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Who Are We?

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Summary of *Who Are We?* by Wolfgang Welsch

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Wolfgang Welsch, *Wer Sind Wir?* (Hamburg: Nap New Academic Press, 2018), 166 pp., in German. ISBN: 978-3-7003-2077-7; 9780826 464637

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Wolfgang Welsch's new book of 166 pages, in German, traces the evolution of mankind and her relation to the earth throughout history. The undercurrent of the text is, in fact "how did we arrive here?" In other words, it is an implicit history of the development and a severe critique of ecological pathology.

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As someone who has always looked at philosophy from the perspective of aesthetics and from the concrete examples of art and sensitivity to beauty, the main question that is posed by Wolfgang Welsch, both explicitly and implied in many of the chapters, is "Why do we need an aesthetics that is not anthropic?" The reasons are presented comprehensively with a perspective on history and taking issue with cognition, morality, and cultural identities.

In tracing an evolutionary anthropology, Wolfgang Welsch presents the cultural stance of postmodernism that hints at developments towards posthumanism. He gives examples of art that transcends human references, such as the light installations that create spatial orientations different from our relations to space. He also gives extracts from Apollinaire's texts, Nietzsche, and art works of Dubuffet relating to cosmic images. We read here an antihumanist discourse, in line with Foucault and Nietzsche, criticizing the humanistic closure created by Enlightenment discourse entitling humans to mistreat nature.

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