

Sapere Aude in the Age of Artificial Intelligence: Critical Awakening in the Face of the Algorithm

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The Latin maxim *Sapere Aude*—"Dare to know" or "Have the courage to use your own reason"—appeared in a letter by Horace and was popularized by Kant in his famous essay "What is Enlightenment?" It remains today a beacon of intellectual emancipation. In the twenty-first century, as artificial intelligence (AI) bursts into every sphere of our lives, this imperative takes on renewed relevance and urgency.

Today, more than ever, daring to know is an existential challenge: Will we be active architects of our knowledge or mere recipients of the information that algorithms choose to show us?

AI, in its many forms, has inaugurated an era of unprecedented efficiency and convenience. The ability to process data, learn automatically, and automate complex tasks promises to free us from routine burdens and open the door to previously unimaginable innovations.

However, this technological promise comes with a shadow: the possible atrophy of our critical judgment if we give up actively exercising reason.

AI algorithms, although sophisticated, are not free from biases inherited from the data on which they are trained, nor from an opacity that turns them into genuine "black boxes." What an algorithm shows us—be it information, news, or recommendations—is not neutral, but the result of calculations aimed at optimizing commercial, political, or attention-capturing interests. If we limit ourselves to consuming what is given to us pre-digested, we run the risk of living in an algorithmic "filter bubble," where our perspectives narrow, our certainties are reinforced, and dissent, difference, and divergent thinking are silenced.

Here, the imperative *Sapere Aude* becomes our bulwark. It is not about rejecting AI, but about developing the wisdom necessary to integrate it with a critical mind, maintaining independence of thought. Daring to know in the age of AI implies:

- Questioning the source: Recognizing that information generated or filtered by AI is not necessarily truthful; it requires verification and analysis of its origin and purpose.
- Understanding the mechanism: Taking an interest, even at a basic level, in how AI systems work, their transparency and explainability, limitations, and potential biases.
- Diversifying understanding: Actively seeking different perspectives and sources, avoiding reliance solely on algorithmic recommendations that reinforce our beliefs.
- Preserving autonomy of judgment: Forming our own opinions and making informed decisions, without blindly delegating to artificial intelligence.

AI is a powerful tool, capable of amplifying our cognition, but also of conditioning it. The challenge is not only to develop more powerful artificial intelligences, but to become wiser and more critical users. In the age of AI, *Sapere Aude* is a call to intellectual vigilance.

In the healthcare field, this challenge becomes even more crucial. Will we be patients and professionals who make our own decisions, or mere recipients of protocols dictated by algorithms?

The potential of AI to improve healthcare is immense: it can analyze large volumes of data, identify subtle patterns, and suggest personalized treatments. However, there is a risk of blindly delegating decision-making autonomy to the algorithm, forgetting that AI systems can reproduce biases and lack the human understanding of context, values, and the personal preferences of the patient.

A therapeutic plan suggested by AI, no matter how robust, is only a probability, not a certainty. *Sapere Aude* reminds us again that we must embrace innovation with a critical spirit and a willingness to understand.

Daring to know in healthcare requires:

- Active patient participation: The patient should not be a passive spectator; they must ask and understand the options suggested by AI, their alternatives, benefits, and risks. Their voice, values, and personal goals must remain at the center of the decision.

- Amplified, not replaced, clinical judgment: Professionals should use AI as an assistant that amplifies their analytical capacity with new perspectives, without abdicating clinical judgment. Empathy, experience, and the ability to discern in the unique context of each patient are irreplaceable.

- Transparency and explainability: Demand that healthcare AI systems be as transparent as possible. Clinicians and patients need to understand how AI arrives at a treatment recommendation, allowing its logic to be evaluated and possible biases detected.

- Digital health literacy: Develop a basic understanding of these technologies, their limitations, and their impact on privacy, and be able to explain them to patients.

- Trust based on understanding: Trust in AI-assisted treatments should not be blind, but earned through understanding, human validation, and demonstration of positive results, always with rigorous oversight.

AI is reshaping healthcare. Its potential to improve patient treatment is immense, but so is its capacity to dehumanize the process or generate biased outcomes if not handled wisely. The challenge is not only to create more accurate artificial intelligences, but to ensure that professionals and patients keep human autonomy at the center of every decision.

Sapere Aude is no longer just an invitation to knowledge: it is a call to co-create our health, empowered by reason and information.

Perhaps today, more than ever, the imperative *Sapere Aude* invites us to redefine authentic human knowledge: not just accumulating information, but knowing how to ask questions, make creative connections, apply ethical judgment, and maintain the curiosity and wonder that drive us to go beyond what any system can offer us.

Today, as in the Enlightenment era, *Sapere Aude* is daring to be truly free!