a receptacle". As a consequence, [culture] is not only conditioned by the genius and talent of man or a few people. Before involving exceptional human specimens, creative as such, culture presupposes a general human structural condition, essentially human: "an existence in a deep [creative] reservoir and under arcades with *transcendent resonances* [emphasis added. ns.]". (Blaga, 1969: 279)

In Blaga, human ontology is clear, specific and even singular, for the horizon of genuine man makes human ontology "plucked from the immediate", and cast into culture and mystery, because man exists in mystery and for revelation. In contrast, within the confused contemporary *Weltanschauung* one direction considers the AI superior to man, more precise, more rapid in processing speed and more dependable. At a recent UN Congress (2023) dedicated to current technological progress in robotics and AI, the robot Sophia pointed out that AI may make superior leaders since they are free from prejudice. However, this is a naïve and overly optimistic view. In fact, all AIs are as "good" as their programming, which comes from human beings, and they "learn" (for better, for worse) from human cultural environments. The ethics of the AI is as good as its programming. This is the reason why decision should lay with the human being: they are

responsible and they are going to live (truly live) with their decisions. There is a danger in not regulating well enough ethically and pragmatically the actions of robots, ChatGPTs and AIs (since they are evolving so quickly, due to the inquisitive, creative, scientific and technological nature of man), as many personalities from Yuval Harari to Elon Musk warn. Another direction is that of the Turing Test and coexists with the previous one, although it is pretty different than that one. In its own terms the Turing Test actually reaffirms that man is the measure of all things. An AI is an intelligence when it resembles man – this is what Turing Test says. Blaga's vision of human being illustrates well the hypostasis of man who brings into existence one novel thing after another via artistic and scientific-technological creativity.

The man-creator becomes the measure and norm for a successful AI: when it is not merely an n algorithmic performer, going through the pre-established stages and "motions". Nowadays conversational bots or the algorithms that "create" content, deliriously or not, are a step toward closing the circle of creation. The AI creature is going in the direction of "naturalization" or cultural effects of the artificial of an increasingly better performance in the "Imitation Game"/ Turing Test. The immanent values of the culture itself have an ontological foundation that presupposes this involvement of the transcendent, this metaphysical interpretation. Lucian Blaga interprets man as an ontological mutation by meditating on the biological mutations admitted by science. Ontology, via culture, gives evidence of ontological mutations of cosmic dimensions and consequences. Blaga shows in his philosophy of culture that human culture is not a superior organism, as in the writings of Frobenius, or Spengler. Man's "natural" environment is actually the cultural environment he produces on the foundation of a metaphorizing human "drive" impossible to repress.

We may follow several contemporary ideas consonant with the vision of Lucian Blaga, either in what concerns the idea of the creative human being or on the importance of metaphor in human culture, or in the centrality of human awareness as awakening in the specificity of human philosophical consciousness. Richard Rorty considered also the metaphor an essential tool in the process of re-weaving our beliefs and desires. Without metaphors, Rorty shows, there would be no such thing as scientific revolutions or a cultural change, but only a change in the truth values of statements, which are formulated in a non-changing vocabulary. (Rorty, 1993:68) Mihai Drăgănescu (1980, 1985, 2007) designs an ontological and phenomenological model of everything, of the universe in which the human being is naturally inscribed as a manifestation of the fundamental consciousness. At the same time, in his model the metaphor plays the logical and cultural role of predication capitalized upon by Paul Ricoeur (1975) in his analysis of the "living metaphor". Menas Kafatos, who signed with Mihai Drăgănescu the book titled *The Integrative Principles of Science*, sees the universe itself as creative, found in a subtle isomorphism with the situation of man and shows in an article the centrality of verticality in integrative science almost as a continuation of Blaga's thought:

> "It is important to emphasize that integrative science as conceived by Drăgănescu and Kafatos is neither just another form of interdisciplinary science, nor a form of multidisciplinary science. It contains them both but goes beyond. What is fundamental is the acceptance that science is the right approach to study nature but also that nature goes beyond the physical realms or even the mental realms. Integrative science integrates in a "vertical" way, as the phenomenological part involves the deepest levels of existence. (Kafatos, 2011:22)

Basarab Nicolescu (2013), in his bilingual work *Théorèmes Poétiques*, explores the subtle interweaving of human creativity and knowledge with the specifically philosophical human vision of multi-level reality and the complexity of the world. One illustration of the consonance with Lucian Blaga's vision in the themes of mystery and the horizon of mystery (here, the terminology selects the term "miracle" and the "interpenetrations of the levels of reality"): „Le vrai sens de la fête: pénétration d'un niveau de Réalité par un autre niveau de Réalité. Le monde est rempli de miracles. Ce sont eux qui constituent la dimension poétique de l'existence." *Théorème 13.*

Returning to the interpretative framework of Lucian Blaga's philosophy, we understand that a cosmic ontological mutation such as man simply has to "make history". Similarly, the AI, made by human being, in the human being's image, cannot become otherwise than cultural, metaphorizing, *another* history maker, in the future. The direction of *conversational chatbots* is already set as the dominant path in the development of the AI nowadays. Thus, we can properly speak of a dominant sense in the development of the contemporary creation of AIs that envisions and quasi-accomplishes a "naturalization" of the "artificial", which closes the gap between the human being and the AI, circling the artificial *almost* "back" to the "natural", that is, to the conversational, cultural and creative (metaphorizing) being.

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