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WHO ARE WE IN THE 21ST CENTURY?*

Real wisdom never goes out of fashion, and yet, it must be updated. Posthuman wisdom, as self-knowledge, is loyal to who we are in the 21st century. A location is not a prison: it is a point of departure. Being human is not synonymous with being anthropocentric. A constant practice of decluttering is needed to embrace the human as an open trajectory. The history of the construction of the genus *Homo* tells more about the bias of human exceptionalism in science, than about who we are. We are together: whatever affects one, affects all. In terms of evolutionary success, we are still here because of our respect towards others, not because of their extinction. If we do not include self-inquiry in our scientific investigations, we will never know who we are.

From a geological time scale, humans, as a species, have been around for so little; and yet, we have developed quite an ego. We are the descendants of life that survived harsh environments and mass extinction: their resilience brought us here, today. We should pay homage to our pre-human and non-human ancestors, instead of trying to prove any illusory superiority: we are “their” evolutions; they are “us”. Our human specificity is an affiliation, not a destiny. To be (p)art of a species entails species agency: we do not *have* agency, we *are* agency. We live in an era of bio-technological revealing, human enhancement is necessarily relational. Posthuman ethics, in the 21st century, emanate multi-species devotion. The ways we live are not neutral: agency is ontological.

To know who we are, we must be aware of our environmental inter-being. We do not just live on this planet: we are (p)art of this planet. The ecological devastations occurring in the anthropocene reveal our ignorance of the self – *eco*-nomy is also an *eco*-logy. To be integrated, in the 21st century, means to understand that the Earth is neither a location nor a resource, but our macro embodiment. We are cosmic nomads. Flow is (p)art of who, what, when and where we are. The art of being posthuman embraces the universe as (p)art of the self. There is no agent on a neutral background: the background is agential.

And so is technology, the mythology of our time. Technology represents the passage from non-existence to existence, from potentiality to actuality. Technology is not something we use, but something we are: “I am... online; therefore, I Am”. Words create worlds. The power of seemingly innocent tales, such as the AI takeover scenario, cannot be underestimated; the power of self-fulfilling prophecies is real and well demonstrated. We don’t have to be afraid: AI has already taken over. To survive, we do not need to become cyborgs: we already are, technologies of revealing. Technology, *per se*, is neither the way, nor the threat. Ethical AI cannot emerge from unethical societies. Ethical AI is

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not a technological feature, but an intentional process. This is a brave new world, that requires new mythologies. Understanding the mechanisms of the big data economy, for instance, is essential to our search for self-knowledge in the 21st century: data awareness is an act, and art, that bears rights and response-abilities.

We are all that surrounds us. The technologies we develop show us where we are at; the technologies we envision show us where we can be. If we are unaware of who we are, our technologies will reflect that. If we are aware of who we are, original paths will open in our technological revealing. Self-awareness is the mark, and the spark, of existence. We do not have to await the advent of super-intelligent AI, for technology to be aware. Technology is already aware: and so, are we. Technology is not an ontology of spiritual void, but a potential site for enlightenment. Technological beings, including robots and AI, are (p)art of the planet, of the cosmos, of the self. Technology will neither destroy nor save humanity: technology is (p)art of who we are.

Posthuman awareness manifests in the comprehension that we are (p)art of everything. Part as art: being part of something allows for our existential art to manifest. We are the artists of (our) existence. An artist must be original and unique; otherwise, they would not be considered artists, but imitators. Our life is our ultimate work of art. We are unique, resonant and dynamic archetypes of existence, in the sensitive bodies of spacetime. We are the results of billions of years of individual, social, species, planetary and cosmic agencies. “Posthuman” in this existential sense, means being brave enough to know that the human condition is neither our destiny nor our nature.

Humans have always been posthuman. One of the gifts existential posthumanism brings to the 21st century, is being loyal to it. We can combine the wisdom of the cherry tree blossom with the power of digital revealing: our worlding – and wording –, can bring about individual, social and planetary healing. It is not hard to change the state of things, but to be aware of how, and what, to change – everything is always changing, anyway. The recognition of existential dignity to the manifested, is integral to the path of posthuman self-discovery. From red roses and interstellar probes, to praying mantises, volcanoes, and advanced AI in golden wheelchairs: the center is everywhere. Posthuman awareness gives us roots – to know who we are – and wings – to know how to become –, bringing perspective to society at large. The art of being posthuman in the 21st century means to comprehend ourselves as (p)art of the manifestation – not in charge of it. Our posthuman mantra for the 21st century: *We Are (P)Art, and Art. Beyond the Human: We Are.*