



### In Search of Homo Deus

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If you search “artificial intelligence” in PubMed today (16 October 2020), you end up with 110,855 results! It is more than obvious that advanced computing is entering our lives – perhaps not yet as much as Yuval Noah Harari has predicted in his book *Homo Deus*, but definitely to an extent that our medical practice is substantially affected, as van de Leur and colleagues discuss in this issue of the journal.

Is this the end of the human mind era and the dawn of the reign of computers, Orwell’s *1984* reborn under cover, or just another achievement of rational, scientific thought bestowed upon us by the Enlightenment?

I personally believe that progress is inevitable, and human efforts should be aimed at mastering and controlling rather than negating it. We cannot be like the oath-based Luddites who used to destroy textile machines during the Industrial Revolution. In general, technology and scientific innovation are the only way to address the continually increasing environmental, social and health challenges to humanity. We should embrace the products of our own minds, certainly under the critical eye of Aristotelian inquiry, and use them for the benefit of the many.

Artificial intelligence is another potentially powerful endeavour, which, when properly studied and developed through experience, should be an indispensable tool towards scientific progress. Computer science has led us on an exciting journey since 1969, when Apollo 11 reached the moon with a computer memory of 32 kilobytes! Indeed, “everything flows”, as Heraclitus taught us more than 2,500 years ago. ■

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