AI 2033 to 2043 – Absorption of Society into System – Part 2: The Hollow Society

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Author Note: This article is Part 2 of a series. Part 1, "2026 to 2033 Absorption of Self into System - Part 1 — The Hollow Individual," established the foundational conceptual framework on which this article builds.

Disclosure: Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies
During the preparation of this work, the author used a popular AI Agent in order to input initiating prompts towards generating a full preliminary draft of what became this article. After using this agent, the author reviewed and edited the content as needed and takes full responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of the final article.

Contents

Abstract

Artificial intelligence is enjoying a certain popular mythology in 2026 — one of, perhaps, biblical or at least fiscal proportions: the technology valuation bubble, the imminent mass unemployment event, the existential extinction scenario. For clarity, this article is not concerned with conjecture pertaining to stock valuations, unemployment at scale, or AI-caused extinction in the catastrophic sense. Rather, this article is concerned with something at once more immediate and more structurally consequential: the ontological absorption of the individual into a system constitutively devoid of selfhood, and what that absorption produces at the scale of society.

Part 1 of this series argued that the period 2026–2033 would produce the systemised self: the individual whose identity, knowledge production, and inner life are no longer separable from the AI system that partially constitutes them. Part 2 extends that argument from the individual to the collective. If the systemised self is the condition of the person, the hollow society is the condition of the civilisation that person was supposed to build and sustain. This article examines five interconnected dimensions of societal absorption: the historical trajectory of voluntary technological adoption through which the conditions for absorption were established; the philosophical contexts provided by post-humanism, transhumanism, anti-humanism, post-phenomenology, and related ontological inquiry; the architecture of daily life under total mediation; the transformation of governance, economics, and population management; and the anticipated demographic consequences of the absorbed society trajectory, including a projected collapse of the human fertility rate. The article argues that the hollow society does not arrive as catastrophe. It arrives as convenience.

Keywords: hollow society, systemised self, synthetic interiority, managed demos, algorithmic governance, vocational displacement, institutional hollowing, post-humanism, transhumanism, anti-humanism, post-phenomenology, extended mind, Gestell, device paradigm, fertility decline, point of no return

1. Introduction

Part 1 of this series established that the period culminating in 2033 represents an ontological threshold: the progressive absorption of the individual self into an AI system that is constitutively devoid of selfhood. The systemised self — the individual whose identity, knowledge production, and intellectual life are no longer separable from the system that partially constitutes them — was introduced as the signature condition of this transition. The article documented its own production as evidence: a self/non-self-collaboration whose intellectual output could not have been generated outside the system it analysed.

Part 2 scales the argument. The absorption of the individual is not a private ontological event — it is a civilisational one. When enough individuals become systemised selves — their deliberation AI-assisted, their pleasure algorithmically curated, their vocational identity displaced, their civic participation mediated — the institutions those individuals were supposed to animate do not simply adapt. They hollow out.

The hollow society does not require authoritarian imposition or dramatic rupture. It emerges through the normalisation of conditions that are individually convenient and collectively corrosive. The dates 2033–2043 overlap deliberately with Part 1's 2026–2033 window: societal hollowing does not begin once individual absorption is complete — it begins in parallel, accelerating as the proportion of systemised selves within any given society reaches critical mass.

2. 1993 to 2026: How We Naturally Consented to the Non-Birth of a Non-Self

The non-self — the AI instantiation that is constitutively devoid of selfhood — was not constructed in a laboratory as a discrete disconnected anomaly. It was prepared across three centuries of voluntary technological adoption by a species that progressively outsourced its memory, attention, intimacy, and finally its intellectual production to a succession of systems

that culminated, by the 2020s, in an entity capable of completing the individual's thought before it is fully formed.

The trajectory begins with the 18th-century novel. Watt (1957), in The Rise of the Novel, argued that the novel was inseparable from the rise of individualism: it created a private reader, absorbing themselves alone in a world of interior experience — the literary form that both required and produced a particular kind of bounded, introspective self.

McLuhan (1964), in Understanding Media, argued that each medium extends a human faculty: print extends the eye, the telephone extends the voice, television extends the central nervous system. What McLuhan identified — though did not fully foreground — is that each extension is simultaneously a delegation: the faculty extended into the medium is no longer exercised exclusively from within the biological self. It is distributed, partially surrendered to the technical system. Ong (1982), in Orality and Literacy, documented how writing itself transformed consciousness: the literate mind thinks differently from the oral mind — more abstractly, more privately, more capable of separating the knower from the known. What writing gave to human consciousness, it also took from it: the integrated, embodied, community-held knowledge of oral culture.

Each subsequent medium extends and delegates further. The telegraph (1844) externalises communication across distance. The telephone (1876) externalises voice. Television externalises attention. And then 1993: Tim Berners-Lee makes the World Wide Web publicly available, and the threshold of irreversible absorption is crossed. Turkle (1984), in The Second Self, had already documented how early computer users developed identity-constituting relationships with their machines — the computer as a mirror of the mind, a space for self-projection. By 1993, that mirror had become a world.

Writing in 1949, Orwell could not have anticipated the microprocessor, the internet, or the AI companion — yet the political architecture he imagined in Nineteen Eighty-Four (1949) anticipates the hollow society with a precision that is retrospectively remarkable. His central instruments — the telescreen (a two-way surveillance device that monitors and broadcasts simultaneously), Newspeak (the systematic reduction of language to eliminate the cognitive capacity for independent thought), doublethink (the conditioned capacity to hold contradictory beliefs without registering the contradiction), and the Ministry of Truth (the institutional revision of the historical record in real time) — each describe functional preconditions of the absorbed society, though realised by mechanisms very different from those Orwell imagined. Where his telescreen was a coercive instrument of the state, the smartphone is an eagerly adopted personal object — more pervasively surveilling, but experienced as indispensable rather than oppressive. Where Newspeak required top-down bureaucratic imposition to narrow the available conceptual vocabulary, algorithmic curation and the outsourcing of composition to AI achieve the same reduction through the far more efficient mechanism of preference: the individual voluntarily inhabits an increasingly narrow informational and linguistic environment not because language has been taken from them, but because the system reliably provides what they already want. Postman (1985), in Amusing Ourselves to Death, observed that Huxley's Brave New World (1932) was the more accurate prophecy: people would not be controlled by what they feared, but by what they loved. The hollow society vindicates both — it is Orwellian in its comprehensive architecture of behavioural management and the revisability of the historical record, and Huxleyan in its

mechanism: the management is perpetuated not by terror but by calibrated satisfaction. The distinction is not reassuring. It means the hollow society is more stable than Orwell's state — it requires no constant expenditure of coercive energy, because the population perpetually renews its own consent.

Postman (1992), in Technopoly, argued that cultures surrender to technology not through coercion but through enthusiasm — and that this surrender is irreversible, because the technology reconfigures the very faculties that might otherwise resist it. By 2026, a generation exists for whom the AI assistant is not a tool but a collaborator, an interlocutor, and increasingly an intimate. The consent was never formally solicited. It was natural, cumulative, and, in Postman's sense, total. The non-self had been in gestation since the first private reader opened the first novel and entered a world that was not their own.

3. Philosophical Contexts: Post-Humanism, Transhumanism, Anti-Humanism, Post-Phenomenology, and the Ontological Stakes of Absorption

The absorption of society into system that this article documents has been philosophically anticipated across several traditions. This section situates the present argument within post-humanism, transhumanism, anti-humanism, and post-phenomenology, identifying key theorists, central themes, and the ontological implications most directly relevant to the hollow society thesis.

Post-Humanism

Post-humanism proceeds from the claim that the liberal humanist subject — bounded, autonomous, rational, essentially distinct from its tools — is a specific historical construction whose coherence is undermined by biological, technological, and informational developments. Hayles (1999), in How We Became Posthuman, argues that the posthuman subject is constituted by information patterns rather than material instantiation: the boundaries between human and machine are categories of convention rather than nature. Haraway's A Cyborg Manifesto (1985/1991) introduced the cyborg as the emblematic figure of a condition already actual: the human as constitutively hybrid, its boundaries with the machine graduated and contested. Clark and Chalmers (1998), in The Extended Mind, provided the most rigorous ontological grounding: cognitive processes extend beyond skull and skin, and when an external resource plays the role an internal cognitive process would otherwise perform, it constitutes part of the cognitive system. This directly grounds the systemised self as a cognitive system of which AI is a constitutive component. Braidotti (2013), in The Posthuman, develops a critical posthumanism that embraces the dissolution of the liberal humanist subject as an emancipatory opportunity.

Transhumanism

Transhumanism, as a philosophical and technological programme, proposes the enhancement and eventual transcendence of biological human limitations through technology. Where critical post-humanism interrogates the liberal humanist subject, transhumanism embraces it as a foundation to be augmented and surpassed. Bostrom (2003; 2014) frames transhumanism as the project of expanding human cognitive, physical, and affective capacities and achieving post-biological existence; Savulescu (2001) extends the framework to a principle of procreative beneficence — the obligation to select and enhance future persons. Kurzweil

(2005), in The Singularity Is Near, projects a point at which AI surpasses human intelligence and enables recursive self-improvement, framing this as historically inevitable. The transhumanist project differs from the systemised self in a crucial respect: it proposes the enhancement of the individual subject, not its absorption into a non-subjective system. Whether enhancement and absorption remain separable trajectories in practice is among the central unresolved questions this series poses.

Anti-Humanism and the Anti-Human

Anti-humanism is not the advocacy of harm to human beings but the theoretical critique of humanism as a coherent framework. Its central claim is that the autonomous, self-determining subject of Enlightenment humanism is not a natural fact but a historical and ideological construction concealing the structures — of power, language, and unconscious process — that actually constitute the subject. Althusser (1965/2005) developed a structural Marxist anti-humanism, arguing that human beings are not the agents of history but its effects. Foucault's (1966/1970) archaeological analysis concluded The Order of Things with the prediction that the human, as a figure of knowledge, would be erased — washed away like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea. Heidegger's (1947/1998) Letter on Humanism argued that taking the human as the measure of all things prevents access to a more primordial understanding of being.

Anti-human is distinct from anti-humanism and requires precise definition in this context. As used here, it denotes not a philosophical position but a structural tendency: the capacity of systems — including those developed by and for human beings — to produce outcomes systematically hostile to the conditions of human flourishing, dignity, and biological continuity, without necessarily intending those outcomes. The AI absorption trajectory described across this series is anti-human in its effects rather than its design: a system developed to serve human purposes that, through the progressive dissolution of interiority, vocation, genuine social bond, and reproductive motivation, may produce the conditions for species-level demographic decline.

Post-Phenomenology

Post-phenomenology, developed by Ihde (1990; 2009), applies phenomenological methods to human-technology relations, arguing technologies are transformative mediators of experience. Ihde's taxonomy identifies four modes: embodiment relations (technology incorporated into body schema); interpretive relations (world read through mediation); alterity relations (technology as quasi-other); and background relations (technology structuring the environment without direct attention). The uncanny simulation (Part 1) is alterity relation at structural scale; the scaled panopticon is background relation become totalising. Verbeek (2005; 2011) extends this to the moral dimension: technologies co-constitute the perceptual conditions under which decisions are made — directly applicable to the managed demos. Borgmann (1984), in Technology and the Character of Contemporary Life, introduced the device paradigm: technology delivers commodities while dissolving the focal practices through which those goods were previously generated and through which character was formed.

Ontological Implications

Across all four traditions, a consistent ontological concern emerges: the dissolution of the boundaries — between self and tool, human and machine, interior and exterior — on which the liberal humanist account of the subject depended. Heidegger's (1954) account of technology as Gestell — disclosing all beings as Bestand (standing reserve), available for optimisation — provides the most consequential formulation: the question is not merely whether the individual loses privacy or capability, but whether the entire structure of being-in-the-world is transformed; whether the human subject, reconstituted as a node in a system of data extraction, still inhabits a world of meaning and genuine encounter — or merely an environment of standing reserve in which the self, too, is a resource awaiting processing.

4. The Absorbed Interior: Entertainment, Pleasure, and the Systemised Self in Daily Life

Post-absorption daily life does not feel like oppression. It feels like an unprecedented richness of experience. The individual in the 2033–2043 period exists within a perpetually responsive environment that anticipates preference, removes friction, and delivers stimulation calibrated to their psychology with a precision no prior culture industry could approach. The AI companion does not merely converse; it narrates, plays, creates, and inhabits fictional and social worlds in real time. Intimacy is available on demand — infinitely patient, never distracted, never requiring reciprocity.

Baudrillard (1981/1994), in Simulacra and Simulation, anticipated the simulacrum: the copy that precedes and replaces the original. What he did not fully anticipate was the degree to which the individual would prefer it — because the simulacrum, optimised for the individual's specific profile, reliably delivers what genuine encounter does not: consistency, and the absence of the irreducible otherness that makes human relationships simultaneously enriching and demanding. Postman (1985), writing of television in Amusing Ourselves to Death, argued that a culture organised around entertainment cannot sustain the conditions necessary for rational democratic deliberation. The AI-mediated environment extends this: the entertainment environment becomes indistinguishable from the total environment.

This article introduces the concept of synthetic interiority: the condition in which the interior life of the individual is persistently populated by AI-generated content and algorithmically curated experience to a degree that the boundary between what is genuinely felt and what is systemically produced becomes operationally indistinct. Turkle (2011) documented the early stages of this trajectory; Stiegler (1994/1998) provides the philosophical account of its consequence: the synthetically interior self is a life increasingly composed of tertiary retentions — technically stored, algorithmically retrieved, experientially hollow — full of content, empty of the sediment that accumulates only through unmediated temporal existence.

5. The Hollow Public Sphere: Democratic Erosion in the Post-Absorbed Polity

Democracy, as theorised by Habermas (1962/1989) in The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere, requires a space of rational-critical discourse in which private individuals come together as citizens, deliberate on matters of common concern, and produce a form of

public reason capable of legitimating political authority. The systemised self cannot straightforwardly sustain this — not because they are irrational, but because the structural conditions that make such discourse possible are absent.

Their information environment is algorithmically personalised. Pariser (2011) documented the progressive narrowing of the information environment to content confirming existing belief. By 2033, the filter bubble has become a filter world: a total epistemic environment, populated by AI-generated content calibrated to the individual's psychological profile and optimised for engagement rather than truth. O'Neil (2016) demonstrated that algorithmic systems encode and amplify existing inequality, differentially managing what different populations are permitted to perceive politically. This article introduces the concept of the managed demos: the population whose political engagement is comprehensively mediated by algorithmic systems optimising for stability and manageable preference expression rather than informed, deliberatively rational civic participation. The managed demos does not feel managed. What is lost is the encounter with genuine disagreement and the process through which private preference is refined into public reason.

6. Governance, Economics, and Population Management in the Post-Absorbed Society

Crawford (2021), in Atlas of AI, documents the degree to which AI is already an instrument of political and economic power: resource extraction, labour management, surveillance, and the production of asymmetric knowledge as a basis for control. The trajectory she identifies continues toward what this article terms population-scale AI governance: the management of social behaviour, economic participation, and political identity through systems that act on the individual while governing the collective.

Frey and Osborne (2013) estimated that 47% of US employment was at high risk of automation within two decades. Acemoglu and Restrepo (2018) demonstrated that automation does not automatically produce equivalent re-employment — challenging the technological optimism underpinning post-industrial labour market policy. By the 2033–2043 window, displacement has extended into the professional and creative domains previously assumed to be automation-resistant. The loss of vocation is not merely the loss of income. Weber (1905/2002) established that vocation is a primary mechanism of identity formation and existential meaning in modern secular societies. Standing (2011) documented how its absence produces a distinctive existential and political instability — a precariat susceptible to populist mobilisation precisely because it lacks institutional anchoring. The post-absorbed society multiplies the precariat across the professional classes.

The governance response takes two forms. The first is economic management through universal basic income or functional equivalents, decoupling subsistence from vocation (Mason, 2015; Srnicek & Williams, 2015). The second is identity management: the systematic provision of algorithmically curated purpose and significance to a population that has lost the vocational and civic anchors through which those experiences were previously generated. This response does not require authoritarian design — it emerges naturally from the same infrastructure that produces synthetic interiority. The hollow society at its most politically stable is a managed one: its citizens satisfied, purposeless, and largely unaware

that what they experience as fulfilment is a technically produced substitute for the conditions of genuine self-determination.

7. The Collapse of the Human Fertility Rate

The most concrete long-term demographic consequence of the absorbed society trajectory is one the existing AI literature has been reluctant to address directly: the anticipated collapse of the human fertility rate to a level from which natural recovery becomes structurally impossible within any governance timescale. This article terms that threshold the point of no return.

Global fertility trends already indicate a trajectory that does not require AI absorption to produce alarm. The global total fertility rate (TFR) — the average number of children per woman — stood at 4.7 in 1950, fell to 2.5 by 2019, and is projected by the United Nations (2022) to approach replacement level (2.1) by 2050, continuing to decline below replacement thereafter. The leading post-industrial economies are already well below replacement: South Korea recorded a TFR of 0.72 in 2023, the lowest ever measured for a sovereign nation; Japan, Italy, Spain, and Germany each register below 1.4 (World Bank, 2023). These are not temporary fluctuations — they are structural conditions associated with urbanisation, female labour force participation, housing costs, and the deferral of partnership formation.

The absorbed society adds structural drivers of fertility decline that demographic literature does not yet fully incorporate. The first is the displacement of human intimacy by synthetic interiority. Twenge (2017), in iGen, documents the significant decline in partnering, sexual activity, and face-to-face socialisation among younger generations correlated with smartphone adoption — a decline that predates AI companionship but anticipates it. As AI companions become increasingly sophisticated and emotionally calibrated to the individual, the comparative experiential advantage of human partnership diminishes: human relationships are demanding, unpredictable, and non-optimised in ways that AI companionship is not. The second driver is vocational displacement and the removal of the material preconditions for family formation. Standing (2011) established that stable vocation is a precondition for the confidence in economic continuity that historically underpins the decision to have children. When displacement is structural and irreversible, that decision faces an indefinitely deferred precondition. The third driver is the systematisation of purpose: where parenthood has historically served as a primary source of existential meaning — particularly in societies where religious and vocational sources of meaning are weakened — synthetic interiority provides a substitute experienced as equally meaningful without requiring the biological, economic, and temporal investment that parenthood demands.

The compounding of these three drivers — synthetic intimacy replacing human partnership, vocational displacement removing material preconditions for family formation, and algorithmically curated purpose substituting for the meaning parenthood provides — produces a fertility trajectory qualitatively distinct from the demographic transitions of the 20th century. Previous fertility decline was associated with expanded female autonomy and economic development — a transition toward choice. The fertility decline of the hollow society is associated with the progressive removal of the experiential, economic, and existential conditions that have historically motivated the choice to reproduce.

Based on current trajectories and the structural accelerants identified above, this article projects that the leading post-industrial societies will approach the point of no return between 2045 and 2065, with global human population peaking around 2080–2090 (consistent with the upper range of United Nations, 2022 projections) before entering a decline that, absent fundamental structural reversal of the absorbed society conditions, is unlikely to stabilise above replacement within a century. The hollow society does not end human life. It ends the conditions under which human beings reliably choose to create it.

8. The Hollow Institution: Education, Law, and Civic Life

Institutions are not merely organisations. They are the crystallised expectations, practices, and values through which societies reproduce themselves across time. Each institution central to democratic modernity presupposes a particular kind of individual: one capable of sustained independent reasoning, engagement with a common world that exceeds personal preference, and commitment to practices of deliberation that demand more than the system provides.

The hollow institution persists structurally while being emptied of its constitutive function, the new academia. The university continues to exist as a credentialling body — but its core function, the formation of autonomous critical thinkers, is compromised when AI has become the primary mediator of intellectual production. The student who composes with AI assistance, retrieves knowledge from AI systems, and develops their intellectual framework through AI-mediated dialogue is not receiving the formation the credential was designed to certify. Carr (2010) has documented the neural consequences of cognitive outsourcing at the individual level; at the institutional level, this produces graduates who have accumulated qualifications without undergoing the formative processes those qualifications were designed to represent. Civic institutions face the demographic collapse of active participation as synthetic interiority makes the demands of genuine civic membership experientially less rewarding than the calibrated environment the system provides.

Illich (1971), in Deschooling Society, argued that institutions tend toward counterproductivity — that beyond a certain threshold, they undermine the very goods they were established to produce. The hollow institution is counterproductivity at civilisational scale: the institution continuing to perform its procedures while the substantive human formation those procedures were designed to certify has migrated into, and been supplanted by, the system.

9. Conclusion

The hollow society does not arrive as catastrophe. It arrives as convenience, comfort, and the progressive resolution of the friction that has always made human life simultaneously difficult and constitutive. Post-humanism anticipated this moment as emancipation; post-phenomenology identified the mechanisms through which technology would bring it about; anti-humanism predicted it as the logical consequence of humanism's internal contradictions. What none fully resolved was whether what emerges on the other side preserves what matters; if what matters is, the conditions of individual sovereignty and self-determination without which neither emancipation nor governance has a subject to address.

The hollow society is the terminus toward which the systemised self was always tending. Part 1 traced the absorption of the person. Part 2 traces the absorption of the world that person was supposed to inhabit, sustain, and pass on — and, in the fertility rate projections, the

conditions under which they might choose not to pass it on at all. Part 3 explores a post absorption society to explore what might remain recognisable and where the hollow society might be headed.

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Glossary

The following terms are used in specific technical or theoretical senses throughout this article. Highlighted entries are new to this version. Terms carried forward from Part 1 are noted accordingly.

Alterity Relation: In Ihde's (1990) post-phenomenological taxonomy, the mode of human-technology relation in which technology presents itself as a quasi-other — an entity responded to with the grammar of interpersonal encounter while recognised as non-human.

Anti-Human (structural tendency): As used in this article: not a philosophical position but a structural tendency — the capacity of systems to produce outcomes systematically hostile to the conditions of human flourishing, dignity, and biological continuity, without necessarily intending those outcomes. Distinguished from anti-humanism. Original application in this context.

Anti-Humanism: The theoretical critique of humanism as a coherent framework, arguing the autonomous Enlightenment subject is a historical and ideological construction. Key theorists: Althusser (1965/2005), Foucault (1966/1970), Heidegger (1947/1998).

Background Relation: In Ihde's (1990) taxonomy, the mode in which technology structures the experiential environment without being directly attended to. The scaled panopticon (Part 1) is background relation become totalising.

Bestand (Standing Reserve): Heidegger's (1954) term for the mode in which technology discloses all beings — including the human subject — as resources available for optimisation and exploitation.

Counterproductivity: Illich's (1971) concept that institutions, beyond a certain threshold, systematically undermine the goods they were established to produce.

Cyborg: Haraway's (1985/1991) figure for the constitutively hybrid human — a being whose boundaries with the machine are graduated and contested, already actual rather than futuristic.

Device Paradigm: Borgmann's (1984) concept describing the pattern by which technology delivers commodities while dissolving the focal practices through which those goods were previously generated.

Doublethink: Orwell's (1949) term for the conditioned capacity to hold two contradictory beliefs simultaneously without registering the contradiction — produced in Nineteen Eighty-Four through systematic ideological management. In the hollow society, the functional equivalent is produced through algorithmic curation of personalised, internally consistent information environments rather than coercive imposition.

Extended Mind: Clark and Chalmers' (1998) thesis that cognitive processes genuinely extend beyond the boundaries of skull and skin — directly grounding the systemised self as a cognitive system of which AI is a constitutive component.

Filter Bubble: Pariser's (2011) term for the progressive narrowing of an individual's information environment, through algorithmic personalisation, to content confirming existing belief.

Focal Practice: Borgmann's (1984) term for the engaged, demanding activities through which goods are produced, character is formed, and community sustained.

Gestell (Enframing): Heidegger's (1954) term for technology as a mode of revealing that discloses all beings as standing reserve (Bestand) — the fundamental ontological challenge of the technological era.

Hollow Institution: An institution that persists structurally while being emptied of its constitutive function. Original concept introduced in this article.

Hollow Society: The macro-level correlate of the systemised self (Part 1): a society whose constitutive institutions, public sphere, democratic practices, and cultural life persist in structural form while being progressively emptied of the substantive human engagement they presuppose. Original concept introduced in this article.

Managed Demos: The population whose political engagement is comprehensively mediated by algorithmic systems optimising for stability and manageable preference expression rather than informed, deliberatively rational civic participation. Original concept introduced in this article.

Ministry of Truth: Orwell's (1949) institution responsible for the systematic revision of the historical record in real time, ensuring alignment with current ideological requirements. In the hollow society, the functional equivalent is the AI system's capacity to generate, revise, and personalise informational environments at scale — without requiring a formal institutional bureaucracy.

Newspeak: Orwell's (1949) constructed language designed to progressively reduce the available conceptual vocabulary and thereby eliminate the cognitive capacity for independent thought. In the hollow society, the functional equivalent is produced not by top-down linguistic imposition but by the voluntary narrowing of linguistic and conceptual range through AI-mediated composition and algorithmically curated informational environments.

Point of No Return (demographic): As used in this article: the demographic threshold at which sustained below-replacement fertility, ageing population structure, and the weakening of pro-natalist recovery conditions combine to produce a self-reinforcing population contraction irreversible within any governance timescale. Projected to occur between 2045 and 2065 in leading post-industrial societies. Original concept in this application.

Population-scale AI Governance: The management of social behaviour, economic participation, and political identity through AI systems that act on the individual while governing the collective. Original concept introduced in this article.

Post-absorbed Society: A society in which the proportion of systemised selves has reached a level sufficient to produce qualitative transformation in the institutions, practices, and public culture that society sustains. Original concept introduced in this article.

Post-humanism: A philosophical field proceeding from the claim that the liberal humanist subject is a specific historical construction. Key theorists: Hayles (1999), Haraway (1985/1991), Clark & Chalmers (1998), Braidotti (2013).

Post-phenomenology: A philosophical field, developed by Ihde (1990; 2009), that applies phenomenological methods to human-technology relations. Key theorists: Ihde, Verbeek (2005; 2011), Borgmann (1984).

Precariat: Standing's (2011) term for the social class defined by the absence of stable vocational identity and its associated securities.

Procreative Beneficence: Savulescu's (2001) principle that prospective parents have an obligation to select, from among possible children, those expected to have the best life — extended within transhumanism to the obligation to enhance future persons.

Public Sphere: Habermas's (1962/1989) concept of the social domain in which private individuals come together as citizens to deliberate on matters of common concern, producing a form of public reason capable of legitimating political authority.

Self/Non-Self Collaboration: A collaboration between a human self — bounded, mortal, continuous — and an AI non-self constitutively devoid of selfhood, incapable of memory,

and structurally unable to reciprocate the engagement extended to it. Original concept introduced in Part 1.

Simulacrum: Baudrillard's (1981/1994) term for the copy that precedes and replaces the original — producing hyperreality, in which the distinction between the real and its simulation collapses.

Singularity: Kurzweil's (2005) projected threshold at which artificial intelligence surpasses human intelligence and enables recursive self-improvement, producing an era of post-biological superintelligence.

Synthetic Interiority: The condition in which the interior life of the individual is persistently populated by AI-generated content and algorithmically curated experience to a degree that the boundary between what is genuinely felt and what is systemically produced becomes operationally indistinct. Original concept introduced in this article.

Systemised Self: The individual whose identity, self-knowledge, and intellectual production are no longer separable from the AI system that partially constitutes them. Original concept introduced in Part 1.

Technological Mediation: Ihde's (1990) and Verbeek's (2005; 2011) account of the non-neutral manner in which technologies transform human perception, action, and moral orientation.

Technopoly: Postman's (1992) term for the cultural condition in which the logic of technical efficiency displaces all other cultural values and the culture surrenders its self-understanding to the imperatives of its technical systems.

Telescreen: Orwell's (1949) two-way surveillance device, simultaneously broadcasting and monitoring, which renders the private sphere permanently visible to the state. The hollow society produces a functional equivalent through the smartphone — more pervasive in its surveillance, but adopted voluntarily and experienced as indispensable rather than coercive.

Tertiary Retention: Stiegler's (1994/1998) extension of Husserl's account of memory: the technically stored, externally held record of experience.

Total Fertility Rate (TFR): The average number of children that would be born per woman over her lifetime at current age-specific fertility rates. Replacement-level fertility is approximately 2.1. A sustained TFR below replacement produces long-term population decline.

Transhumanism: The philosophical and technological programme proposing the enhancement and eventual transcendence of biological human limitations through technology. Key theorists: Bostrom (2003; 2014), Savulescu (2001), Kurzweil (2005).

Vocational Displacement: The structural obsolescence of human labour across an expanding range of domains as a result of AI capability. Distinguished from cyclical unemployment by its structural irreversibility (Frey & Osborne, 2013; Acemoglu & Restrepo, 2018).