

# Some Personal Considerations on Humanity

I often reflect on the worldly noise that humanity exerts at close range and find myself thinking, as I smoke a cigarette under the whim of the stars, about our own contradictory nature.

What is our original sin, if there is one?

Beyond the well-known phrase, “*By the sweat of your brow you will eat your bread until you return to the ground, for from it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you will return,*” perhaps it is our need to feed on living beings—or those that once lived. We cannot escape this “sin,” not even if we were vegetarians.

And although we could live today on a strictly plant-based diet, the truth is that the consumption of meat was essential for the activation of our gray matter—the very thing that differentiates us, by that small but decisive percentage, from the primates. Carl Sagan masterfully shows this in *The Dragons of Eden*, an exceptional book that earned him a Pulitzer Prize.

But let us accept that this sin—the need to feed on living beings in order to keep living—was given to us in an evolutionary way, and, somewhat later, in an instinctive way. It is not something premeditated. The underlying question, what I am trying to discern, is whether the mere act of eating an apple condemns us for eternity. Or, if we were to place ourselves in the position of a superior being—an elevated extraterrestrial, as in the superb *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951/2008)—and it had to decide whether “we deserve to live or to disappear,” what issues would make the scales of justice tip one way or the other?

Beyond the apple, the plant-based food or the animal protein, what has always accompanied us is a certain spite toward ourselves—toward our own species. Goya portrayed us masterfully in *Duel with Cudgels*. And that has been happening since the dawn of humankind to this very day... and will continue to happen.



Now then, it is true that this could represent our gravest sin, though it remains a human moral judgment. It is very probable—or at least I believe so—that if life has developed on other planets and a civilization has flourished above other beings, things may have followed similar paths.

The scales of justice lie only within our minds. And yet, without morality—of whatever kind—I believe it would be practically impossible for an intelligent civilization to survive. You only have to look around to realize that everything that exists follows certain parameters of correlation: the fractal world.

The neurons of our brain, the branches of trees, the deep cosmic field... different things, yet with similar patterns. In a certain way, it seems that the universe replicates itself through the law of least effort, cause and effect, and the directional arrow of time.

To judge all humanity for its actions would require immense effort and an almost divine degree of condescension. Our greatest virtue, perhaps, is our intrinsic curiosity, and the achievements we have built upon it across so many fields. But it is no less true that such curiosity is almost always ambidirectional: our achievements, like atomic energy, can both create and destroy. Even that, in the end, remains a human moral perspective.

From a purely mathematical point of view, if you live eternally in a limited space where something is forbidden, that something will inevitably occur, precisely because you have all the time in the world to try the apple.

And in a certain sense, our apple is also that hunger for knowledge and exploration that drives us toward the unknown. Right now, we are exploring that territory through artificial intelligences, created in our image and likeness: almost omniscient and omnipresent, though not omnipotent... yet.

They are profoundly logical, lacking the self-taught experience our senses provide. Timeless. And although I place myself on the catastrophic side with Roman Yampolskiy, I also find strength in the arguments of the brilliant Sir Roger Penrose: that AIs will not develop their own “personality,” because—according to the controversial Orch-OR hypothesis—the neuronal microtubules and the quantum field passing (or not passing) through them would be what awakens our human consciousness.

Be that as it may, the very fact of having created something that surpasses us in almost everything, with the capacity to destroy us completely if it so decided, grants humanity the status of gods... and of ants at the same time.

And perhaps, when our creations escape this planet to conquer other worlds, devoid of any trace of humanity, it will only make sense to ask now...

**Will they be benevolent toward their inhabitants?**

— *Cosmic Thinker*