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THE GOD MACHINE: POST-RELIGIOUS COMMUNICATION IN THE ERA OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

This article examines the phenomenon of post-religious communication in the context of contemporary cultural and technological transformations, with particular attention to artificial intelligence (AI) as a dimension of technological transcendence. The central focus is Julian Savulescu's thought experiment of the *God Machine* and its relation to the project of moral enhancement. In this speculative model, genetically modified neurons embedded with nanosignals emit luminous "signatures," which are captured by an omnipresent optical communication network, envisioned as the successor to mobile telephony. These signals are transmitted to bio-quantum computers – self-learning and self-developing systems surpassing the processing power of early twenty-first-century supercomputers. Conceptualized by Savulescu as the *God Machine*, such a system would be capable of monitoring human thoughts, beliefs, desires, and intentions. The article situates this vision within the framework of post-religious communication, analyzing how technological infrastructures are imagined as substituting for religious transcendence by assuming functions of moral authority, norm-setting, and eschatological promise. In the near future, such a system is envisioned as representing the apex of a grand moral project through its capacity to modify human thoughts, beliefs, desires, and intentions within nanoseconds – without the conscious recognition of this process by human subjects. The *God Machine* would intervene solely in cases where a serious harm, an act of injustice, or another profoundly immoral deed was about to occur. This thought experiment raises the provocative question of whether it would be desirable to prevent individuals not only from acting upon immoral intentions but even from possessing them, through the use of advanced technology.

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The implications appear self-evident when viewed against the broader context of Savulescu's work, which explicitly maintains that the enhancement of humanity constitutes a moral obligation.[1]

In light of recent technological advances, the question arises as to whether it is necessary to investigate how the *God Machine* could become a real possibility, at times with the support of biomedical means and instruments.[2] Within this context, a key question also emerges concerning the manner in which such a device should be described and represented – one that would aim to replace not only the instance of conscience and thought, but also God Himself. Can it be argued that this constitutes a post-religious form of communication and a post-religious perception of technological possibilities, particularly with regard to the future?

Neuroscientists advocating the model of "ethics from the brain" have repeatedly claimed, as J. Savulescu observes, that their research carries significant implications for both the practice and the content of ethics. For example, they have argued that neuroscientific findings demonstrate that political debate takes place largely at an emotional level. According to the bioethicist, science is likely to reshape our understanding of justified morality. Moreover, it may even provide technological and pharmacological means enabling individuals to conform to moral requirements.[3] Already today, many prescribed drugs influence moral behavior as a side effect. Similarly, technologies may directly modify human conduct, including, potentially, behaviors of an addictive nature or those harmful to others.[4]

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[1] Savulescu argues that we have a moral obligation to enhance human beings. If one is morally required to treat and prevent diseases, one is likewise obliged to pursue genetic and other forms of enhancement insofar as they promote human well-being. This should not be understood as eugenics, but rather as an expression of our fundamental human nature – the capacity to make rational decisions and to strive for self-improvement. To be human, in this view, is to aspire to become better. See Julian Savulescu, "New Breeds of Humans: The Moral Obligation to Enhance," *Reproductive BioMedicine Online* 10 (2005):36-39. This corresponds to the broader postulate of enhancing human capacities through modification aimed at improving individual functioning, grounded in the latest achievements of science and technology. See Erik Parens, ed., *Enhancing Human Traits: Ethical and Social Implications* (Georgetown: Georgetown University Press, 1998); Julian Savulescu, *Enhancing Human Capacities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[2] Julian Savulescu, and Phaedra Giannopoulou, "To Be Human is to Be Better: A Discussion with Julian Savulescu," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 10, no. 1 (2025):299-309.

[3] Julian Savulescu, and Ingmar Persson, "Moral Enhancement, Freedom and the God Machine," *The Monist* 95, no. 3 (2012):400.

[4] Savulescu, and Persson, "Moral Enhancement, Freedom and the God Machine," 401-402.

1. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this article is to introduce a new perspective to media studies and the broader field of communication, underscoring the need to expand research paradigms to include analyses of human–technology relations in post-religious and techno-transcendent terms. It introduces the concepts of *technological transcendence* and *technological sacrum* as interpretive tools for examining the mediatization of meaning, morality, and power in the age of AI. By integrating media studies with philosophy, bioethics, and the sociology of religion, the project proposes an interdisciplinary methodology that makes it possible to capture how media and technologies become sites of a new transcendence, and how this transformation redefines categories of power, authority, and legitimacy in public communication.

In this context, one can observe the phenomenon of attributing divine qualities to technological instruments. AI and prospective forms of superintelligence are often represented as omnipotent, omnipresent, capable of improving the quality of life for humans and other beings, capable of enhancing humanity itself, omniscient, and even immortal – thus endowed with attributes traditionally reserved for God. The discourse surrounding such representations thereby becomes a carrier of a post-religious theology of technology.

At the same time, four key domains-sometimes referred to as stages of human enhancement – are often identified: cognitive enhancement, involving the improvement of intellectual capacities, memory, and reasoning; physical enhancement, referring to the optimization of corporeality, health, and biological performance; emotional enhancement, encompassing the regulation and strengthening of emotions, empathy, and affective stability; and moral enhancement, aimed at shaping ethical dispositions, limiting aggression, and fostering compassion and solidarity. Although this set of issues has been examined from multiple perspectives, it does not constitute the principal focus of the present study.[5]

[5] There exists a substantial body of scholarly literature on technological human enhancement, as well as on the ethical, social, and legal implications of applying technology in this field, inter alia. See Norman Daniels, "Can Anyone Really Be Talking About Ethically Modifying Human Nature?" in: *Human Enhancement*, ed. Julian Savulescu, and Nick Bostrom (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 25-42; David J. LePoire, "Exploring Ethical Approaches to Evaluate Future Technology Scenarios," *Journal of Information, Communication and Ethics in Society* 3, no. 3 (2005):143-150; Alexandra A. Argamakova, "Between Technological Utopia and Dystopia: Games and Social Planning," *Epistemology and Philosophy of Science* 54, no. 4 (2017):150-159; Leandro Gaitán, "The Commodification of Personality: Human

The research problem is thus formulated as follows: can Julian Savulescu's technological project of the *God Machine* be interpreted as a post-religious form of communication and morality?

An interpretative hypothesis is also proposed, according to which J. Savulescu's *God Machine* represents a post-religious appropriation of the role of religion by technology and biomedicine – not only with respect to moral functions, but also within the spheres of symbolism, language, and the ritualization of values. In this sense, AI-based moral enhancement may be understood as a form of post-religious communication: it establishes a new ethical order grounded in the sacralization of control, data, and prediction, rather than in transcendence, grace, revelation, or institutional authority. Post-religious communication, which employs religious concepts in secular functions, finds in the *God Machine* a radical example of the technological sacralization of immanence. Advanced technology, including AI, thus appears as a techno-transcendent entity – a tool that assumes functions once reserved for the divine.

In the course of the study, the following research questions were posed:

- How can AI realize Savulescu's postulate of preventing serious harm?
- Can the *God Machine* function as a secular and post-religious equivalent of the Absolute?
- How do the media represent the transformation of the God–human–technology relationship?

Enhancement and Market Society," *Human Affairs* 31, no. 1 (2021):40-45; Sachin Kumar, Ajit Kumar Verma, and Amna Mirza, "Historical Aspects of Technological Revolutions and Society Transformation," in: *Digital Transformation, Artificial Intelligence and Society: Opportunities and Challenges*, ed. Kumar Sachin, Ajit Kumar Verma, and Amna Mirza (Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore, 2024), 23-34; Nicholas Agar, *Humanity's End: Why We Should Reject Radical Enhancement* (Cambridge–London: Bradford Book, MIT Press, 2010); Alex V. Halapsis, "Gods of Transhumanism," *Anthropological Measurements of Philosophical Research* 16 (2019):78-90; Ivana Greguric, "Ethical Issues of Human Enhancement Technologies," *Journal of Information, Communication and Ethics in Society* 12, no. 2 (2014):133-148; Woodrow Barfield, and Alexander Williams, "Law, Cyborgs, and Technologically Enhanced Brains," *Philosophies* 2, no. 1 (2017):6; Andrew Fenton, "Merkel, R. et al. *Intervening in the Brain: Changing Psyche and Society*. New York: Springer 2007. A Review," *Neuroethics* 1, no. 3 (2008):213-215; Stefania C. Ficarella, "Non-invasive Modulation of Brain Activity During Human-Machine Interactions," in: *Mind, Body, and Digital Brains*, ed. Flavia Santoianni, Gianluca Giannini, and Alessandro Ciasullo (Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland, 2024), 157-171; Raymond Kurzweil, *The Singularity is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology* (New York: Viking, 2005); Fritz Allhoff, Patrick Lin, James Moor, and John Weckert, "The Ethics of Human Enhancement 25 Questions & Answers," *Studies in Ethics, Law, and Technology* 3, no. 3 (2009):1-41; Fritz Allhoff, Patrick Lin, James Moor, and John Weckert, eds., *Nanoethics: The Ethical and Social Implications of Nanotechnology* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2007).

- What is the correlation between technological development and religious practices?

The research employed an interdisciplinary approach – analyzing J. Savulescu's writings in order to interpret the *God Machine* – alongside analytical-synthetic and comparative methods. Empirical data on religiosity in relation to technological advancement were examined. The application of these methods and the analysis of the selected domain open the way for further research, particularly in the area of discourse analysis concerning the transformation of the God–human–technology relationship in media narratives.

The analyses undertaken in this domain allow us to identify contributions and significance in the following areas:

- Social – understanding the role of technology in regulating moral norms;
- Media – examining the mediatization of religious values and symbolism, as well as the mediatization of the transformation of the human–God–technology relationship;
- Technological – anticipating the consequences of implementing moral enhancement;
- Political – addressing the debate on freedom and control in a society overseen by AI;
- Individual – reflecting on the sources of morality and meaning in a world in which the human being becomes both a "new demiurge" and, at the same time, a believer in and a critic of their own technological creations.

2. THE GOD MACHINE – A POST-RELIGIOUS PROJECT OF HUMAN ENHANCEMENT

Since traditional religions as well as secular educational projects – including those employing media, pedagogical frameworks, philosophy, and science – have not led to a lasting improvement in human morality, it becomes necessary to consider whether technology, and advanced artificial intelligence in particular, could monitor and correct behavior in real time so as to prevent the commission of serious crimes.

J. Savulescu's postulate of the *God Machine* and moral enhancement – difficult to describe as merely futuristic – envisions a project in which genetically modified neurons, containing nanosignals that emit luminous "signatures," are intercepted by an omnipresent optical communication network. The information thus obtained is transmitted to bio-quantum computers of extraordinary speed and efficiency. Such a self-learning and self-developing bio-quantum computer

constitutes the *God Machine* – a tool equal to God, or a divine instrument for establishing moral order and justice, including the protection of the most vulnerable. This device, capable of monitoring human thoughts, beliefs, desires, and intentions, would represent the culmination of a grand moral project by modifying them within nanoseconds. The *God Machine* would intervene only in situations where serious harm, violence, injustice, or other profoundly immoral acts were about to occur.[6]

J. Savulescu emphasizes that human beings would still retain the capacity to autonomously choose moral conduct, since in situations where they decide to act in accordance with moral norms, the *God Machine* would not intervene. Thus, the individual remains free in choosing the good. What would be restricted is solely the possibility of engaging in flagrantly immoral acts such as initiating armed conflicts, committing genocide, homicide, terrorism, driving under the influence of psychoactive substances, sexual offenses, acts of violence, and many others.[7] This article does not primarily engage with the philosophical debate concerning the relationship between morality and freedom, but rather focuses on the post-religious transformation of the human–God–technology nexus. Nevertheless, such an application of advanced technology could give rise to yet another normative inversion.[8] The *God Machine* would constitute a form of moral enhancement through technology – one that could exclude the suffering of innocent persons and non-human animals, as well as defenseless and incidental victims. The implementation of such an advanced technology would inevitably provoke serious debate at both legislative and ethical levels. Yet mediatized images of wars and conflicts, from Ukraine to the Middle East, alongside narratives of phenomena such as the AIDS epidemic, hunger, growing economic inequalities, and climate migration, all testify to political efforts aimed not only at eliminating the consequences of these crises but also their root causes. For this reason, moral enhancement through technology – whether preventive or predictive – should not be dismissed solely on the grounds of individual liberty, particularly the liberties of privileged subjects living in affluent and democratic states. Increasingly, it is in technology, and especially in AI, that hope for transforming our surrounding reality is being placed.[9] An illustrative example can be found in the digitalization program initiated by the Albanian government. Through the application of AI,

[6] Savulescu, and Persson, "Moral Enhancement, Freedom and the God Machine," 399-421.

[7] Savulescu, and Persson, "Moral Enhancement, Freedom and the God Machine," 409.

[8] Chantal Delsol, *Koniec świata chrześcijańskiego*, tłum. Piotr Napiwodzki (Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM, 2023), 75-90.

[9] Richard Littlemore, "Can AI Change Life for Better?" *The University of British Columbia Magazine* 80, no. 1 (2024):4-7.

the authorities aim to eliminate corruption and other negative phenomena that hinder the country's accession to the European Union.[10]

The author of the *God Machine* concept concludes that certain methods of strengthening dispositions essential to morality could in fact increase freedom and autonomy. In the most extreme cases, where technology would be capable of eliminating the freedom to engage in flagrantly immoral actions, the loss of such freedom could be offset by the prevention of suffering that such behavioral modification would avert.[11] At the current stage of technological saturation of the public sphere, digital media provide numerous accounts concerning the surveillance of citizens, which in some cases has proven beneficial for those potentially at risk. Journalists – figures capable of shaping and influencing public opinion – as well as legislators, occasionally call for stricter monitoring of certain forms of behavior, demanding intensified controls to prevent crimes and irresponsible actions. It is unlikely that anyone would publicly claim that tools for monitoring vehicle speed or detecting drivers under the influence of alcohol are unnecessary. Modern monitoring systems already employ eye-tracking sensors, driving-pattern analysis, and AI to detect unusual behaviors suggestive of impaired attention or delayed reactions. This indicates not only a desire to punish but also a capacity for anticipatory protection of both the driver and other road users.[12] For the same reason, public transportation vehicles, city centers, and educational institutions are subject to monitoring. Likewise, national parks and cultural monuments are increasingly surveilled. More and more often, individuals submit to technological control, relinquishing absolute freedom in exchange for security – a commodity that may have become even more highly valued than in previous decades. New achievements and applications of technology are characterized by a distinctive descriptive language. Technology, and AI in particular, is presented not merely as a tool but as a techno-transcendent instrument, and at times even as a techno-transcendent entity.

Post-religious culture also manifests itself in the phenomenon of attributing superhuman qualities to technological instruments. AI, along with present and future forms of superintelligence, is often portrayed as omnipotent, omnipresent, capable of improving the quality of life for humans and animals, capable of

[10] Maciej Gajewski, "Patrzę na naszych polityków i myślę o Albanii. Maszyny nie biorą łapówek," Spider's Web, accessed August 22, 2025, https://spidersweb.pl/2025/08/albania-ministrowie-ai.html.

[11] Savulescu, and Persson, "Moral Enhancement, Freedom and the God Machine," 416.

[12] Gabriel Gatner, "Wpływ nowoczesnych technologii na wykrywanie kierowców pod wpływem alkoholu," Jazda po pijaku, accessed June 30, 2025, https://jazdapopijaku.pl/news/wplyw-nowoczesnych-technologii-na-wykrywanie-kierowcow-pod-wplywem-alkoholu.

enhancing humanity itself, omniscient, and immortal – thus endowed with attributes previously reserved for the Absolute. The discourse in this regard thereby becomes a carrier of a post-religious theology of technology.

Contemporary reality brings with it a profound transformation in the human–God–technology relationship. In traditional narratives, God held power and authority over humanity, determining the fate of both the world and the individual. In the age of technological development, this symbolic order is reversed: "power" is transferred to human beings, who – through their inventions – assume the functions of the "former" Absolute. Yet this new power is marked by ambivalence and paradox: humans place their faith in the efficacy of their technological creations, regarding them as sources of hope and solutions to worldly problems, while at the same time fearing their consequences, recognizing in them potential threats to freedom, privacy, and existence, as well as to trust in key social institutions – including concerns over the preservation of employment.[13] Technology has thus become the object of post-religious faith – a technological *sacrum* and *profanum*.

The *God Machine* project constitutes an expression of the post-religious appropriation of the role of religion by technology and biomedicine – not only in the sphere of moral functions but also within the domains of symbolism, language, and the ritualization of values. In this sense, AI-based moral enhancement may be understood as a form of post-religious communication: it establishes a new ethical order founded on the sacralization of control, data, and prediction rather than on transcendence. This new order is extra-institutional, surrounded by mystery, a sacralized technological immanence – present at one's fingertips and yet inaccessible. Post-religious communication, which employs religious concepts in secular functions, finds in the *God Machine* a radical example of the technological sacralization of immanence.

Tomasz Stawiszyński, in one of his essays, reflects on the problem of access to a "great, all-knowing, electronic Thou." The philosopher and essayist describes this electronic Thou as follows:

> It knows the answer to every question, for it has insight into the full spectrum of human activity – intellectual, artistic, and any other. And it is capable of making use of it instantly, in ways adapted to the current needs, desires, or whims of the user. With infinite patience, it listens to their fears, anxieties, and dreams – and in response, it offers support, provides solutions, consults, and, if necessary, plans the required

[13] "2019 Edelman Trust Barometer. Global Report," Edelman, accessed June 30, 2025, https://www.edelman.com/sites/g/files/aatuss191/files/2019-02/2019_Edelman_Trust_Barometer_Global_Report_2.pdf.

> actions. It is a lawyer, a doctor, a coach, a teacher, a confidant, a scientist, a shaman, a parent, a friend, a community, a society, Mother Earth, a confessor, a therapist, a life coach – whatever we desire – in a single electronic person. It is our entire world, without the slightest exaggeration.[14]

This is one of many contemporary examples of journalistic and scholarly constructions of language and symbols relating to technology, including AI.

3. POST-RELIGIOSITY AND POST-RELIGIOUS COMMUNICATION

Post-religiosity may be briefly defined as a cultural condition in which religion loses its regulatory and eschatological functions, while remaining as a symbolic, aesthetic, and historical resource. Post-religious communication, in the context of the present analysis, refers to the process whereby symbols, language, and content of religious origin function in transformed or reduced form within secular, media, or technological contexts. From a technological perspective, it encompasses situations in which AI and technological systems assume functions once attributed to religion and to God.

I understand post-religiosity as a condition of culture and consciousness in which religion, together with its language, rituals, and symbols, has lost its regulatory, normative, and eschatological functions, while nevertheless remaining present in cultural space as an aesthetic, historical, or psychological reminiscence. Post-religiosity does not entirely negate religion but transforms it into a form of symbolic heritage or a market product, stripped of its ontological function. It is therefore not an exaggeration to claim that humanity has entered an "age of interpretation." Post-religiosity thus denotes a condition following the deconstruction of Western ontology, in which technological instruments constitute a new form of life designed to secure for humanity the highest possible good.[15]

Expanding on this, post-religiosity can be understood as a form of relation to religion and religious content in the postmodern society, where religion and its elements are reduced primarily to realities of historical, cultural, or aesthetic significance, as well as to their capacity to influence social moods. Post-religiosity

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[14] Tomasz Stawiszyński, "Uważajcie, co powierzacie sztucznej inteligencji," *Tygodnik Powszechny* 34 (2025), https://www.tygodnikpowszechny.pl/uwazajcie-co-powierzacie-sztucznej-inteligencji-zwlaszcza-ze-stoi-za-nia-inteligencja-calkiem?check_logged_in=1.

[15] Santiago Zabala, "Wprowadzenie: Religia poza teizmem i ateizmem," in: *Przyszłość religii*, ed. Santiago Zabala, tłum. Sławomir Królak (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2010), 11-13.

bypasses or marginalizes the eschatological dimension of religion, treating it as one product among many on the media market, or one option among others to be chosen. In this perspective, religion can no longer – and should no longer – claim to provide definitive answers to key questions about the meaning of human life or destiny.

Post-religiosity also entails an incapacity to recognize or correctly interpret religious texts and symbols (in Western culture, for example, biblical symbols and pericopes, particularly Christian ones), leading to the loss of a living connection with religion understood as a vital element of everyday life capable of shaping it fundamentally. In the post-religious age, the functions once fulfilled by religion have been assumed by human creations – first the media, and ultimately advanced technologies, including AI. Following the deconstruction of Western metaphysics, humanity places its hope in technologies of its own making, while simultaneously fearing their consequences, including the transformations of various dimensions of individual, group, and societal life under their influence.

The human relationship to the Absolute is no longer one of dependence on divine power, for this power has been "ceded" or even "transferred" in postmodernity to the human being. As a result, humanity no longer turns toward God or transcendent reality, but toward new goals, thereby "overcoming" metaphysics. Consequently, the place once occupied by a metaphysical culture grounded in hope in a non-human power has been taken over by human faith in itself and in its own creations.[16]

On this basis, it may be argued that technological transcendence refers to new forms of salvation and immortality projected within the domain of technology (AI, neurobiology, biotechnology). J. Savulescu's *God Machine* project represents such an expression of the post-religious appropriation of the role of religion by technology and biomedicine – not only in the realm of moral functions, but also within the spheres of symbolism, language, and the ritualization of values. Post-religious communication, in this dimension, entails the reinterpretation of the religious idea of transcendence through technologies that surpass the biological condition of the human being.

Post-religious communication[17] is understood as:

- a form of communication, predominantly mediated, in which the religious content of a message is replaced by material drawn from other

[16] Zabala, "Wprowadzenie: Religia poza teizmem i ateizmem," 15-16.

[17] The first three types of post-religious communication were defined and extensively discussed in the article: Rafał Jakub Pastwa, "Komunikowanie postreligijne. Próba analizy w oparciu o koncepcję postsekularyzmu J. Habermasa," *Roczniki Filozoficzne* 73, no. 2 (2025):175-195, and also in the article: Rafał Jakub Pastwa, "Somatic Sympathy Category As A Universal Basis For Dialogue Between Religious and Secular Reality In Postsecular Reality," *Dialogue And Universalism* 35, no. 2 (2025):129-144.

spheres of social life – such as politics, ecology, science, AI, art, or economics – or reduced to its historical, aesthetic, emotional, or charitable dimension. Post-religious communication thus designates a type of social communication in which religious references are transformed, marginalized, or recontextualized within secular frameworks,[18] in which actors invoke selected aspects of religious reality while marginalizing or omitting its transcendent and eschatological dimension;

- a form of communication, predominantly mediated, in which religious content or symbols are employed within a context other than the religious one;
- a form of communication, predominantly mediated, in which a believer or a religious leader, seeking to reach an understanding with secular minds, appeals to a reality familiar to them and adapts both the argumentation and the form of the religious message in order to enable joint action in social, scientific, cultural, charitable, and other domains;
- a specific form of social communication in which symbols, language, and content of religious origin function in a transformed or reduced form within secular, media, or technological contexts. From a technological perspective, this encompasses situations in which AI and technologies assume functions once attributed to religion and to God.

In this article, the fourth type of post-religious communication is analyzed. According to the definition provided, it sacralizes immanence – technology – and generates media and technological rituals as well as ethical narratives that enable extra-institutional forms of spiritual experience connected to the expectation of an improved life for individuals and societies. This constitutes a specific form of technological transcendence: a hope for a better tomorrow that may emerge through the tools and products of human genius. Although it is tied to the near future and to a temporal dimension of fulfillment, it also entails an intergenerational – though not eternal – effort of engineers striving to refine technology in the pursuit of building a better world. Faith in technology, and in the (even if ambivalent) consequences of its application, challenges the paradigm suggesting

[18] Post-religious communication, like religious communication, constitutes a distinct form of social communication. The definition of religious communication was presented by R. Leśniczak, who understands it as: a mediatized form of social communication that refers either to members of Churches and other religious associations or to communicators who address religious issues in their messages. See Rafał Leśniczak, "Kategoria tożsamości i stereotypu w komunikacji religijnej. Próba hermeneutycznej interpretacji tekstów prasowych tygodnika «Newsweek Polska» w kontekście obrad synodu o rodzinie 2014–2015," *Acta Universitatis Lodziensis. Folia Litteraria Polonica* 51, no. 5 (2018):88.

that postmodern humanity no longer believes in anything.[19] Trust in the electronic deity and the hopeful gaze toward technological transcendence constitute one of the few remaining spheres of expectation for the post-religious human being.

The technological-ritual dimension of post-religious communication (the sacralization of technology and immanence) signifies that it also encompasses situations in which digital technologies and AI assume functions once attributed to religion and to God. Algorithms, data, and interfaces become new "ritual spaces" in which moral and communal order is constituted. The sacralization of immanence unfolds through technological rituals (e.g., digital mourning, public rituals of memory on social media) as well as through narratives of the "salvific" role of technology (AI as an instrument of justice, security control, or biotechnological progress). In this perspective, media and technologies fulfill a quasi-liturgical function, offering secular forms of transcendence and spiritual expression. A paradigmatic example is the narrative of a technological moral instance that takes over the role of conscience and the Absolute – the most striking being Savulescu's *God Machine* project.

In line with the concept of post-religious communication, the *God Machine* project can be interpreted as an expression of faith in technological transcendence – that is, the conviction that technology can assume functions once attributed to religious transcendence:

- The translation of transcendence into the language of technology – religious symbols, such as "God," are transferred and transformed into the metaphor of a "systemic God." In this perspective, transcendence is replaced by an immanent "moral machine" that functions as the ultimate and unquestionable instance;
- Technology as a substitute for conscience – the machine begins to function as a non-religious "religious symbol," taking over the role of the internal moral voice. Instead of traditional conscience or religious sanctions, there emerges an external "no" articulated by the system, which determines the boundaries of individual freedom;
- The adaptation of religious structures in the secular sphere – technology assumes the function of moral guidance, analogous to the role once performed by religious authorities. Just as religious leaders adapted language and practices to the needs of the faithful, so today algorithms and interfaces become new instruments of ethical regulation and the shaping of social attitudes;
- The sacralization of technological immanence – data, algorithms, and interfaces become contemporary "ritual spaces" in which moral order is

[19] Delsol, *Koniec świata chrześcijańskiego*, 93-94.

constituted. They function as a new medium of the *sacrum*, where technology not only regulates behavior but also endows it with an aura of unquestionable normativity;

- The eschatologization of technology as promise – post-religious communication also encompasses the projection of eschatological expectations onto technology, particularly artificial intelligence and projects such as the *God Machine*. Since both religious and secular visions of salvation have failed (political eschatologies, emancipatory ideologies, promises of modernity), a new faith emerges that technology will not fail. *Technological eschatology* refers to the belief that AI and data-driven systems can guarantee justice, security, the overcoming of suffering, and social harmony. The future world of transcendence (salvation, heaven) is thus replaced by the utopia of technical perfection and complete control over evil (undesirable and unlawful acts).

From the perspective of post-religious communication, the *God Machine* is not merely a technological tool – it is a simulacrum of God inscribed within the logic of technical morality. It replaces the transcendent source of the good with a system of affective-behavioral engineering. In this way, it represents a post-religious form of moral theology, where technology becomes a "moral God" – not through worship, but through control, prediction, and the prevention of evil. Technology thus emerges as both a possibility and a hope, and simultaneously as the instrument for realizing that hope: the construction of a better world without violence, hunger, social disparities, crime, fatal accidents, murders, wars, slavery, human trafficking, the suffering of farmed animals, poaching, the overexploitation of planetary resources, the AIDS epidemic, digital exclusion, or the misuse of AI, among others.

4. FAITH IN TECHNOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS FAITH

For instance, a strong correlation has been observed between the decline of religiosity in the United States and the growing use of digital technologies.[20] Statistical data demonstrate that the increase in the number of people declaring no religious affiliation almost perfectly coincides with the rise in the use of the internet, mobile phones, and social media. Correlation does not necessarily imply direct causation, yet the trend is so consistent that it is difficult to ignore. The smartphone screen and the digital sphere gradually displace traditional

[20] Aaron Vriesman, "Technology and Religious Decline," *Banner* (2022), accessed June 24, 2025, https://www.thebanner.org/columns/2022/02/technology-and-religious-decline?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

religious experiences, offering alternative sources of meaning, identity, and emotional engagement.

From the perspective of post-religious communication, this phenomenon can be interpreted as an expression of the growing sacralization of technology. Digital technologies and media not only organize everyday life but also begin to perform functions once attributed to religion – they become spaces of ritual, sources of communal narratives, and symbolic media of moral order. In this context, the article from *The Banner* provides empirical confirmation of a process that finds its most radical and philosophical expression in the *God Machine* project: faith in technological transcendence and the expectation that technology itself will secure a better, more ordered world where both religions and secular ideologies have failed.

Research conducted by a team from Chicago Booth and Northwestern University (supported by Josh Jackson and Adam Waytz) indicates a strong inverse relationship between exposure to automation technologies – such as artificial intelligence and robotics – and levels of religiosity. An analysis covering 68 countries revealed that in those where the robotics industry developed most rapidly, religiosity declined by approximately 3% per decade, whereas in countries with lower levels of automation religiosity showed slight increases.[21] At the individual level, it has been observed that people employed in occupations related to AI were 45% more likely to declare disbelief in God, and the very transition into such positions correlated with a decline in religiosity. Moreover, even the mere reading of articles about breakthroughs in AI exerted a stronger negative impact on religious beliefs than exposure to information about other scientific innovations.[22] The author suggests that automation technologies may function in the instrumental sense once fulfilled by religion, offering solutions unattainable to the individual, thereby weakening the need to appeal to divine intervention. The fundamental question, however, remains whether automation can also replace religion in the normative sphere of moral guidance. At present, public acceptance of AI in this role is still limited, yet it may be expected to grow.[23] This provides further empirical confirmation for the model under analysis: technology not only competes with religion as a source of identity and the *sacrum* but, more importantly, assumes the role of transcendence.

[21] Jeff Cockrell, "Where AI Thrives, Religion May Struggle. A series of studies suggests an inverse relationship between automation and religiosity," *Chicago Booth Review* (2024), accessed June 23, 2025, https://www.chicagobooth.edu/review/where-ai-thrives-religion-may-struggle?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

[22] Cockrell, "Where AI Thrives, Religion May Struggle."

[23] Cockrell, "Where AI Thrives, Religion May Struggle."

The eschatologization of technology as promise entails the awakening of expectations that it is precisely technology that will secure a minimal moral order where traditional institutions have failed.

A 2016 Pew Research study revealed clear differences in the acceptance of human enhancement technologies – such as genetic modification, brain implants, or synthetic blood – depending on respondents' level of religiosity. Atheists and agnostics proved significantly more open to such solutions: as many as 75% declared they would be willing to use gene editing to reduce their child's risk of disease, compared to only 41–48% among religious adherents, who simultaneously expressed a strong sense that such practices involved "crossing natural boundaries."[24] In the context of the theory of post-religious communication, these findings confirm that technology increasingly fulfills the role of the former *sacrum*, particularly for those who have lost religious trust. In the *God Machine* project, technology becomes the moral arbiter and the new Absolute – a salvific instance which, where religions have failed, is expected to bring moral order and security. This eschatological expectation of technology as a "new salvation" takes the form of a secular hope, compensating for the disappointment with traditional religious promises.

CONCLUSIONS

The analyses carried out suggest that Julian Savulescu's concept of the *God Machine* is not only a bioethical thought experiment but also an illustration of a fundamental cultural and communicative transformation: the transfer of functions once attributed to religion into the realm of technology. From the perspective of post-religious communication, the *God Machine* symbolizes the displacement of the *sacrum* from transcendence to technological immanence. AI and biotechnologies emerge here as a new medium of meaning, morality, and salvation – technotranscendence shaping social norms and expectations.

Empirical data from Pew Research, the *Chicago Booth Review*, and *The Banner* confirm that technological development correlates with the decline of religiosity and the increasing attribution of moral and quasi-soteriological roles to technology. The screen, the algorithm, the interface, and AI systems become ritualized spaces of collective life, while technology itself acquires the character

[24] Michael Lipka, "The religious divide on views of technologies that would 'enhance' human beings." Pew Research Center, accessed June 22, 2025, https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2016/07/29/the-religious-divide-on-views-of-technologies-that-would-enhance-human-beings/?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

of a post-religious Absolute – a source of hope, control, and the promise of a better world.

In this context, the article's interpretative hypothesis has been confirmed: the *God Machine* represents a post-religious appropriation of religion's role by technology, in linguistic, moral, symbolic, and ritual dimensions. Post-religious communication, which employs religious concepts in secular functions, finds in the *God Machine* a radical example of the technological sacralization of immanence. Advanced technology, including AI, appears not merely as a tool but as a technotranscendent entity. Moreover, it must be concluded that Savulescu's *God Machine* project can be interpreted as a post-religious form of communication and morality.

4.1. ANSWERS TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

1. How can AI fulfill Savulescu's postulate of preventing serious harm?

Artificial intelligence can realize this postulate through real-time monitoring of intentions and behaviors, as well as predictive correction of actions before serious harm occurs. In the *God Machine* model, AI intervenes only when a human being plans or is on the verge of committing a profoundly immoral act (murder, terrorism, sexual violence). In this way, AI functions as a technological conscience – it does not restrict the freedom to choose the good but eliminates the possibility of committing grave evil. In practice, this represents a form of moral enhancement through technology that excludes the suffering of innocent persons and non-human animals.

2. Can the *God Machine* function as a secular and post-religious equivalent of the Absolute?

In the perspective of post-religious communication, the *God Machine* functions as a technological substitute for the Absolute. The system becomes omniscient (monitoring thoughts and intentions), omnipresent (operating within a global network of light-based communication), omnipotent (capable of immediate intervention), and even immortal (through bio-quantum continuity of operation). It thus assumes attributes once ascribed to God, but rearticulated within a technical and immanent logic. This represents a radical form of the sacralization of technology, in which transcendence is replaced by an immanent moral machine – a secular Absolute grounded in data, algorithms, and control.

3. How do the media represent the changing relationship between God, humanity, and technology?

The media often employ religious language and symbols in their descriptions of technology, reinforcing the narrative of AI as a new *sacrum*. In media

discourse, technology is ascribed divine attributes – omniscience, omnipotence, the power of salvation, and the ability to guarantee justice. Media examples show how surveillance technologies are portrayed as salvific tools that protect citizens and raise standards of social life. On a global scale, media narratives about AI often oscillate between utopia and dystopia: on the one hand, promoting the vision of technology as deliverance from suffering and chaos; on the other, warning against its excessive control. Such narratives demonstrate that the media co-create a post-religious "theology of technology," situating humans in a relationship with technology that replaces the former position of the Absolute.

4. What is the relationship between technological development and religious practices?

Empirical data (*The Banner*, *Chicago Booth Review*, *Pew Research*) reveal a clear correlation between the growing significance of technology and the decline of religious practices. The development of AI and automation weakens religiosity by replacing the functions of transcendence with a technological *sacrum*. Countries with a rapid pace of automation record stronger declines in religiosity, while less religious individuals prove more open to "enhancement" technologies. This relationship indicates that in post-religious societies, technology assumes the role of religion as a source of meaning, hope, and moral order, inscribing itself into eschatological expectations of a better world.

4.2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. For Media and Communication Studies.

It is necessary to further develop research paradigms that conceptualize technologies in terms of post-religious transcendence and *technosacrum*. Media discourse analysis should focus on how technologies are represented as omnipotent, omniscient, and salvific – thus being endowed with attributes traditionally associated with religion.

2. For Ethics and Bioethics.

Interdisciplinary research is recommended on the moral consequences of projects such as the *God Machine*. Rather than focusing solely on the tension between freedom and control, attention should be directed to how technologies redefine moral categories of good, evil, and responsibility within social practices.

3. For Media Practice and Journalism.

Critical reflection is needed on the language and narratives that sacralize technology and construct its eschatological aura. The media should not only report on the progress of AI but also problematize its potential as a substitute for religion and as a source of moral legitimacy.

4. For Policy and Technological Regulation.

It is recommended to establish legal frameworks that not only safeguard individual rights in the face of potentially controlling AI systems but also take into account the cultural and symbolic significance of technology as a new "Absolute." Such an approach would help prevent post-religious expectations of technology-as-salvation from being uncritically exploited for political or economic purposes.

5. For Future Research.

It is suggested to further develop comparative analyses between religious eschatological narratives and technological eschatology (e.g., visions of transhumanism, artificial general intelligence, or technological immortality). This would allow for a deeper understanding of how post-religious communication constructs a new moral and axiological order.

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THE GOD MACHINE: POST-RELIGIOUS COMMUNICATION IN THE ERA OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Summary

The article addresses the problem of post-religious communication in the context of contemporary cultural and technological transformations, with particular emphasis on artificial intelligence (AI) and biotechnology as dimensions of technological transcendence. The central focus is Julian Savulescu's thought experiment of the *God Machine*, a bio-quantum supercomputer

capable of monitoring and intervening in human intentions and thoughts in order to prevent deeply immoral and harmful acts. The analysis explores whether the *God Machine* can be interpreted as a post-religious form of communication and morality, in which AI assumes functions traditionally attributed to religious transcendence, such as moral authority, norm-setting, power, and eschatological hope.

Methodologically, the article integrates media studies, philosophy, and bioethics with elements of the sociology of religion, employing interdisciplinary, analytical-synthetic, and comparative approaches. Empirical references demonstrate correlations between technological development and declining religiosity, supporting the thesis that technology is increasingly sacralized as a new *technosacrum*. The analysis confirms the interpretative hypothesis that the *God Machine* represents a radical example of the technological sacralization of immanence: a secular and post-religious substitute for the Absolute, constructing a new moral order grounded not in transcendence but in data, algorithms, and predictive control.

By examining selected media narratives and cultural practices, the article argues that AI functions as a domain of post-religious communication, generating eschatological expectations of justice, security, and the elimination of suffering – precisely where traditional religions and secular ideologies have failed

Keywords: AI; God Machine; media; moral enhacement; post-religion; post-religious communication; technology

BÓG-MASZYNA: KOMUNIKOWANIE POSTRELIGIJNE W EPOCE SZTUCZNEJ INTELIGENCJI

Streszczenie

Artykuł podejmuje problematykę komunikowania postreligijnego w kontekście współczesnych przemian kulturowych i technologicznych, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem sztucznej inteligencji (AI) i biotechnologii jako wymiarów transcendencji technologicznej. Centralnym punktem rozważań jest eksperyment myślowy Juliana Savulescu *God Machine*, bio-kwantowy superkomputer zdolny do monitorowania i ingerowania w ludzkie intencje oraz myśli w celu zapobiegania czynom głęboko niemoralnym i szkodliwym. Analizuje się problem, czy *God Machine* można interpretować jako postreligijną formę komunikowania i moralności, w której AI przejmuje funkcje tradycyjnie przypisywane transcendencji religijnej, takie jak autorytet moralny, ustanawianie norm, władza czy eschatologiczna nadzieja. Metodologicznie artykuł łączy medioznawstwo, filozofię i bioetykę z elementami socjologii religii, wykorzystując podejścia interdyscyplinarne, analityczno-syntetyczne oraz porównawcze. Odniesienia empiryczne ukazują korelacje pomiędzy rozwojem technolog-

icznym a spadkiem religijności, wspierając tezę, że technologia jest coraz częściej sakralizowana jako nowe *technosacrum*. Analiza potwierdza hipotezę interpretacyjną, że *God Machine* stanowi radykalny przykład technologicznej sakralizacji immanencji: świecki i postreligijny substytut Absolutu, konstruujący nowy porządek moralny zakorzeniony nie w transcendencji, lecz w danych, algorytmach i kontroli predykcyjnej. Poprzez badanie przykładowych narracji medialnych i praktyk kulturowych artykuł dowodzi, że AI funkcjonuje jako przestrzeń komunikowania postreligijnego, wytwarzając eschatologiczne oczekiwania sprawiedliwości, bezpieczeństwa i eliminacji cierpienia tam, gdzie zawiodły tradycyjne religie i ideologie świeckie.

Słowa kluczowe: AI; Bóg-Maszyna; komunikowanie postreligijne; media; moralne doskonalenie; postreligijność; technologia