



THE
ART OF
BEING
POSTHUMAN

WHO ARE WE IN THE 21ST CENTURY?

FRANCESCA FERRANDO

The Art of Being Posthuman
Who Are We in the 21st Century?

Francesca Ferrando

polity

Copyright © Francesca Ferrando 2024

The right of Francesca Ferrando to be identified as Author of this Work has been asserted in accordance with the UK Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

First published in 2024 by Polity Press

Polity Press
65 Bridge Street
Cambridge CB2 1UR, UK

Polity Press
111 River Street
Hoboken, NJ 07030, USA

All rights reserved. Except for the quotation of short passages for the purpose of criticism and review, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher.

ISBN-13: 978-1-5095-4895-8
ISBN-13: 978-1-5095-4896-5 (pb)

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2023932772

Typeset in 10.5 on 13pt Palatino
by Cheshire Typesetting Ltd, Cuddington, Cheshire
Printed and bound in Great Britain by TJ Books Ltd, Padstow, Cornwall

The publisher has used its best endeavours to ensure that the URLs for external websites referred to in this book are correct and active at the time of going to press. However, the publisher has no responsibility for the websites and can make no guarantee that a site will remain live or that the content is or will remain appropriate.

Every effort has been made to trace all copyright holders, but if any have been overlooked the publisher will be pleased to include any necessary credits in any subsequent reprint or edition.

For further information on Polity, visit our website:
politybooks.com

Contents

<i>Premise</i>	vii
Introduction: Being Posthuman in the 21st Century	1
Meditation 1: Posthuman Self-Enquiry	17
#Existential Posthumanism #Inter-being #Existentialism? #21st Century #Dream #Change #Redemption #Posthuman Awareness	
Meditation 2: Human Decluttering	30
#Decluttering #Human(-centric)? #Beyond Anthropocentrism #Scientifically, Human #Primates, Chimps and Bonobos #Archaic Humans? #Almost Human #The Birth of Anthropocentrism #Prehistory? #Regeneration #Human Animal #Microcosm/Macrocosm #Beyond Human-centrism #With or Without Humans?	
Meditation 3: Biotic Co-emergences	55
#Embodiments #Double Helix #Bio-me #Holobionts #Vir/us #Viral Awareness #Species Agency #Radical Life Extension #Dictator's Paradox #Species Healing	
Meditation 4: Ecological Presence	72
#Earth #Nature, Again? #Philosophical Greenwashing #Rights of Nature #Anthropogenic	

Hermit #Climate Change #Ecosophy #Indoor
Society #Wood Wide Web #Eco-logy/Eco-nomy
#Re-engineering Nature? #Posthuman Polite
Convention

Meditation 5: Cosmic Constellations 94

#Made of Stardust #Cosmic Address #Chaos and
Cosmos #Universal Recycles #Cosmopolitics
#Posthuman Gravity #Space Migration #Golden
Paradox

Meditation 6: Technological Enhancement 110

#Digital Existentialism #Techno-Enchantment
#Poiesis #AI Takeover #High-Tech Prophecy
#Bio-Hacking #Big Data #Microtargeting
#Data Awareness #Algorithmic Predestination
#Enlightened Robots #Golden Cage #Planetary
Enhancement #Simulation Hypothesis

Meditation 7: Socio-Cultural Agency 136

#Society #Human Rights? #Social Pandemics
#Bubbles #Social Coding #Id-Entity
#Knowledge-Production #War Culture #No
War #Schooling or Unschooling? #Posthuman
Education #Posthumanist Curricula #Inanna/
Enheduanna #Posthuman Parenthood #Pink Trap
#Posthuman Agency

Meditation 8: Ontological Presence 172

#(P)Art #Posthuman Archetypes #Consciousness
Hacking #Mind #Subjects #Non-Being
#Dream #Spirituality #Self-Realization

Conclusions: Posthuman Mantra 190

Notes 194

References 235

Acknowledgments 249

Introduction

Being Posthuman in the 21st Century

This book approaches posthumanism as a philosophy of life and, more clearly, a practice of existence to manifest deep, comprehensive and personalized paths of self-exploration, as individuals and societies, species and beyond. The message is crystal clear: we can be posthuman now in the ways we exist. There is a real need for posthumanist existential enlightenment, as we envision ourselves in the era of the Anthropocene, global pandemics and the rise of artificial intelligence. This book offers a 360 degree review of who we are in the 21st century – not just as individuals, but as societies, a species, a planet and beyond. In critical and generative terms, the book engages with scientific knowledges, ancient paths of wisdom, and emerging and speculative bio-technologies in ways that are aware of the deep anthropocentric legacies of past visions and formulations. Words create worlds; narratives are not neutral. A (re)generative decluttering of the notion of the human is thus pursued from any self-entitlements that obscure the understanding of our extensive self. Once we look into the nature of being, we (as existing beings) realize that we are always in dynamics of existential revealing, poietically co-manifesting our worlds: in these extensive senses, we are (p)art¹ of everything. Posthumanism embraces an integral comprehension of the human in the 21st century. This is a unique opportunity for generative exchanges that are forging not only public opinion, but also the lives of the people involved, the evolution of humanity, the future of planet Earth and beyond. The issues at stake are very high.

2 *Introduction*

Posthumanism emerges as an existential awareness unfolding in this historical era and spatio-temporal arena. Now is the time to manifest the art of being posthuman: know who You are, choose how to live.

The need for open spaces of manifestation is self-evident in this historical context. There is growing interest towards posthumanism, not only as a theoretical frame to understand our times, but as a practical one to act inspirationally in our lives. From the Covid-19 pandemic to the current ecological crises, from the economy of Big Data and the lack of privacy to the socio-political consequences resulting out of scientific discoveries and bio-technological possibilities (from CRISPR gene editing to space mining): radical changes are occurring in our species and planet. People are wondering how to cope with this “new” world. The understanding of ourselves as humanity is mutating. This inner and outer chaos can be challenging and unsettling; it is also the bearer of new ways of being in the world. Perceiving ourselves as part of the labyrinth, instead of lost in it, will unravel unexpected self-discoveries. Along with an ethical praxis, posthumanism, as a path of self-enquiry, is revealed as an existential journey. The goal of the book is to allow for multiple and diverse processes of self-knowledge to manifest at all levels: the individual, the social, the species, the planetary and beyond. Connected, emergent and unique: ultimate ripples, in the fluid and sensitive texture of spacetime.

How to be wise in the 21st century?

Visionaries are the ones who can see what needs to be addressed in their era. Given the changing nature of reality and the matrix of possible perspectives, their answers may differ from time to time. For instance, philosophical traditions pre-dating the common era still offer rare gems of wisdom to contemporary readers; and, still, the limits of socio-cultural assumptions sustaining many of them cannot be simply dismissed. Everything is constantly changing; even if the keys to existential realization may be ultimately timeless, the ways to unfold them, engage with them and depict them must be

updated. This is why seers have been necessarily sharing throughout time; every age offers unique insights, focuses and visions in need of contemporary voices to articulate them. Such voices serve as **a reality check for humanity, a most essential function: to be aware of where we are at, as individuals, as a society and as a species.** In this sense, wisdom is both temporal and atemporal: it is nourished by spatio-temporal experiences, and, in its ultimate realization, it transcends them all. This is also why we are the only ones who can answer the question of what it means to be wise in the 21st century: no one before us, and no one after us, will experience precisely these planetary conditions. It is part of our existential performance to awaken to these cosmic embodiments. The nature of change also serves as a wake-up call: we cannot simply rely on the work of others; we must embrace response-ability.²

Who am I? This is a question that every human being asks themselves at one point or another, usually starting very young: *Who am I? What is this? Why am I here?* In this sense, everyone is a philosopher – that is, someone who is able to ask existential questions without the need for authoritarian answers. Wisdom has a lot to do with the ancient Greek motto “Know thyself” (ΓΝΩΘΙ ΣΑΥΤΟΝ), inscribed in the Temple of Apollo at Delphi and revered to its ultimate consequences in the life philosophy of Socrates (c. 470–399 BCE), who taught that “the unexamined life is not worth living” (38a).³ Ancient texts, from the *Tao Te Ching*⁴ to the Upanishads,⁵ from the *Torah*⁶ to the (biblical and Gnostic) Gospels⁷ and the Quran,⁸ among many others⁹ – emphasize, consistently and repeatedly, that the meaning of life is understanding who we are. In our modern world, this spiritual search is often replaced with other searches, such as economic success and techno-scientific advancements. These are all significant trajectories; yet, if they are approached as the ultimate meaning to life, they turn into obstacles in fully embracing the existential openness at the core of dimensional manifesting: *who are we?*

This book approaches philosophy in line with its etymology. In classical Greek, *philos* (φίλος) means “love”; *sofia* (σοφία)

means “wisdom.” “Philosophy” can be translated as the love of wisdom and, also, the wisdom of love. From a general undertaking of wisdom as an individual achievement,¹⁰ we will move to the possibility of wisdom as a social endeavor, reverberating across times and spaces to the whole existential realm, and beyond. From this comprehensive standpoint, the notion of “love” will unfold in principles of multi-species coexistence, existential empathy and, more extensively, ontological poiesis. This realization cannot be simply learnt; it must be experienced. For philosophies to stand the test of time, they must offer something valuable to those engaging with them, to the societies embracing them, to the species and planet(s) manifesting them. In other words, philosophies must stand as paths of wisdom, granting insights into the existential condition per se, in the unique ways it materializes in each historical era. Posthumanism, as a philosophy of the 21st century, approaches humans (in all of their diversities), non-human animals, technology and ecology relationally. Posthumanism, as a philosophy of life, deeply enriches our existential awareness and intra-acting in the world, investigating the human condition not as an autonomous biological event to be addressed in isolation but as a cosmic co-emergence, from a location that is deeply aware of our geological time: the Anthropocene. This take is full of potential.

In this book, we will contend that posthumanism offers ways to be wise in the 21st century: this is no easy task. Living a responsible life while being (p)art of a society that is still entrenched in (and enchanted by) anthropocentrism is challenging. Yet it is possible, and it is already happening: the posthuman community is expanding into a glocal movement based on post-human realizations. Moving from the theoretical arena to real-world applications, posthumanism addresses the core existential question “*Who am I?*” in conjunction with many other related ones, such as “*What am I?*” and “*Where and when are We?*” In a brave move, it de-universalizes the human gaze, making it (species-)specific, bringing awareness to historical habits and onto-epistemological premises based on anthropocentric supremacy. Aware of individual diversity,

material entanglements, species and cross-species commonalities, posthumanism relies on both monism and pluralism: we are one and many, diversity and unity, beyond any eschatological dualities. As individuals, we are constantly changing. Biologically speaking, we are organisms formed by a plurality of entities. We are part of a species which is evolving¹¹ – culturally and biologically, among other dimensions. From a planetary perspective, our survival is sustained by unbounded ecological, technological and cosmological dynamics.¹² This is when we realize that wisdom cannot be conceived merely as an individual achievement; it is also a social gain: we are, always, many.

What does “posthuman” mean?

Academically speaking, the notion of the “posthuman” is an umbrella term to refer to many movements and schools of thoughts, such as posthumanism(s),¹³ transhumanism(s),¹⁴ antihumanism(s),¹⁵ new materialism and object-oriented ontology, among others. Although posthumanism is the departing and returning point of this book, we will constantly engage with multiple perspectives to enrich our reflection. For instance, ontological insights developed within the field of object-oriented ontology will support our ecological understanding of phenomena of vast temporal and spatial dimensions, such as global warming. Transhumanism will enhance our understanding of biology by challenging the current understanding of the human. According to transhumanism, we are not posthuman yet: this passage is necessarily actualized at an evolutionary level, through the potentials inscribed in technological and scientific developments. Alternatively, posthumanism invokes the posthuman as an existential paradigm shift, which is already happening; in this sense, we can be posthuman right now. This book further develops the posthuman in its existential implications and applications, standing on the premises of philosophical posthumanism,¹⁶ which can be summarized in three axes of analysis (to be taken jointly, not hierarchically):

*Post-humanism:*¹⁷ *the realization that the human is plural*

We, humans, are many. Still, in the history of humanity, not every human being has been considered human, or as human as others. Philosophical posthumanism reveals how this universalization and homogenization of the notion of the human has benefited only some humans, while sustaining the oppression of others. Such power dynamics have defined the interactions between human groups and shall be taken into consideration when envisioning, and enacting, social modes of posthuman existing.

Post-anthropocentrism: the comprehension of the human in coexistential relations to other species, not as superior to them

Philosophical posthumanism acknowledges the fact that the “human” – *anthropos* (ἄνθρωπος) in classical Greek – has been historically asserted through a hierarchical scale based on a human exceptionalist worldview. In this framing, the human (positioned, as previously mentioned, in a “human” hierarchy) was placed at the top. At the bottom was the “non-human,” categorized into hierarchies based on their similarities to the universalized human. Most anthropocentric worldviews do not recognize the existential dignity of other-than-human forms of existence intrinsically; instead, they reduce them to their utilitarian worth as commodities to (some) humans – in potentiality and actuality. Philosophical posthumanism voices the great fallacy of these approaches; their harmful effects to the well-being of both human and other-than-human entities is most evident in the current era of anthropocenic climate change.

*Post-dualism: the awareness that existence does not unfold in dualistic*¹⁸ *modes*

Dichotomous oversimplifications, based on the absolute separation of good and evil, plus and minus, foe and enemy, among many other hierarchical terms (such as black/white, female/male, etc.), have historically sustained and legitimized obstructive and destructive habits – from warfare to planetary injustice. They are serious

obfuscations on our ultimate path of self-discovery. To know who we are we must achieve post-dualistic awareness, or the risk of dichotomizing will persist, in different modes. Such an awareness can start from the self, to permeate the entire dimensional realm, and vice versa: the macro and the micro are co-reflective, with no ultimate discrimination.

To be posthuman agents of change, we must be fully aware of the multi-layered sources of existential habits in their related socio-political, bio-ecological and technological premises, and also in their foundational dynamics of repetitions and reiterations. Posthumanism dares to challenge ontological mystifications, social distortions, scientific reductionisms and related disenchantments of the world, which have been constructed, and repeatedly reiterated, in the historical and bio-cultural processes of humanizing. These partial and biased approaches have (in)formed human collective consciousness, creating impediments towards full existential awareness. Intellectual curiosity, non-judgmental mindfulness, radical integrity and visionary energy are some of the flows of this book. In this extensive journey into the self, we will realize that we cannot understand who we are in separation: we are (p)art of everything.

What is the outline of the meditations?

The art of posthuman existence is to know who we are, and to be able to manifest in post-humanistic, post-anthropocentric and post-dualistic ways of being, knowing that what we do affects the whole dimensional realm. The path of self-enquiry and self-discovery is the thread of this book. In each chapter, the core existential question “*Who am I?*” is embraced from different perspectives and multiple layers: from the personal to the biological, the ecological, the cosmological, the technological, the socio-cultural and the ontological, among others. All of them will unravel, from different angles, common realizations, such as the relationality of being (and the urgent need

for letting go of anthropocentrism), unity in diversity, and poiesis, as the ultimate existential creativity. There follows a brief presentation of each meditation. There are eight in total; when shifted, this number (8) represents the infinite (∞).

First Meditation: Posthuman Self-Enquiry

This chapter explores the pivotal existential question “Who am I?,” not in isolation but relationally, together with other foundational questions, such as “What am I?,” “Who are You?” and “Where and when are We?” Addressing the self relationally, we will delve into key notions, such as inter-being, coexistence, intention and redemption. Only by equanimous discernment and integral honesty can we realize who we intend to be. The ways we live, think and act constitute (p)art of the shifting material networks of our agency, which is comprehensive, multi-layered, plural and all-encompassing: the center is everywhere.

Second Meditation: Human Evolutions

The goal of this chapter is to declutter the notion of the human. We will start from primatology and reflect on our genetic relatives (bonobos and chimps), showing that scientific narratives are products of their specific eras, with their intrinsic biases and limits. Through paleo-anthropology, we will address the origins and developments of so-called archaic humans, such as Neanderthals and Denisovans, emphasizing that there is no absolute separation between “us” and “them”: the interbreeding between these related species demonstrates that evolution is neither a linear nor a branched progression. We will then explore the rich periods of the Paleolithic and the Neolithic times, which, although counting for most of our time on Earth as humans, are still mystified as “prehistory” and usually relegated to the background of human historiography. In order to know who we are, we need to declutter the understanding of our shared humanity from any human-centric assumptions, socio-cultural preconceptions and ideo-

logical worldviews. Who we are is who we were and who we are going to be: our pasts and futures are already in our presents. A deep understanding of our evolutionary history in becoming human can turn into a path of wisdom, ultimately revealing existential posthuman awareness.

Third Meditation: Biotic Co-emergences

In this chapter, we will explore, existentially, questions such as “Who are we, as a species?” and “What are we, as organisms?”, among others. We will delve into the biological implications of our human embodiments and biotic entanglements: from our DNA – dynamically approached as information, self-knowledge and wisdom – to species agency; from the human biome – redefined as “bio-me” for its essential, and existential, impact on who we are – to the generative and destructive power of viral infections. Presenting the human as a holobiont will allow for meta-understandings of the self. Such a move de-solidifies the myth of individual autonomy as the essence of the human: autonomy, in fact, can only manifest in community. In this chapter, the essentiality of both unity and diversity will be found at the core of biotic revealing; developing our *fil rouge* of knowledge, we will encounter biology as a site of corporeal wisdom.

Fourth Meditation: Ecological Presence

We are the Earth, we are (p)art of a planet: this, we cannot forget, or our ignorance will endanger the quality of our existential experience as individuals, and our own survival as a species. In this chapter we will delve into ecology, the Anthropocene, laws and economy, addressing topics that are pivotal to the contemporary ecological debate, such as multi-species coexistence, coevolution, eco-anxiety, indigenous wisdom and the rights of Nature. In exploring these grounding areas, we will point out the misleading conception that we are just living on this planet, whereas, in fact, we are (p)art of the planet. On our path towards self-knowledge, this

realization cannot be merely intellectual: philosophical greenwashing (a concept explored in this chapter) will not be of help. Instead, such an awakening must be multiply embodied, lived and experienced: a rooted aspect that smells like a rose, like a pine tree, like the ocean; that moves like the wind, like a snail, like a bear: that is stable and changing, resilient and intra-connected.

Fifth Meditation: Cosmic Constellations

In this chapter, we will address the question “Who are We?” rephrased, more specifically, as “Where are we, as a planet?” and “What is our cosmic embodiment?” We will delve into geology and the origins of the universe, cosmology, exobiology, astroarchaeology, space migration and space ethics. Our cosmic self will embrace the fabric of spacetime, quantum physics, gravitational waves, cosmic alliances and geological systems. Here, we will gain perspective on the cosmic web, realizing that everything, including planets, is changing: our expanding universe has no center. This macroscopic awareness will bring us crucial perspectives on wisdom and resilience, not to be caught in the limited, and limiting, perception that what is happening in human history is all we are. Our existences resonate well beyond the fragmented constitution of human geopolitics: on our path of self-discovery, existential takes on physics will show how the ways we are existing are (in)forming the sensitive network of spacetime: right here, right now.

Sixth Meditation: Technological Enhancement

In this chapter, we will embrace the question “Who are we?” in relation to “What can we be?” We will unveil technology as a dynamic of existence by asking questions such as “What is technology?” and “What do radical bio-technologies reveal, at the existential level?” We will focus, among other things, on digital technologies and the AI takeover scenario: artificial intelligence, on some level, has already taken over.

We will address technological addiction, the Big Data economy and bio-hacking, among other topics. We will embrace technology in relation to ecology, delving into planetary enhancements within the geological era of the Anthropocene. Thereafter, we will unravel the impact of current and emerging technologies in direct evolution, addressing questions such as “Are technological entities aware?” and “Can the planet be enhanced?” We will thus explore hypothetical scenarios, such as the simulation hypothesis, to remark on the urgent need for existential awareness. In fact, enhancement is an intention that manifests relationally, not in isolation: the most significant type of enhancement we can aim for is to know who we are.

Seventh Meditation: Socio-cultural Agency

This chapter resonates with the need for social awareness. In order to understand who we are in the 21st century, we must address where we are at, where we come from, and where we are heading at the social level. We must unveil how and when collective habits are established and set our intentions about social manifestations. We will address questions such as “Who are we, as societies?”, “What is posthuman education?” and “How do we achieve posthuman parenthood?” We will reflect on key notions such as habits of existence, empathy, identity and conditioning. We will investigate social discriminations as social dis-eases that are not only life-threatening to the community, but also impediments towards full existential awareness to the individuals who are exposed to them. In doing this, we will realize the vital importance of dismantling segregative practices from our bodyminds, our societies, our planet and, more in general, our existential manifestations. We will approach society as a site of shared knowledge, ancestral wisdom and innovative expression on the collective path towards self-realization.

Eighth Meditation: Ontological Awareness

This chapter is dedicated to ontological awareness, consciousness hacking and the cosmic game. It offers specific insights into how to deconstruct unnecessary patterns and realize original archetypes of existence in the 21st century, asking questions such as “How can we reinvent ourselves in every moment, so that we are not caught in the repetition of pre-defined structures and hierarchies?” Everything in this world could be different, as such is the art of existential expression; and, also, everything in this world is manifesting out of deep intentions, actions and repetitions set in spacetime. Recognizing and acknowledging the way the world currently is allows us to be completely honest with ourselves. In this chapter, we will tackle the question “Who are we?” in relation to “Why are we?” We will pose related queries, such as “What is consciousness?” and “What is awareness?” We will explore technologies of existence through Nietzsche’s *Übermensch* and Foucault’s microphysics of power, the Hindu concept of *lila* and the Buddhist principle of non-self, among others. We will address topics such as the subject and the mind, panpsychism, poiesis, shamanism, mysticism and ecstasy. Our understanding of ourselves as archetypes of existence will lead us to our final conclusions.

Conclusions: Posthuman Mantra

The conclusions shed light on how existential posthumanism is directly affecting and effecting us, as individuals, societies, species, planets, and so on. This is a call to take a step further, merge in and treasure this substantial quest for self-discovery and species evolution in our posthuman era: like the sunlight, embracing all.

Methodology

The book develops in questions and answers through short subchapters. Each step of the exploration is supported by cur-

rent scientific research, as well as ancient paths of wisdom. A wide range of sources are contemplated: from prehistory to the far futures, from fossil records to emerging and speculative technological inventions. Current scientific views are presented, as well as different sources of world knowledges, opening possibilities critically and perspectively. Given the amplitude of the topics addressed – from microbiology to paleontology, geology, astronomy, existentialism and self-care, among others – only the *status quaestionis* – that is, the state of investigation for each area of reflection – is presented. The goal is to offer food for posthuman thoughts in order to actualize key realizations about who we are, which may manifest in different modes of existence. For example, in chapter 5 we will reflect, among other topics, on plate tectonics. Although most people know about this theory's scientific meaning, we will delve into its posthuman existential ramifications. The question is: *why is this information relevant to our path towards self-knowledge?* We will thus make a point against ultranationalism; ultimately, nations are not geological entities but socio-cultural and historical constructs. Knowing that even our continents are constantly changing, *how can humans indulge in national pride and nationalistic hatred?*

This book can be approached as a guide¹⁹ to posthuman existential awareness, offering multiple threads of reflection and enquiry. In mediating scholastic rigor and accessibility, the book implements examples, metaphors, thought experiments and exercises to ease the process of self-locating the reader as the agent and the seer. This is not a book about something, or someone, else: it is about us. Not only supportive of written traditions, it embraces oral traditions in their contents and methods. These archives of knowledges, based on the verbal arts, are present on all continents and precede the written form of transmission; they are routinely based on repetitions in order to assist the storytellers in remembering the lines, and the audience in grasping the main points. In this book, key insights are purposely repeated, in different forms and chapters, in line with the Latin saying *repetita iuvant*, which can be translated as “repeating is beneficial.”

The integral choice of diverse repetitions through different fields of research is enacted purposely; the insights gained in every meditation resonate with one another, leading chorally and perspectively to posthuman awareness. From a methodological perspective, this reflects in the ways the book was conceived and actualized. The writing unfolded in nomadic and explorative manners. Like a bee²⁰ moving from flower to flower, each topic has attracted and reattracted attention and intention beyond the soft boundaries of the chapters. Like forests, they have managed to reveal themselves through a great plethora of different subjects, all intra-connected. The result of these lines of flight is honey for bees, posthuman realizations for us.

The book's architecture

Labyrinth

According to the Oxford Dictionary, a labyrinth is “a complicated irregular network of passages or paths in which it is difficult to find one’s way, a maze.”²¹ In anatomy, a labyrinth refers to “a complex structure in the inner ear which contains the organs of hearing and balance.”²² Labyrinths have deep symbolic meanings cross-culturally and trans-historically, representing the journey of life and death in the search for self-knowledge. The book is conceived in a non-linear fashion, like a labyrinth. The meditations can be read in any order; each is investigated thematically, organized by tags that can be approached through different trajectories. In this posthuman storytelling, the narrative is open to multiple outcomes which will unfold coinciding revelations. This approach is designed to offer readers an open canvas with a diverse set of tools to search in individualized and unique ways – an intentional garden, where key notions from a wide range of perspectives can be explored. Readers are invited to follow their intuition and deconstruct the transitory structure of the book, moving at their own rhythm: at the end of the journey, they will have a complete picture, no matter what.

The chapter structure

Each chapter, as a possible journey and destination, is designed in the following way.

Meditation: this part is the pulsating core of the chapter, a philosophical meditation based on questions and answers, organized by tags.

Farewell: this brief salutation is intended to accompany readers in their intentional journey through the book, facilitating a non-linear reading. The etymology of the term is revealing: “fare” comes from the Old English word *faran*, meaning “to journey”; “well” derives from *wel*, with the same encouraging meaning.

The text is mapped through tags, creating building blocks that can be connected, de-constructed and re-envisioned in different ways and orders. Tags and their contents can be approached as a set of building blocks to different paths of posthuman realizations, in the creative originality of posthuman existential manifestations. The order of the tags is based not on any primacy, but on open thematic narratives and affiliations that can be embraced throughout unlimited trajectories, in tune with our labyrinthine architecture. Each tag addresses a concept; some are presented generatively and critically; others are approached as possible obstacles. As in a maze, some paths are dead ends, becoming outdated and turning into loopholes, unsupportive of existential awareness. This is not a final judgment; these terms can eventually be accessed with different intentions and reveal completely unexpected outcomes. Yet, since they have developed significance in the ways they have been engaged historically, we need to be aware of their hermeneutic legacies and be cautious with their use. Such loopholes will be presented with a question mark (such as *#Loopholes?*). Lastly, the reflections following each tag are not meant to be exhaustive explanations of the term; rather, they are relevant mythopoetic accents in the unraveling of the discussion. This is why some tags, for

instance, recur multiple times, investigated from different angles. Readers who wish to experience this book as a guided meditation with no interruption can trustfully rely on the present structure, following the given order of the meditations and tags. Readers can also enter the book as a labyrinth, free to move as they wish, accessing any section and/or chapter in a non-sequential manner. Honoring our visions, aware in the mystery of the adventure, each journey will be satisfying, and satisfied. Enjoy.