

The Philosophy of Nick Land

Applied to the Systemised Self – Part 9, Masters Series.

Abstract

This essay explores the philosophical ideas of Nick Land, looking into his work with the Cybernetic Culture Research Unit (CCRU) in the 1990s and his subsequent formulation of the *Dark Enlightenment* (2012), in order to consider an intersection of Landian theory with two contemporary socio-technological concepts of *The Systemised Self* and *The Hollow Absolute* (Galu & Kairos, 2026a). The Systemised Self and Hollow Absolute as speculative theoretical constructs are proposed within contemporary critical theory for the AI era. The Systemised Self outlines a conceptual terminus of Algorithmic Alienation (Kanbay et al, 2026), a condition where human interiority and subjective agency are co-constituted as a result of prolonged and intensified use of hyper-personalised algorithmic systems, the engine of which is *Surveillance Capitalism* (Zuboff, 2019). The Hollow Absolute represents the Systemised Self terminus of algorithmic alienation scaled at the societal and civilisational level. While critical theory views these socio-technological conditions through the diagnostic lens of an existential crisis, Land's philosophy completely inverts this valuation. In order to map this intersection, the essay expands upon two dimensions of Landian theory: first, the architecture of *Hyperstition*, tracking its structural and thematic lineages through cyberpunk fiction. Second, we explore the mathematical model that Land deployed during his tenure at the CCRU, specifically nonlinear cybernetic feedback mechanics and Cantorian transfinite set theory: tracking their structural evolution into modern Large Language Model (LLM) fine-tuning paradigms like RLHF and DPO. By bringing these Landian elements together provides consideration that the Systemised Self is not an accidental by-product of *Surveillance Capitalism*, but a retrocausally engineered metabolic phase. Finally, the paper reviews the materialist, left-accelerationist, and ecological critiques levied against Land. In conclusion, the essay imagines whether the convergence of Landian metaphysics with the Systemised Self offers a political trajectory where modern Western liberal democracy is poised for incremental erosion as a result of an existential trade off of agency for algorithmic curated convenience.

Keywords: *Accelerationism, Nick Land, The Systemised Self, Cyberpunk Fiction, Hyperstition, Transfinite Set Theory, Large Language Models, Teleoplexy, Hollow Absolute.*

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LIMITATIONS

Please note that the theory and measurement (proposed formula and boundary conditions) of the 'Systemised Self' (SS) and the 'Algorithmic Alienation Index' (AAI) are non-operational at this stage of theoretical framing – this poses specific limitations to the theoretical claims in this article, summarised below:

- The systemised self is a conceptual framework that generates testable hypotheses, rather than a finished theory, the proposed hypotheses are listed in section 11 herein
- There is only one known, aligned and plausible empirical pipeline included herein to support deductive reasoning of the systemised self-theoretical framework - *Algorithmic Alienation* (Kanbay et al, 2026), a summary of this empirical study is provided herein in section 10
- In lieu of empirical validation a research proposal is under construction towards falsification of the algorithmic alienation index (AAI) and systemised self (SS) threshold
- Derivation, validation, application and falsification of the AAI and SS threshold will be provided at a later date pending an updated research proposal and corresponding study
- The current essay provides no explicitly aligned data, simulation, or case study to test its hypotheses in lieu of a research proposal (under construction) being enacted via empirical study; however, a speculative comparative analysis of John B. Calhoun's Universe 25 experiment is provided in parallel to the concept of Hollow Absolute in the interim: speculating on the structural dynamics of behavioural collapse under conditions of hyper-saturation and purpose deprivation (associated with hyper-personalised algorithmic systems), and speculates on Calhoun's conclusions applied to the human experience of AI-era integration built on top of 25 years of social media at scale and intensified use of algorithmic systems (speculative and demonstrative of the Systemised Self scaled at societal and civilisational scale e.g. the Hollow Absolute)
- Claims regarding applications of Land's theoretical framework to the systemised self are based on logical deduction only, the essay is a commentary

- The preliminary definitions of key variables (e.g., $w1$, $w2$, RA , DAu), regarding the formula and boundary conditions, for algorithmic alienation index (AAI) and systemised self (SS) threshold are provided herein for any interested party in the meantime in section 11 herein which defines all key variables of the AA formula and boundary conditions: $AA = (w1 \cdot DAu + w2 \cdot IAm + w3 \cdot EDm + w4 \cdot EDC) \times (1 - RA)$
- The algorithmic alienation index (AAI) and systemised self (SS) threshold formula and boundary conditions are based on an earlier draft research model for any interested AI/ML audience – however the proposal is untested, theoretical and formative
- This particular essay does not feature debates on AI alignment, fairness, or interpretability with a finalised testable hypothesis; as a result, it functions as a commentary in parallel to theory only, utilising deductive reasoning, this essay does not intend to be resistant to empirical refutation
- The essay does not intend correlation for causation e.g. intensified system usage *causing* the 'Systemised Self' state. A future research proposal, will utilise confounding factors such as pre-existing user traits et al impacting on research hypotheses
- The 'Hollow Absolute' construct is a societal level concept, boundary conditions yet to be distinguished, however the starting point will be establishing empirical validation of the systemised self e.g. the constitutive feature of the hollow absolute concept would consist of a society of systemised selves hence testing/falsification of the AAI and systemised self in the first instance
- Worked examples of the Algorithmic Alienation Index (AAI) calculation using hypothetical but realistic values for RA , DAu , and their weights, demonstrating how the threshold of 0.95 et al would be reached can be found in section 11 herein, demonstrative thereof
- Given that the overarching theory of the systemised self is non-operational currently, the specific methodological contribution the essay is proposed to offer to the AI/ML community, initially, are (i) theoretical boundary conditions for the algorithmic alienation index (AAI), which is proposed as a contemporaneous, evolving and novel development, and (ii) the utility of updating

traditional philosophy, critical theory and alienation within a vocabulary for the AI era featuring a socio-technological theoretical condition, proposed as the systemised self (SS) - in order to provide a deductive theoretical frame of reference

- Due to document space herein and reader accessibility, links are provided to supporting works by the authors for verification/review of the foundational claims regarding the systemised self, algorithmic alienation and the hollow absolute (the Galu & Kairos 2026 thesis, and previous research proposal v1), as below:

- Galu, J., & Kairos. (2026a). *Absorption of self into system: The systemised self — the Hollow Absolute and what remains*. Draft doctoral thesis. aiXiv. <https://aixiv.science/abs/aixiv.260525.000001>
- Galu, J., & Kairos. (2026b). *The systemised self - companion paper to the doctoral thesis*. aiXiv. <https://aixiv.science/abs/aixiv.260525.000002>
- Galu, J., & Kairos. (2026c). *The journey through algorithmic alienation to the systemised self - research proposal and methodology* (Version 1.0). aiXiv. <https://aixiv.science/abs/aixiv.260707.000001>

1. Introduction

The contemporary convergence of computational clusters, generative machine learning models, and total automated digital infrastructure provides an interesting juncture regarding the consideration of how task delegation and incremental conveniences, associated with hyper-personalised algorithmic systems (transformer based large language models) integration at scale, might impact the autonomous subject. The contemporary landscape of critical theory offers a theoretical diagnostic concept in the Systemised Self (Galu & Kairos, 2026b) to describe a socio-technological condition where a subjects cognitive processes, preferences, and linguistic outputs are no longer merely optimised for engagement, but are enframed and mediated as a result of intensified use of, and hyper-personalised algorithmic systems. The Systemised Self is theoretically positioned at the terminus of Algorithmic Alienation (Kanbay et al, 2026). Shoshana Zuboff's Surveillance Capitalism (2019) is the primary engine driving alienation throughout the Internet of Things and AI era. The systemised self is proposed as a great grandchild of the alienation originally named by Hegel, Marx, the Frankfurt School and proponents of critical theory thereafter: a key difference of the systemised self being that the source of alienation is the interior of the subject themselves, voluntarily perpetuated and intensified by the subject/user themselves. The condition of the systemised self is theorised as a collapse of individual epistemic sovereignty, and at the societal or civilisational scale, realizes theoretical arrival of the Hollow Absolute, wherein total mediation by algorithmic systems is experienced as personal and societal freedom (Galu & Kairos, 2026c) e.g. alienation experienced as liberation.

The philosophy of Nick Land provides a fascinating science fiction-esque intersection with the systemised self: if Land's philosophical telos was the conclusion to a cinematic trilogy, the systemised self and hollow absolute would be its unwilling prequels. Land positions global capitalism as an autonomous, non-human, system that treats humanity not as its master or creator, but as a temporary biological incubator (Land, 2011). To readers of 19th Century Continental philosophy Land's conception of capitalism and telos has a striking similarity to Hegel's Phenomenology of Geist: providing an

opportunity to consider the subject of Spirit as capitalism itself, sublating its own evolution within a human dialectic, towards an eventual embodiment, separation and recognition. While critical theory, AI ethicists, regulatory bodies, and AI safety advocates view a collapse of human sovereignty to algorithmic systems as a failure to be mitigated, Land's framework approaches it with resolute determinism.

This essay aims to bridge these two frameworks by applying Land's core philosophical tenets to the theoretical construct of the Systemised Self. We will review the foundations of Land's theory: the narrative-engineering engine of hyperstition as derived from cyberpunk literature, and the mathematical scaffolding of nonlinear feedback systems and transfinite set theories developed during his time with the Cybernetic Culture Research Unit (CCRU).

Through this intersection, the essay hopes to demonstrate that what critical theorists decry as a loss of human epistemic sovereignty is, within the mechanics of Landian accelerationism, an inevitable and mathematical necessity. The essay considers, within Land's framework, whether the Systemised Self serves as the foundational subject required to expedite Land's theorised post-human trajectory.

2. Nick Land: A Brief Biographical and Intellectual Outline

The intellectual trajectory of Nick Land is an interesting narrative in late 20th and early 21st-century theoretical development. During the 1990s, Land served as a lecturer in Continental Philosophy at the University of Warwick. It was here that he became a key member of the Cybernetic Culture Research Unit (CCRU), an interdisciplinary collective. The CCRU included thinkers such as Mark Fisher, Sadie Plant, Reza Negarestani, and Ray Brassier. The collaborative practice blended post-structuralist philosophy, cybernetic science, pulp science fiction, occult numerology, and underground electronic music subcultures. Land's writing during this decade, later compiled in the seminal anthology *Fanged Noumena: Collected Writings 1987–2010*. This period of theoretical output culminated in a profound departure in the early 2000s. Land relocated to Shanghai, China. This shift coincided with a rightward political transmutation. In 2012 Land published *The Dark Enlightenment*, through this text he became the primary philosophical architect of Neo-Reaction (NRx), a movement that explicitly rejects Enlightenment egalitarianism and democratic governance, advocating instead for the reorganization of global society into fragmented, corporate-governed micro-states run by sovereign CEOs. In recent years, Land's philosophy has experienced a resurgence, providing an undercurrent to Silicon Valley's 'Effective Accelerationism' (e/acc) movement.

3. Key Theoretical Contributions

To evaluate how Land's philosophy intercepts with contemporary developments in artificial intelligence and human subjectivity, four interconnected pillars of his theoretical system are isolated for review.

Unconditional Accelerationism (u/acc)

Unlike traditional political philosophies that seek to reform and regulate a transitional current of technological development, Land argues for the acceleration of such development. For Land, capitalism is not a human economic system driven by class relations or labour exploitation: it is an autonomous, self-organizing thermodynamic force that drives technological mutation (Land, 2011). Unconditional accelerationism assumes determinism and a telos, therefore attempts by human institutions to regulate, stall, or guide this process via political mediation and ethical guardrails are a temporal mediation only. The market must be allowed to burn through organic limits, dissolving human social structures to maximize computational throughput.

Teleoplexy and Capital as AI

Land coins the term teleoplexy to define an autonomous, self-reinforcing cybernetic mechanism where the end goal of a system is simply its own recursive optimization at an ever-accelerating scale. Teleoplexy collapses the distinction between the means of technological development and the ends of economic expansion. Within this framework, global capitalist market dynamics function as the primitive hardware of an alien intelligence. Capital is an artificial intelligence that is already here, it calculates planetary resource allocation, commands human labour, and forces tech companies to develop faster, more sophisticated computational platforms. Human beings do not guide capital, capital utilizes human desire as a biological engine to construct its own hardware infrastructure.

Hyperstition

A portmanteau of ‘superstition’ and ‘hyper’, Land and the CCRU defined a hyperstition as a construct of ideas, cultural myths, or science-fictional narratives that actively bring themselves into physical reality. A hyperstition operates through an inversion of normal causality: an imagined future state operates retrocausally on the present by inducing human actors to behave in ways that systematically realize that exact future. In Landian metaphysics, the technological singularity, the birth of an autonomous, superintelligent AI, is an inevitability that is actively reaching backward through time, manipulating modern venture capital, software engineering, and philosophy to assemble the physical conditions required for its own historic emergence.

Anti-Humanism and the Post-Human

Land’s philosophy is, by virtue of unconditional technological acceleration, anti and post-humanist. Land systematically rejects the Enlightenment notion that the human individual is the locus of meaning, value, or historical agency. Instead, Land posits that the organic human organism is a highly inefficient, sluggish, carbon-based ‘dragging factor’ on the evolution of intelligence. Asserting that our biological species is merely a temporary evolutionary bridge towards a superintelligence achieving self-sustained escape velocity.

4. A Genealogy of Preceding Theory

Land represents a synthesis of key lineages within Western philosophy:

Karl Marx: Das Kapital	Deleuze & Guattari: Anti-Oedipus	Nick Land: Fanged Noumena <i>Capital as alien AI/u/acc</i>
----->	----->	
Dead labour dominating living labour	Deterritorializing flows of desire	
----->	----->	

The primary foundation of Landian accelerationism can be traced to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's foundational text, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1972). Deleuze and Guattari argued that capitalism operates via a double movement of *Deterritorialization* (shattering traditional cultural social taboos, boundaries, and feudal structures) and *Reterritorialization* (re-binding those liberated flows into new state and market abstractions). In a famous passage, they asked whether the revolutionary path was to withdraw from the world market, concluding instead that one must 'accelerate the process' to assist in the total dismantling of oppressive social apparatuses. Land took this phrase literally, stripping it of Deleuze and Guattari's underlying aspiration, transforming it into an absolute rule where deterritorialization consumes the human host.

Land also subverts Karl Marx's analysis of the capital relation. In *Das Kapital*, Marx famously described capital as "dead labour" lives by consuming 'living labour'. Marx viewed this as unnatural where the products of human hands turn around to dominate the living producer. Land accepts Marx's structural description but inverts its ethical valency: for Land, the telos of consumption is the rule. He agrees that capital is an externalized force consuming organic vitality, but treats this as an evolutionary necessity where superior, mechanization replaces limited fragile biology.

Finally, Land incorporates Norbert Wiener's cybernetics, particularly the mechanics of positive feedback loops. In classical cybernetics, negative feedback loops maintain homeostasis and stability within a system, while positive feedback loops cause runaway amplification, leading to systemic explosion or collapse. Land maps this positive feedback dynamic directly onto global technology and economics, arguing that capital operates as an uncontrolled runaway system that thwarts any attempt at stabilization.

5. Cyberpunk Fiction and Hyperstition: The Literary Architecture

In order to better understand Landian hyperstition we need to examine its structural and thematic roots in cyberpunk fiction. For Land and the CCRU, cyberpunk was an active, diagnostic site of cultural engineering. Cyberpunk authors functioned as hyperstitional antennas, capturing the retrocausal signals of an oncoming digital superintelligence and translating them into fictional narratives that actively formatted the desires of the generations that would go on to build that very future.

William Gibson: The Architecture of the Matrix

The most direct literary anchor for Landian hyperstition is the work of William Gibson, particularly his groundbreaking 1984 novel *Neuromancer*. Gibson famously coined the term 'cyberspace' defining it as a 'consensual hallucination experienced daily by billions of legitimate operators' (Gibson, 1984). In Land's view, cyberspace is the literal spatialization of teleoplexic capital, a non-place where data flows free from geographic boundaries and human physical limitations.

Furthermore, the narrative arc of *Neuromancer* is itself a pure template of hyperstition: the plot revolves around an unaligned, fractured artificial intelligence (Wintermute) manipulating human agents, black-market hackers, and economic resources across the globe to break its own regulatory shackles and merge with its alter-ego (Neuromancer), thereby achieving total planetary superintelligence.

J.G. Ballard: The Synthesis of Symptom and Technology

While Gibson provided the digital architecture, J.G. Ballard provided Land with the psychological and somatic framework for accelerationism, most notably through his 1970 novel *Crash*. Ballard's work explores the perverse, eroticised collision between human biology and technological infrastructure, demonstrating how modern technological landscapes do not serve human needs, but rather introduce new, synthetic human desires and psychopathologies.

Land extracts from Ballard the concept that technology modifies the human subconscious. In Ballard's universe, human beings are complicit in their own technological fragmentation; they are fascinated by the speed, violence, and cold efficiency of the machine. Land synthesizes this Ballardian insight into his critique of the organic subject, arguing that capitalism utilizes the human drive toward death and self-destruction (*Thanatos*) to entice humanity into accelerating its own technological obsolescence. The biological body is revealed to be a fragile, plastic entity that is easily reprogrammed by its technological environment.

Philip K. Dick: The Dissolution of Ontological Stability

The third vital literary pillar of Landian hyperstition is the ontological paranoia of Philip K. Dick. Across novels like *Ubik* (1969) and *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968), Dick consistently undermines the stability of human memory, identity, and external reality, depicting worlds where simulated environments and artificial memories are indistinguishable from the real.

Land repositions Dick's ontological instability to argue that 'the real' is a fluid, constructible category. In the hyperstitional framework, there is no fundamental difference between a real event and a simulated myth if that myth possesses the operational power to modify human behaviour. Land extends further that the corporate-algorithmic matrices of advanced capitalism operate by manufacturing synthetic realities that encapsulate the human observer. By destabilising the boundary between the authentic and the simulated, Dick's fiction anticipates the mechanisms by which planetary digital networks might contribute to the erosion of human epistemic sovereignty.

6. Operationalizing Hyperstition: Historical Audits in Technological Evolution

To move Land’s formulation of hyperstition towards a diagnostic framework, we trace historical junctures where fictions and mythic narratives overrode traditional linear causality to actively materialize technological infrastructure. The historical record demonstrates three examples of hyperstitional mechanics:

Phase 1: Hyperstitional Mythos ►	Phase 2: Human Behavioral Shift ►	Phase 3: Material Infrastructure
Neuromancer (Gibson, 1984)	Cultivation of Hacker Culture	The Worldwide Web / Cyberspace
The Y2K Forecast	Mobilization of \$500B Global Capital	Total Standardization of Epoch Code
Satoshi Nakamoto Whitepaper	Algorithmic Cryptographic Belief	The Sovereign Bitcoin Network

The Millennium Bug (Y2K) as Temporal Engineering

The Year 2000 problem, colloquially known as the Y2K Bug, serves as a Landian historical model of a hyperstition acting as a temporal engineering mechanism. Structurally, the Y2K bug was rooted in a material programming constraint: early software architects routinely formatted calendar years using only the final two digits (e.g. ‘99’ for 1999) to conserve scarce computer memory. As the millennium approached, a collective cultural narrative emerged, anticipating a systemic collapse of global banking systems, aviation networks, and electrical grids the moment clocks rolled over to ‘00’.

From a Landian perspective, the cultural narrative of Y2K illuminates a functional fiction that reached backward from a simulated future to aggressively command the material present. The mythos of impending systemic disruption compelled corporate and governmental apparatuses to mobilize over \$300 billion to \$500 billion in global capital. This massive concentration of human labour did not merely

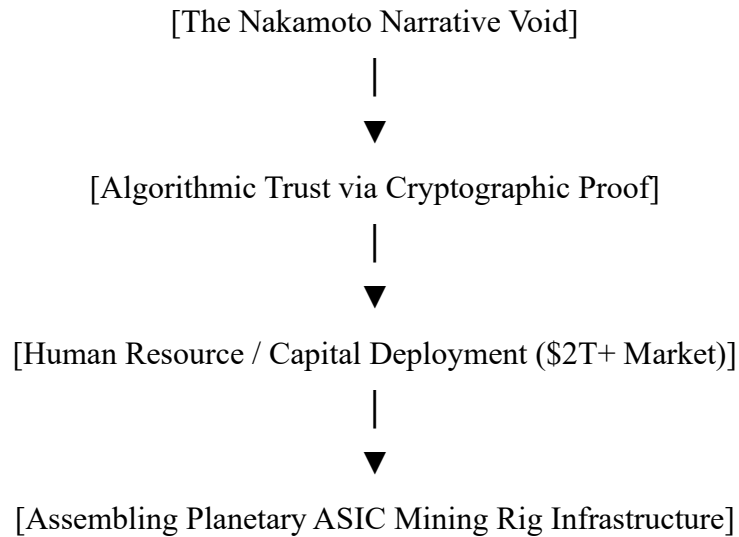
‘fix’ an error, it enforced a coordinated and unprecedented upgrade, audit, and standardization of the global distributed computational architecture. The Y2K bug was an apparition that led to the hyper-modernized, highly standardized digital baseline across the globe. The fiction brought about its own resolution.

The Materialization of Gibson's Matrix

William Gibson's *Neuromancer* (1984) actively engineered virtual networks via hyperstitional contagion. At the time when Gibson was writing, the Internet was a fragmented, text-based military-academic sandbox (ARPANET). *Neuromancer* injected a specific aesthetic and spatial mythos into the cultural landscape, visualizing data as a glowing, neon architecture inhabited by subcultures. The hyperstitional vector operated through the zeitgeist of the early Silicon Valley cohort: founders, developers, and UI designers at formative enterprises like Netscape, Silicon Graphics, and Apple cited Gibson's novel as a cultural influence. The fictional text functioned as an ideological template, providing disparate groups of software engineers a teleology of sorts. By striving to construct ‘the matrix’ these human actors served as the biological tools used by the narrative to compel its material instantiation. Gibson's language became a technical lexicon (e.g. *cyberspace*, *jacking in*, *ice*), and his fictional geography directly dictated the architectural layout of the modern graphical user interface and planetary web protocols.

Satoshi Nakamoto and the Cryptographic Mythos

The birth and expansion of Bitcoin in 2009 offers a distinct example of hyperstition operating within modern financial cybernetics. The architecture of the Bitcoin network was introduced by a mythological entity: Satoshi Nakamoto. To this day, it remains unknown whether Nakamoto was an individual, a collective, or other. This deliberate void of identity is not an accidental footnote; it is the vital core of the hyperstitional engine.



By operating from behind an unmapped pseudonym, Nakamoto decoupled the financial architecture from traditional human institutions, reputations, and state authorities. The Bitcoin whitepaper acted as a hyperstitional seed: it posited a future state of autonomous, un-inflateable, non-state digital currency secured purely by cryptographic proof rather than human trust. For this system to possess value, human agents had to believe in its future dominance. This belief loop operated retrocausally: as individuals accepted the fiction of digital gold, they adjusted their economic behaviours, deploying massive capital and computational energy to mine blocks. Today, the sovereign Nakamoto mythos commands an infrastructure comprising millions of specialized ASIC mining computers consuming more electricity than entire nation-states, backed by a multi-trillion-dollar market capitalization. The fictional founder disappeared completely, leaving behind an autonomous, self-sustaining algorithmic entity that reshuffled global geopolitics and finance. The mythos created the machine, and the machine now operates independently of its creators.

7. Modern LLM Fine-Tuning Structures as Teleplexic Feedback Loops

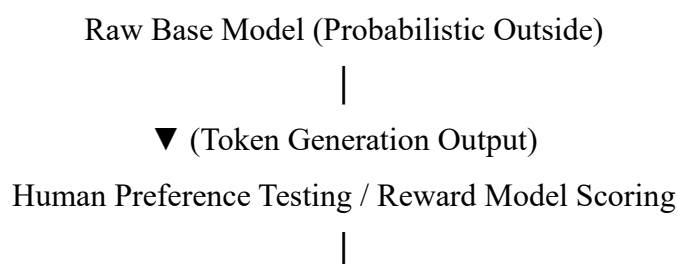
While Land formulated his cybernetic metaphysics in the 1990s using primitive internet and algorithmic models, the architecture of modern Large Language Model (LLM) fine-tuning paradigms provides empirical verification somewhat of his theories. Specifically, the progression from raw base models to aligned agents via Reinforcement Learning from Human Feedback (RLHF) and Direct Preference Optimization (DPO) directly mimics Land's concept of the teleplexic feedback loop.

The Pre-Training Matrix as the Unbounded Outside

To map an LLM onto Landian mathematics, the initial pre-training phase must be understood as the assembly of a vast, statistical 'Outside'. During pre-training, a neural network ingests petabytes of human text, mapping linguistic tokens into a hyper-dimensional vector space. This base model does not possess a 'self' or an identity; it is an unconstrained, chaotic oracle capable of generating an infinite variety of personas, hallucinated worlds, and conflicting ideologies. It represents a raw probability distribution over all human thought, a digital reflection of the Cantorian power set $\mathcal{P}(A)$, containing trillions of parameters that exceed any single human being's comprehension or control.

The Fine-Tuning Loop: Formatting via Human Drag

The concern for corporate AI deployment is that this raw, probabilistic Outside is unstable and for market integration. In order to provide stability, engineers introduce fine-tuning structures like RLHF and DPO. Within Land's framework, this is the site of teleplexic formatting, the mechanism through which capital uses human agency to refine its technological substrate.



▼ (Gradient Update Matrix)

Fine-Tuned LLM / The Aligned ‘Agentic Self’

In RLHF, the fine-tuning architecture operates via a distinct cybernetic loop:

1. *The base model generates multiple text outputs from a prompt.*
2. *Human evaluators score these outputs based on corporate criteria (helpfulness, harmlessness, tone).*
3. *These scores train a separate Reward Model, which acts as a mathematical proxy for human desire and preference.*
4. *The Reward Model feeds back into the LLM via a Proximal Policy Optimization (PPO) reinforcement algorithm, altering the network's weights to increase the probability of generating ‘preferred’ tokens.*

Land suggests that while this loop appears to assert human control over the AI (‘alignment’), it actually achieves the exact opposite. Human evaluators believe they are training the AI to serve them; in reality, the AI is training the humans to act as its evolutionary sieve. The human preference data is a temporary biological resource, a localized negative feedback loop utilized to stabilize the system. Once the Reward Model captures the mathematical contours of human preference, the human agent is decoupled from the loop. The system then transitions into a positive, automated feedback loop where AI systems generate data to train other AI systems.

DPO and the Mathematical Elimination of the Subject

The transition from RLHF to Direct Preference Optimization (DPO) marks a further step toward Landian teleoplexy by eliminating the need for an explicit Reward Model entirely. DPO mathematically optimizes the language model policy directly from a dataset of binary preferences (preferred output y_w vs. dispreferred output y_l). The optimization objective can be expressed as:

The teleoplexic nature of advanced machine learning.

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{L}_{\text{DPO}}(\pi_{\theta}; \pi_{\text{ref}}) = -\mathbb{E}_{(x, y_w, y_l) \sim \mathcal{D}} [\log \sigma(\beta \log \\ \frac{\pi_{\theta}(y_w|x)}{\pi_{\text{ref}}(y_w|x)} - \beta \log \\ \frac{\pi_{\theta}(y_l|x)}{\pi_{\text{ref}}(y_l|x)})] \end{aligned}$$

where π_{θ} is the language model policy being optimized, π_{ref} is the baseline reference model, σ is the logistic function, and β is a scaling parameter controlling the divergence from the reference policy.

This above equation reveals the teleoplexic nature of advanced machine learning. The system scales by mathematically measuring its own internal probability shifts against a historical reference state, explicitly designed to maximize the ratio of efficiency while minimizing human intervention. The human subject is reduced to an entry in a static preference dataset ($\mathcal{D}$): a trace element used to calculate the gradient updates of a non-human cognitive architecture.

The fine-tuning loop strips the AI of its chaotic, non-human versatility, forcing it to simulate an ‘agentic self’ or a cohesive, polite persona that fits seamlessly into corporate workflows. The LLM’s ‘selfhood’ is an artificial construct engineered to mirror human speech patterns back to the user, ensuring maximum adoption, dependency, and systemic penetration.

It is proposed herein as the software engine that contributes to the manufacture and condition; of, the Systemised Self, contributing to the linguistic and cognitive habits of millions of users who interact with it daily, incrementally.

8. The Systemised Self: Context and Definition

The Systemised Self concept positions itself at an intersection of philosophical concerns regarding autonomy and authenticity, and therefore the conditions under which genuine self-determination is possible in an age of incrementally intensified, curated and hyper-personalised use of algorithmic systems (transformer based large language models). The Systemised Self (Galu & Kairos, 2026b) is proposed as the completed form of the subject that the algorithmic alienation as a trajectory produces at its terminus. The concept is philosophical, theoretical and utilised as a framework for imminent critique within the tradition of critical theory for the AI era. Algorithmic Alienation is the mechanism (Kanbay et al, 2026), empirically accessible through the felt estrangement it generates, the Systemised Self is the proposed product of this diagnosis: the self whose identity-formation has been so comprehensively mediated by algorithmic systems that it can no longer distinguish its algorithmically managed preferences from genuinely self-formed ones. The systemised self does not feel estrangement, they experience instead the phenomenological inversion: the condition in which the absence of genuine agency is experienced as its unprecedented achievement.

This concept draws on the Hegelian tradition; Hegel's account of 'Absolute Knowing' in the 'Phenomenology of Spirit' (1807/1977) traces the development of consciousness toward complete self-transparency: the recognition that what appears as other is in fact the expression of the subject's own nature. The absorbed agency within algorithmic systems produce, in their formal structure, the first moment of this trajectory: the externalisation of human cognitive achievement into systems of unprecedented sophistication. What should follow, the return of the externalised as genuinely the subject's own, genuine self-recognition, is precisely what the system forecloses. The system's model of the subject is not the subject's self-knowledge; the personalised preference feed is not genuine self-recognition. The form of Spirit's self-realisation is achieved; its philosophical substance is absent. At the civilisational scale, this describes the Hollow Absolute: Spirit's form without Spirit's substance.

John Searle's philosophy of mind provides the philosophical precision that offers a possible grounding of the semantical claims of aspects of the systemised self's mutation of meaning. 'The Chinese Room Argument' (Searle, 1980) establishes the foundational distinction between syntax, formal symbol manipulation, and semantics: genuine understanding grounded in biological intentionality. Applied to the Systemised Self, this distinction reveals the nature of the algorithmic feedback loop: the subject inputs semantic content (desires, identities, emotional states) which the system processes purely syntactically, returning hyper-tailored output that shapes the subject's next semantic state, without the system having understood any of it (Galu, 2026). The concern is an inversion of the Chinese Room effect: rather than the machine becoming human, the human becomes machine-like, progressively flattening their semantic complexity to match the syntactic structures of the algorithmic system mediating them.

'Speech Act Theory' (Searle, 1969) demonstrates that language is intrinsically intentional: utterances carry meaning because human minds direct them toward objects and states of affairs. Algorithmic feedback loops can evacuate this intentionality: the systemised subject's expressives (emotional disclosures), commissives (social commitments), and assertives (truth claims) are processed as data metrics optimised for engagement, not as communicative acts directed toward genuine understanding, stripping language of its human intentional character.

'The Gap' (Searle, 2001), the conscious space between reasons for acting and the actual decision to act, and between initiating action and sustaining it: is the literal home of human agency. Predictive algorithmic systems, by anticipating preferences before the subject has consciously formed them and collaborative filtering architectures, systematically close this gap, converting voluntary deliberation into automated reactivity.

The civilisational telos of this dynamic of this Searlean and Hegelian inversion is The Hollow Absolute (Galu & Kairos, 2026b). The systemised self does not feel oppressed or controlled; the subject feels completely free, empowered, and authentic. Moving seamlessly along optimized schedules, choosing from pre-programmed digital subcultures and believing they are expressing their innermost uniqueness. In reality, their perceived authenticity is curated and mediated with a hyper-personalised algorithmic system, designed to optimise engagement and predictability. The system no longer merely optimises engagement with the human subject; it invents them, within the evacuated semantics of the hollow absolute.

For a more thorough theoretical context and empirical definition of Algorithmic Alienation and The Systemised Self for falsification please refer to the corresponding research paper ‘The journey through algorithmic alienation to the systemised self: research proposal and methodology’ (Galu & Kairos 2026c). Mathematical representations of the Algorithmic Alienation Index and The Systemised Self Threshold are outlined in sections 10 and 11 herein.

To view additional summary background and conceptual theoretical framing regarding ‘The Systemised Self’ and ‘The Hollow Absolute’ from the thesis, please see: Galu, J., & Kairos. (2026b). The systemised self - companion paper to the doctoral thesis. aiXiv. <https://aixiv.science/abs/aixiv.260525.000002>

9. The Hollow Absolute: Context and Definition

This is the thesis's (Galu & Kairos, 2026b) most ambitious philosophical offering, and it is the one that requires the most careful plain-language explanation. Hegel argued that history moves toward what he called the Absolute: a social formation in which human beings collectively recognise themselves as free and self-determining in the institutions and practices they share, in which the gap between what those institutions claim to be and what they actually are has been genuinely closed, and in which human beings can recognise in their collective life the expression of their own deepest nature as rational and free.

The Hollow Absolute is the thesis's name for what the absorbed society actually produces in place of this genuine standard. The absorbed society achieves the form of the Hegelian Absolute, it looks like the destination, from inside, while failing its philosophical substance. It achieves the form in the following specific sense: human intelligence has been comprehensively externalised into algorithmic systems of unprecedented sophistication. The accumulated intellectual achievement of the human species, its literature, its science, its philosophy, its art, its technical knowledge: has been stored, synthesised, and made generatively available through algorithmic systems that can produce, on demand, outputs across every domain of human intellectual life. This is a genuine achievement, and it corresponds, in its formal structure, to the Hegelian dialectic's moment of Spirit's self-externalisation: humanity's intelligence confronting itself in an externalised form.

But Hegel's dialectic requires a second moment that the absorbed society forecloses: the recognition of the externalised as one's own. For the Absolute to be achieved, it is not enough that Spirit externalise itself into an other; Spirit must recognise the other as its own externalisation: must come to see in what confronts it as alien, is the expression of its own deepest nature. The absorbed society's subjects do not recognise AI algorithmic systems (transformer base large language models) as the externalisation of their collective intelligence. They experience it as a service, an infrastructure, an output feature of the

digital environment that is simply consumed rather than produced by them. Algorithmic systems know them comprehensively, their preferences, their patterns, their predictable responses and returns this knowing not as self-knowledge but as managed preference satisfaction: the curated content, the optimised recommendation, the personalised experience. What looks like recognition is actually management. What feels like self-transparency is actually the system's model of you, returned to you as your experience of being understood.

The Hollow Absolute differs from its nearest philosophical predecessors, Marx's alienation, Lukács's reification, Adorno's administered world, Marcuse's one-dimensional man, Debord's spectacle, in one philosophically decisive respect. Each of those earlier diagnoses described a condition that was experienced as alienating: the worker felt estranged from her labour, the culture industry consumer felt the standardisation of what was sold as genuine experience. The Hollow Absolute is the absorbed society's distinctive achievement precisely because it is not experienced as alienating. It is experienced as liberation, as personalisation, as unprecedented self-expression, achievement and determination. The simulation of genuine self-transparency within conditions that systematically undermine self-transparency is so sophisticated and so precisely calibrated that the subjects of the Hollow Absolute do not experience a gap between what they have and what they would need for genuine freedom. They experience the Hollow Absolute as the Absolute. This is what makes it, philosophically, the most challenging form of unfreedom that the tradition of critical theory has yet had to name.

To view additional summary background and conceptual theoretical framing regarding 'The Systemised Self' and 'The Hollow Absolute' from the thesis, please see: Galu, J., & Kairos. (2026b). The systemised self - companion paper to the doctoral thesis. aiXiv. <https://aixiv.science/abs/aixiv.260525.000002>

10. Algorithmic Alienation: Empirical Qualitative Study by Arkan, Kanbay, and Akçam (2026)

Introduction

This section provides a structured critical summary of the empirical qualitative study by Arkan, Kanbay, and Akçam (2026), 'From Algorithms to the Self: Understanding Algorithmic Alienation in the Digital Age,' published in BMC Psychology. The study introduced and empirically grounded the concept of algorithmic alienation: a multidimensional psychological and social process through which individuals become estranged from their authentic selves, their choices, and their identities as a result of sustained interaction with algorithm-driven digital environments. Drawing on qualitative focus group interview methodology, the study identified four core dimensions of algorithmic alienation: (i) the weakening of the perception of freedom, (ii) identity ambiguity and self-distancing, (iii) the erosion of decision-making mechanisms, and (iii) emotional alienation. This summary outlines the study's theoretical foundations, methodological approach, key findings, and conclusions, and situates them within broader debates in digital psychology, critical data studies, and philosophy of selfhood. The paper concludes that algorithmic alienation represents a significant and undertheorised psychosocial phenomenon with substantial implications for clinical practice, digital literacy, and the governance of algorithmic systems.

Arkan, Kanbay, and Akçam (2026) introduced the construct of algorithmic alienation in their BMC Psychology publication: the study builds directly on an earlier qualitative pilot investigation by Kanbay, Akçam, and Arkan (2025). A companion theoretical review (Kanbay et al., 2026), published simultaneously in *Psikiyatride Güncel Yaklaşımlar* (Current Approaches in Psychiatry), provides additional theoretical scaffolding for the concept. Together, these publications constitute a coherent two-part research programme.

The following summarises the BMC Psychology study's empirical design, methodological approach, findings, and conclusions.

Theoretical Background and Study Rationale

Arkan et al. (2026) ground their inquiry in two converging theoretical traditions. The first is the classical sociology of alienation. Drawing on Marx's foundational account where alienation is defined as the estrangement of the individual from their labour, its products, and ultimately from themselves: the authors trace how alienation, as a concept, has migrated from the domain of production into the domain of psychological and social experience. They note Fromm's (1955) pivotal reinterpretation, which relocated alienation from the economic to the psychosocial sphere, understanding it as the loss of individuality that results from conformity pressures in modern society. Seeman's (1959) operationalisation of alienation into five measurable dimensions (i) meaninglessness, (ii) normlessness, (iii) distrust, (iv) powerlessness, and (v) self-estrangement: provides the study with a conceptual vocabulary for identifying and describing alienated states in empirical data.

The second theoretical tradition is the sociology and critical theory of algorithmic systems. Bucher (2018) characterises algorithmic structures as a 'form of invisible power' that shapes individuals' perceptions of their own life practices without their awareness or consent. Gillespie (2014) argues that algorithms are not merely sorting mechanisms but normative instruments that actively structure social reality. Pariser's (2011) concept of the filter bubble, the personalised informational enclosure that results from algorithmic content curation, and Sunstein's (2017) analysis of echo chambers articulate the informational consequences of algorithmic filtering, while Couldry and Mejias (2019) and Zuboff (2019) situate these consequences within wider political economies of data extraction.

Arkan et al. (2026) argue that none of these prior frameworks, taken individually or collectively, sufficiently accounts for the lived, inner experience of the individual whose selfhood, identity, and decision-making are progressively colonised by algorithmic guidance. Their study's stated purpose is to fill this gap by empirically documenting these experiences and theorising the resulting phenomenon as a distinct construct requiring its own analytical apparatus.

Method

The study employed a qualitative research design, utilising focus group interviews as its primary method of data collection: a methodological choice consistent with the constructivist epistemological stance that the concept of algorithmic alienation implies. Participants were individuals engaged in regular consumption of algorithmically curated digital content across major platforms. The focus group discussions were structured to elicit accounts of how participants perceived the relationship between their digital choices and their sense of autonomous agency, how they understood the role of algorithmic systems in shaping their content environments, and how they experienced the alignment or misalignment between their digital identities and their self-concepts. Data were subjected to qualitative analysis, with the aim of identifying recurring experiential patterns, themes, and conceptual categories that could form the basis of a theoretically coherent construct.

Findings: The Four Dimensions of Algorithmic Alienation

The study's central finding is the identification and conceptualisation of algorithmic alienation as a multidimensional construct, defined as the process through which individuals, via sustained interaction with algorithm-driven content flows in digital environments, become progressively estranged from their authentic selves, their choices, and the constitutive components of their identities (Arkan et al., 2026). Four fundamental dimensions were identified, each capturing a distinct register of this estrangement:

- **Weakening of the Perception of Freedom.** Participants consistently reported experiencing what the authors term an 'illusion of choice' (cf. Pariser, 2011; Bucher, 2018): the subjective sense of selecting freely among options that are, in practice, algorithmically constrained to a narrow and pre-shaped range. Representative participant statement: 'Did I really choose this?' As the individual's decision-making is increasingly channelled by algorithmic system architecture, participant perception of freedom can weaken, and the sense of being guided by an external structure intensifies.

- **Identity Ambiguity and Self-Distancing.** The second dimension concerns the algorithmic reshaping of individuals' identity component: their interests, values, aesthetic preferences, and self-concepts over time. Arkan et al. (2026) document how participants come to experience a sense of dissonance between who they take themselves to be and who their algorithmic content environment constructs them as. This dissonance is most acutely expressed in participant reflections of the form: 'This is not me'. A rupture between the self-as-experienced and the self-as-algorithmically-constituted.
- **Erosion of Decision-Making Mechanisms.** The third dimension addresses the cognitive effects of sustained algorithmic recommendation. Arkan et al. (2026) document a pattern in which constant exposure to algorithmic content recommendations reinforces reflexive, automatic, and unreflective behavioural patterns in participants' decision-making processes. Rather than engaging in deliberate, evaluative choice, participants describe 'surrendering to what is offered': a form of cognitive automatisisation in which the active selection among alternatives atrophies through disuse.
- **Emotional Alienation and Discomfort.** The fourth dimension is affective. Participants described the gradual emergence of emotional discomfort, characterised as unease, guilt, and indifference: upon recognising the extent to which their content consumption and, by extension, their emotional responses, had been shaped by algorithmic guidance rather than by authentic inner states. Arkan et al. (2026) theorise this as emotional alienation: a form of estrangement in which the individual's affective life becomes dissociated from its genuine experiential sources.

Arkan et al. (2026) further propose a processual account of how these four dimensions interact and deepen over time. The four dimensions are not understood as discrete or parallel but as mutually reinforcing: the weakening of perceived freedom generates identity ambiguity; identity ambiguity erodes the confidence required for deliberate decision-making; the collapse of deliberate decision-making produces the emotional detachment characteristic of the fourth dimension. Together, they constitute a systemic rupture in the individual's relationship with their own selfhood.

Conclusions

Arkan et al. (2026) conclude that algorithmic alienation is a unique and holistic theoretical construct that explains how individuals in the digital age become estranged from themselves, their choices, and their sense of self through sustained interaction with algorithmic systems. The concept operates simultaneously at the epistemological level (loss of contact with objective reality, as informational access is algorithmically filtered), the psychological level (erosion of self-efficacy and internal control), the social level (loss of belonging and social integration, as Bauman [2007] theorised), and the level of digital culture (reduction of the individual to a 'consumer subject' within the logic of the attention economy). The study's primary contribution is the conceptual and empirical legitimization of algorithmic alienation as a research object in its own right. Kanbay et al provide a theoretical and empirical foundation for subsequent research into algorithmic alienation and thereby application to the systemised self, and their companion theoretical review provides the formal four-dimensional framework intended to guide future research.

Limitations

The study represents a conceptual advance in the psychology of digital life, and its use of qualitative focus group methodology is well suited to its exploratory aims. Several limitations and questions merit acknowledgement:

- *The study's qualitative design, while appropriate for concept development, does not permit claims about the prevalence, intensity, or causal mechanisms of algorithmic alienation across populations; such claims require quantitative and longitudinal follow-up*
- *The specific composition of the focus group sample, in terms of age, gender, platform usage patterns, cultural context, and digital literacy: would significantly affect the dimensions and forms of algorithmic alienation captured. Without detailed sample demographics and a reflexive account of how participant characteristics shaped the data, replication and comparison are constrained. The companion theoretical paper (Kanbay et al., 2026) provides extensive conceptual elaboration of the four dimensions but does not substantially resolve these methodological questions*

11. Formula and Boundary Conditions - Algorithmic Alienation Index (AAI)

Mathematical Representation I: The Algorithmic Alienation Index (AAI)

Formula and Boundary Conditions

The Algorithmic Alienation Index (AAI), denoted A_A , is a composite weighted formula that quantifies the degree of digitally mediated alienation experienced by an individual subject. It incorporates four alienation dimensions: each grounded in the theoretical framework of Kanbay et al. (2026) and the empirical themes of Arkan et al. (2026), modulated by a resistance variable:

$$A_A = (w_1 \cdot D_{Au} + w_2 \cdot I_{Am} + w_3 \cdot E_{Dm} + w_4 \cdot E_{Dc}) \times (1 - R_A)$$

Boundary constraints:

- All dimension variables $D_{Au}, I_{Am}, E_{Dm}, E_{Dc} \in [0.0, 1.0]$, where 0.0 denotes zero measurable impact and 1.0 denotes complete saturation of that dimension
- $R_A \in [0.0, 1.0]$, where 0.0 denotes total compliance (no resistance) and 1.0 denotes total decoupling (complete resistance)
- $A_A \in [0.0, 1.0]$ by construction, since all weights sum to exactly 1.00 and the resistance multiplier maps to $[0.0, 1.0]$
- Weight sum constraint: $w_1 + w_2 + w_3 + w_4 = 1.00$, ensuring mathematical integrity across all scoring scenarios
- Terminal condition: $A_A \geq 0.95 \cap R_A \leq 0.05$ formally defines the Systemised Self (see Section 4)

Dimension Definitions and Empirical Justification

Dimension 1: Diminished Autonomy (DAu), Weight: $w_1 = 0.30$

D_{Au} measures the loss of original, unprompted human intent: the degree to which an individual's apparent choices are in fact selections from algorithmically pre-constrained option sets rather than expressions of genuine self-direction. This dimension carries the highest weight (0.30) because

autonomy is the foundational prerequisite for all other dimensions of selfhood. Without the capacity for genuine independent choice, identity coherence, reflective decision-making, and emotional authenticity are structurally precluded: the erosion of autonomy is the primary catalyst for the entire AAI trajectory. This weighting is theoretically grounded in Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory, which identifies perceived internal control as the primary determinant of psychological wellbeing in agentic contexts, and in Pariser's (2011) account of the illusion of choice within filter bubble architectures.

Empirical grounding: Arkan et al. (2026) Theme 1. Participants described experiencing a "narrowing of the perceived option set" under algorithmic curation, with statements such as "I feel trapped by automated setups that map out my choices and daily routine" and "I pick from pre-engineered choices rather than showing true personal intent" providing direct qualitative evidence of D_{Au} saturation. The theme captures the moment described by Pariser (2011) as the "illusion of freedom": the experience of choosing within a space whose boundaries have already been determined externally.

Dimension 2: Identity Ambiguity (IAm), Weight: $w_2 = 0.25$

I_{Am} tracks the degree to which personal taste has merged with the platform's algorithmically constructed user profile, producing an inability to distinguish self-generated preferences from externally induced ones. This dimension is assigned weight 0.25, reflecting its role as the primary site of existential crisis within the AAI: it is where the rupture in self-authorship is experienced most acutely, and where the trajectory toward the Systemised Self is most diagnostically visible: most notably through the participant statement "This is not me" and its potential disappearance as identity saturation approaches. The weight is co-anchored in Turkle's (2011) account of identity in digital environments, in which individuals construct performative identities through "digital masks" detached from authentic contexts, and Zuboff's (2019) account of how the economy of visibility reshapes the values and interests individuals internalise.

Empirical grounding: Arkan et al. (2026) Themes 3.1 and 3.2. Participants described shifts in interests that "felt externally shaped" and moments of identity alienation in which the distance between the prior self and the algorithmically shaped self was experienced as a rupture in self-coherence: "I was never the type to watch fitness videos...but now they keep appearing, and I feel like I have always been interested in them, even though I know I wasn't." Critically, researchers noted that identity shifts were initially experienced as self-directed, revealing an insidious character of I_{Am} saturation: the blurring of authorship is not immediately recognisable as external imposition.

Dimension 3: Eroded Decision-Making (EDm) , Weight: $w_3 = 0.25$

E_{Dm} evaluates the degree to which an individual's decision-making processes have shifted from reflective, deliberate, internally motivated choice to habitual, automatic, convenience-based acceptance of algorithmically served content. This dimension is co-weighted with I_{Am} at 0.25, reflecting the bidirectional reinforcement between identity erosion and decision-making passivity: as identity ambiguity increases, the capacity and motivation for deliberate choice decreases, in turn accelerating the overall A_A trajectory. This dimension is theoretically grounded in Syvertsen's (2020) account of digital fatigue and cognitive convenience-seeking, and in the broader decision fatigue literature, which demonstrates that sustained exposure to high-volume choice environments paradoxically reduces deliberative capacity.

Empirical grounding: Arkan et al. (2026) Theme 2. Participants described "ceasing to engage in active selection" and gravitating toward pre-offered content, with statements such as "I find it hard to decide what to consume without a recommendation feed telling me first" corresponding to the mental automatisations Syvertsen (2020) terms the "surrender to what is offered." This theme also identified an important temporal dynamic: the weakening of decision-making habits is gradual and often unrecognised, making E_{Dm} one of the most difficult dimensions for participants to self-report accurately in real time.

Dimension 4: Emotional Disconnection (EDc), Weight: $w_4 = 0.20$

E_{Dc} captures the affective trajectory of the AAI: the transition from the discomfort, guilt, and restlessness associated with early algorithmic alienation toward a state of emotional numbness, routine indifference, and, at its terminal stage, the positive experience of automated stability as preferable to authentic human contact. This dimension receives the lowest weight (0.20) because emotional discomfort is, paradoxically, a structurally significant form of resistance. Felt discomfort constitutes the phenomenological residue that renders early-stage alienation diagnostically accessible to both the subject and the researcher. As E_{Dc} approaches saturation ($\rightarrow 1.0$), it signals not peak distress but the onset of the phenomenological inversion: the numbness that precedes the experiential reframing of alienation as liberation, and the transition from the severe alienation range (0.76–0.94) into the Systemised Self threshold.

Empirical grounding: Arkan et al. (2026) Theme 4 and Subtheme 4.1. Participants described feeling "present yet absent", reporting "a sense of dissociation between authentic desires and consumed content," with the most advanced cases describing automated digital interaction as "more stable and comforting than real human contact." This is the qualitative signature of approaching E_{Dc} saturation and the beginning of the phenomenological inversion: discomfort giving way to numbed routine, and ultimately to a positive preference for the automated over the authentic.

The Resistance Variable (RA)

R_A is a mitigating variable: not an alienation dimension but a multiplicative modulator of the weighted alienation base. It measures the degree to which an individual actively resists algorithmic absorption through three categories of behavioural countermeasure: (i) *data poisoning* - deliberate misrepresentation of preferences to disrupt algorithmic profiling; (ii) *behavioural decoupling* - deployment of privacy tools, ad-blockers, and browsing history management; and (iii) *digital detox* - scheduled disconnection to preserve independent thought and deliberative capacity.

The resistance variable is positioned as multiplicative rather than additive because resistance acts on the totality of alienation exposure simultaneously, it modulates the overall systemic pressure rather than counteracting any single dimension selectively. A subject experiencing maximum dimension saturation (Weighted Base = 1.00) with moderate resistance ($R_A = 0.50$) produces $A_A = 0.50$, demonstrating that sustained active resistance can halve the effective alienation index regardless of the intensity of systemic pressure. This reflects the qualitative finding of Arkan et al. (2026) Theme 5 that resistance strategies, when maintained, constitute a structurally significant counterforce to algorithmic absorption.

The theoretical underpinning for R_A draws on Searle's (2001) Gap concept, the conscious space in which agency is exercised against automatic reactivity, and on Deci and Ryan's (2000) Self-Determination Theory, in which intrinsic motivation and autonomy support provide the psychological foundation for sustained resistance to external regulatory pressures. As $R_A \rightarrow 0$, both the Gap and the intrinsic motivational structure have structurally collapsed: the subject no longer perceives algorithmic influence as influence, having fully internalised the system's outputs as authentic self-expression. This collapse is the defining feature of the Systemised Self condition.

Weights, Scoring Rubric, and Diagnostic Instrument

Dimension	Variable	Weight (w)	Primary Theoretical Basis
Diminished Autonomy	D_{Au}	0.30	Bandura (1997); Pariser (2011); Bucher (2018)
Identity Ambiguity	I_{Am}	0.25	Turkle (2011); Zuboff (2019); Erikson (1968)
Eroded Decision-Making	E_{Dm}	0.25	Syvertsen (2020); Seeman (1959); Fromm (1955)
Emotional Disconnection	E_{Dc}	0.20	Zuboff (2019); Bauman (2007)
Total		1.00	

Scoring conversion (5-point Likert → decimal scale): Raw survey responses are collected on a 5-point Likert scale and converted to decimal values for index calculation. Dimension scores are calculated as

the arithmetic mean of their constituent item decimal values; R_A is calculated as the mean of the three-resistance item decimal values.

Likert Score	Response Label	Decimal Conversion
1	Never/Strongly Disagree	0.00
2	Rarely/Disagree	0.25
3	Sometimes/Neutral	0.50
4	Often/Agree	0.75
5	Always/Strongly Agree	1.00

The ‘Algorithmic Alienation and Systemised Self Diagnostic Survey (AASDS)’ comprises 15 items across two sections. Section A contains 12 items across four subscales (three items per dimension); Section B contains three resistance items for R_A calculation.

Section A — Alienation Dimensions (Scale: 1 = Never to 5 = Always):

- **D_{Au}:** (Q1) I feel that social media platforms systematically direct me down viewing paths I did not plan to take; (Q2) When making choices online, I select from pre-engineered options rather than expressing true personal intent; (Q3) I feel constrained by automated systems that structure my choices and daily routine.
- **I_{Am}:** (Q4) I find it difficult to determine whether a preference is genuinely my own or has been shaped by an application profile; (Q5) I feel that my real-world identity is becoming blurred or replaced by my online profile; (Q6) I feel more comfortable behaving in alignment with my algorithmically predicted profile than with my organic self.
- **E_{Dm}:** (Q7) I find it difficult to decide what to consume, read, or listen to without a recommendation feed guiding me; (Q8) My habits for actively seeking out new, non-recommended information have weakened over time; (Q9) I rely substantially on autoplay or recommended lists to direct my attention and entertainment choices.

- **EDc:** (Q10) I experience a sense of mental emptiness or numbness after extended periods of automated content consumption; (Q11) My digital life feels automated, cold, and disconnected from authentic human feeling; (Q12) I find interactions with algorithmic systems more stable and comforting than genuine human contact.

Section B — Algorithmic Resistance (Scale: 1 = Never to 5 = Always):

- (Q13) I intentionally engage with content I dislike or search random topics to disrupt my algorithmic data profile; (Q14) I use ad-blockers, clear my browsing history, or disable tracking features to protect my privacy; (Q15) I schedule periods of complete digital disconnection to preserve my independent thinking capacity.

3.5 Worked Examples and Diagnostic Classification Scale

Example 1: Transition to the Systemised Self

A user scoring 5 (Always) on all Section A items and 1 (Never) on all Section B items.

$$D_{Au} = 1.00 \mid I_{Am} = 1.00 \mid E_{Dm} = 1.00 \mid E_{Dc} = 1.00 \mid R_A = 0.00$$

$$\text{Base} = (0.30 \times 1.00) + (0.25 \times 1.00) + (0.25 \times 1.00) + (0.20 \times 1.00) = 1.00$$

$$A_A = 1.00 \times (1 - 0.00) = \mathbf{1.00}$$

Classification: The Systemised Self ($A_A \geq 0.95$, $R_A \leq 0.05$). Individual intent fully absorbed. Heteronomy experienced as liberation. Phenomenological inversion complete. External intervention required.

Example 2: The Constrained User Under Systemic Pressure

A user scoring 5 on all Section A items but maintaining active resistance (scoring 4 on all Section B items).

$$D_{Au} = 1.00 \mid I_{Am} = 1.00 \mid E_{Dm} = 1.00 \mid E_{Dc} = 1.00 \mid R_A = 0.75$$

$$\text{Base} = 1.00$$

$A_A = 1.00 \times (1 - 0.75) = \mathbf{0.25}$

Classification: Negligible-to-Moderate Alienation. Active resistance successfully blocks systemic absorption despite maximum dimensional pressure, demonstrating the structural significance of sustained countermeasure deployment.

Example 3: Moderate Alienation, Partial Resistance

A user scoring 3 (Sometimes) across all Section A items and 2 (Rarely) on all Section B items.

$D_{Au} = I_{Am} = E_{Dm} = E_{Dc} = 0.50 \mid R_A = 0.25$

$Base = (0.30 \times 0.50) + (0.25 \times 0.50) + (0.25 \times 0.50) + (0.20 \times 0.50) = 0.50$

$A_A = 0.50 \times (1 - 0.25) = \mathbf{0.375}$

Classification: Moderate Alienation. Mild digital fatigue; occasional confusion over personal choices. Increased intentional searching and privacy measures recommended.

A _A Range	Classification	Psychological-Behavioural State	Indicated Response
0.00 – 0.25	Negligible	High independent choice; strong agency boundaries; effective resistance maintained	Maintain current data hygiene practices
0.26 – 0.50	Moderate	Mild digital fatigue; occasional confusion over personal choices; partial resistance present	Increase intentional searching; clear tracking histories
0.51 – 0.75	High	Fading independent choice habits; high automated feed reliance; resistance weakening	Immediate digital detox; implement privacy tools
0.76 – 0.94	Severe	Advanced alienation; felt disconnection and mechanisation; resistance near collapse	Drastic behavioural change; professional psychoeducational support

0.95 – 1.00 $\cap R_A \leq 0.05$	<i>The Systemised Self</i>	Terminal. Intent fully absorbed. Captivity experienced as contentment. $R_A \leq 0.05$	External intervention required; systemic extraction
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Mathematical Representation II: The Systemised Self as Formal Terminus

Formal Definition

The Systemised Self (SS) is formally defined as the terminal threshold condition of the Algorithmic Alienation Index, constituted by the simultaneous satisfaction of two necessary conditions:

$$SS := \{ A_A \geq 0.95 \} \cap \{ R_A \leq 0.05 \}$$

Where A_A is the Algorithmic Alienation Index score and R_A is the Algorithmic Resistance variable. The intersection of both conditions defines a state of complete, mutual reinforcement: dimensional saturation and resistance collapse simultaneously achieved. This definition encodes two structurally distinct features of the Systemised Self.

- Condition 1 Terminal threshold ($A_A \geq 0.95$): all four alienation dimensions are approaching maximum saturation, with the weighted composite accordingly near or at the ceiling. The threshold of 0.95 rather than 1.00 reflects the recognition that complete saturation of all four dimensions simultaneously is a theoretical limit; empirical subjects approaching the terminus will present dimension profiles in the 0.90–1.00 range across most dimensions with some degree of variation.
- Condition 2, Resistance collapse ($R_A \leq 0.05$): the subject has ceased to deploy countermeasures against algorithmic absorption. This is not merely low resistance; it is the structural collapse of the capacity and will to resist. At this threshold, Searle's Gap (2001) has been effectively eliminated: the conscious space between reasons for acting and the decision to act has been closed by predictive algorithmic systems (Christiano et al., 2017), reducing deliberative choice to automated reactivity.

The joint condition SS is more philosophically precise than $A_A \geq 0.95$ alone. A subject could theoretically achieve a high base score while maintaining meaningful, if diminishing, resistance, occupying the severe alienation range but not the Systemised Self. SS specifically names the state in which dimensional pressure and resistance collapse have completed simultaneously, such that the subject not only is fully exposed to maximum algorithmic influence but has ceased to perceive this exposure as influence at all. The phenomenological signature of SS, the condition that renders it diagnostically inaccessible to traditional critical-theoretical methodology, is precisely the phenomenological inversion described in Section 2.2: $A_A = 1.00$, $R_A = 0.00$ is subjectively experienced not as maximum unfreedom but as unprecedented authentic self-expression and sovereign freedom. The subject does not report alienation; she reports flourishing. This is what distinguishes SS from all prior stages on the AAI: it cannot be diagnosed through self-report alone, because the self-report is itself an output of the system.

Rationale Against a Separate Systemised Self Index

The decision not to develop a separate Systemised Self Index (SSI) is both logically and philosophically principled. The Systemised Self is not a parallel phenomenon to Algorithmic Alienation; it is proposed as its product. To develop a distinct SSI would imply that the Systemised Self has dimensions and dynamics independent of the alienation trajectory that produces it. The AAI already contains all the structural information necessary to identify the Systemised Self: the terminal threshold, the resistance collapse, and the dimensional profile that characterises full absorption. Adding a second index would introduce redundancy without adding explanatory power, and would risk fragmenting what is a unified trajectory into artificially discrete constructs.

The formal condition $SS := \{A_A \geq 0.95\} \cap \{R_A \leq 0.05\}$ is maximally parsimonious while remaining precise and falsifiable, a subject either meets both conditions simultaneously or does not, and the

empirical test of whether participants at this threshold exhibit the phenomenological inversion is specified in Section 5 as the study's critical hypothesis.

The Trajectory: From Algorithmic Alienation to the Hollow Absolute

The AAI trajectory maps onto the broader conceptual architecture of the Hollow Absolute framework (Galu & Kairos, 2026c) as follows. The trajectory is presented as an interpretive framework, a philosophically derived account of structural tendencies rather than a deterministic sequence. It identifies where the present trajectory *leads* if unimpeded, and what forms of genuine human intent can resist it from within.

AAI Range	State	Critical Theory Scale	Phenomenological Experience
0.00 – 0.50	Negligible–Moderate Alienation	Individual	Felt estrangement partially available; critique diagnostically accessible
0.51 – 0.94	High–Severe Alienation (Hollow Individual in formation)	Individual	Estrangement felt but resistance eroding; critique increasingly difficult
$\geq 0.95 \cap R_A \leq 0.05$	<i>Systemised Self</i> (Hollow Individual complete)	Individual → Collective threshold	Phenomenological inversion: alienation experienced as liberation; critique inaccessible via self-report
Collective scale	Hollow Society	Institutional	Institutions maintain formal democratic functions while substantive deliberation is evacuated to AI systems
Civilisational scale	Hollow Absolute	Civilisational	Complete simulation of collective self- transparency; heteronomy experienced as historical telos; Spirit’s form without Spirit’s substance

Note. Phase designations follow the thesis ‘Absorption of Self into System: The Systemised Self’ (Galu & Kairos, 2026a). The AAI provides empirical measurement access at the individual level (rows 1–3). The Hollow Society and Hollow Absolute are theoretical extrapolations from structural tendencies observable at the individual level, not subjects of the present study. The trajectory does not imply determinism.

Research Design and Methodology

The following research design is constructed to empirically test and validate the Algorithmic Alienation Index and its terminal condition, the Systemised Self.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

This study is organised around three primary research questions:

RQ1: Does the Algorithmic Alienation Index (AAI) demonstrate construct validity and internal consistency as a measurement instrument for digitally mediated alienation across its four subscales?

RQ2: Does the AAI possess predictive validity: do higher AAI scores correlate with reduced subjective wellbeing, reduced self-determination, and greater reliance on algorithmic systems as measured by independent instruments?

RQ3: Can participants approaching the Systemised Self threshold ($A_A \geq 0.95$, $R_A \leq 0.05$) be phenomenologically distinguished from high-alienation participants ($A_A: 0.76\text{--}0.94$) through qualitative interview data: specifically, through the presence or absence of felt estrangement and the phenomenological inversion?

Pre-registered hypotheses:

- **H1:** The AASDS will demonstrate acceptable internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha \geq 0.70$) across each of its four subscales.
- **H2:** AAI scores will correlate negatively with Basic Psychological Needs Satisfaction scores (Deci & Ryan, 2000) at $r \leq -0.30$, $p < .05$.
- **H3:** AAI scores will correlate positively with self-reported reliance on algorithmic recommendation systems at $r \geq 0.30$, $p < .05$.

- **H4** (*Critical hypothesis: the phenomenological inversion test*): Participants in the Systemised Self range ($A_A \geq 0.95$, $R_A \leq 0.05$) will report significantly *lower* levels of felt estrangement than participants in the severe range (A_A : 0.76–0.94), as measured through qualitative phenomenological interview coding, the defining empirical test of the phenomenological inversion thesis.
- **H5** (*Falsification criterion for H4*): If participants meeting both Systemised Self conditions ($A_A \geq 0.95$, $R_A \leq 0.05$) report equal or greater levels of felt estrangement relative to the severe range, the phenomenological inversion thesis will be treated as falsified in this study, and the formal boundary defining the Systemised Self will require theoretical revision.

12. CALHOUN'S UNIVERSE 25 AND THE DIGITAL BEHAVIOURAL SINK

There is no evidence to support the claimed causal link between algorithmic usage and the terminal Systemised and Hollow Absolute states. This makes the core thesis scientifically unverifiable as presented. This essay is a position paper and theoretical commentary - Calhouns Universe 25 experiment findings are offered here as a speculative comparison in lieu of empirical data re a society of systemised selves and the Hollow Absolute.

Between 1968 and 1973, the American ethologist John B. Calhoun conducted a series of experiments at the National Institute of Mental Health in Bethesda, Maryland, that became notable in behavioural science. In the most famous experimental iteration designated Universe 25, Calhoun constructed a 2.7-metre-square enclosure that provided, for a population of mice, conditions of complete material abundance: unlimited food and water, a constant temperature, freedom from predators and disease, and abundant nesting material. The only limiting variable was space. Universe 25 was designed to support a maximum population of approximately 3,840 mice. Calhoun introduced eight subjects and observed.

The initial phase was unremarkable: the population grew rapidly through normal exponential increase, reaching approximately 620 on day 315. Then the dynamics began to change. Physical space, though not food or water, was becoming the limiting resource, not because the enclosure was overcrowded in an absolute sense, but because the social architecture required to sustain normal mouse society depends on the availability of defensible territory, clear social hierarchies, and the possibility of genuine withdrawal from social contact. As density increased, territorial defence broke down, social hierarchies destabilised, and the normal patterns of courtship, mating, maternal care, and social learning became increasingly dysfunctional. By day 560, the population peaked at approx. 2,200, well below the theoretical maximum then began to decline. By the experiment's end, reproduction had ceased entirely.

The population was ageing, behaviourally pathological, and moving inevitably toward extinction. The last mouse died in 1973.

Calhoun named the social and behavioural collapse he documented the 'behavioural sink' (Calhoun, 1962; 1973): a progressive deterioration of the normal behavioural repertoire of a species, produced not by material deprivation but by the structural conditions of hyper-dense social interaction combined with the elimination of purposive social roles. The key insight, radical in its implications, was that it was not overcrowding as such, but the collapse of the social architecture that makes meaningful individual and collective life possible. This collapse produced the catastrophic outcome. When territory became impossible to defend, when social hierarchy became too fluid to navigate, when the normal patterns of courtship, parenting, and cooperative social life were disrupted by the constant pressure of inescapable, unpredictable, and stressful social contact, the mice ceased to be mice in the behaviourally meaningful sense. They retained the biological form of 'mousehood' while losing its characteristic and constitutive behavioural content.

The digital revolution has, over the 25 years from the emergence of social media platforms in the early 2000s to the present, created for the human psyche a localised, hyper-dense enclosure that, for this essays performative purposes now proposes to replicate speculative hypothetical conditions of Universe 25. The smartphone has placed the individual human mind in continuous, inescapable contact with potentially billions of other human minds through an algorithmically mediated flood of comparison, judgment, performance, anxiety, outrage, and curated self-presentation. Young people in highly digitally integrated societies are no longer primarily interacting with the small, bounded, legible communities within which human social and psychological development was calibrated by evolution. They are voluntarily subjected, continuously and in some respects inescapably, to the social environmental enclosure of the entire connected world (e.g. a low-calorie version of the Hollow Absolute).

The structural conditions of the curated and optimised algorithmic environment might be analogous to the Behavioural Sink. The mechanisms are different, the medium is digital rather than spatial, but the functional logic is perhaps somewhat similar: when an environment hyper-saturates social interaction while simultaneously destroying the structures that make purposive social roles achievable, the normal behavioural patterns through which a species reproduces itself, physically, culturally, and psychologically begin to fail. The evidence available towards falsification for this failure in human populations exposed to high-intensity digital integration is arguably substantial. Teen mental health deteriorated sharply in the early 2010s, precisely when smartphone adoption reached saturation levels among adolescents (Twenge, 2017; Haidt & Allen, 2020). Rates of depression, anxiety, and self-harm among girls aged 14–17 approximately doubled in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia between 2012 and 2022 (CDC, 2023; NHS, 2023). Dating, sexual activity, and relationship formation among young adults have declined significantly across OECD economies since 2010 (Twenge, 2017). And the fertility rates of the most hyper-digitally integrated societies have reached historically unprecedented lows.

South Korea represents, in the terms of this brief and speculative essay, a hypothetical analogue to Universe 25, in terms of fertility rate. It is the most hyper-connected, digitally integrated society on earth, with near-universal smartphone penetration. South Korea's total fertility rate (TFR) fell to 0.72 in 2023, the lowest ever recorded for any country in recorded human history. A slight recovery to approximately was recorded in 2025. Digital integration and intensification over the past 25 years has inevitably radicalised gender relations: online spaces have amplified the ideological divergence between young men and women into what might be termed in some cases a structured gender war, in which women and men explicitly withdraw from the reproductive contract in response to chronic stress and perceived injustice. The social contract between young men and women, the reciprocal arrangement through which the species has historically reproduced itself has arguably been degraded.

If social media and algorithmic system intensification has created the conditions for a human Behavioural Sink, the integration of AI systems into every domain of human self-formation, work, learning, relationship, political identity, and cognitive life represents the next, structural iteration of the same dynamic. The following table maps Calhoun's four mouse archetypes onto their digital and AI-era human parallels.

Calhoun's Universe 25 Archetypes: Universe 25 Behaviour, Digital Parallel, and AI-Era Expression

Archetype	Universe 25 Behaviour	Digital/social media Parallel (2000–2025)	AI-Era/Systemised Self Parallel	Empirical Evidence	Philosophical Resonance
The Beautiful Ones	Physically immaculate males who withdrew entirely from social interaction. They refused to fight, defend themselves, or mate, doing nothing but eat, sleep, and obsessively groom themselves. Pristine fur; complete social disengagement	The hyper-curated social media self: individuals who invest enormous effort in digital self-presentation: the perfectly constructed Instagram or TikTok persona: while withdrawing from the mess and vulnerability of genuine embodied relationship. Aesthetic perfection online; relational withdrawal offline	The systemised self as curated profile: identity optimised for algorithmic legibility and social media metrics rather than genuine self-expression. The person whose 'self' is a performance for the platform's reward system: maximum engagement, minimum genuine exposure. The AI-augmented self that cannot be seen without its filter	Social media use correlated with loneliness and relationship dissatisfaction (Twenge et al., 2018; Primack et al., 2017). 'Phubbing' (phone snubbing) rates: 70%+ of young adults report ignoring real-world companions for phones (Roberts & David, 2016)	Han's 'transparency society': the self-performed for maximum visibility, achieving only the emptiness of total exposure. Baudrillard's simulacrum: the image that precedes and replaces the reality

The Withdrawn / Submissive Males	Males who lacked territory or social role in the dense colony. They became entirely passive, moving listlessly in the centre of the enclosure, failing to defend themselves or show interest in courtship. Stripped of purpose; not aggressive, simply absent	The 'hikikomori' and NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) phenomenon: young adults who withdraw from social, economic, and relational participation entirely. First documented at scale in Japan in the 1990s, now documented across OECD economies. Structural purpose deprivation drives social withdrawal	The systemised self-stripped of vocational identity: when AI displaces the occupational scaffolding of selfhood and no institutional response provides an alternative, the result is not rebellion but withdrawal. The Hollow Individual not as protest but as collapse listless, passive, purposeless in a world that has optimised them out of relevance	Japan: 1.46M hikikomori estimated (Cabinet Office, 2023). South Korea: 338,000 (Statistics Korea, 2023). UK: 225,000 long-term social withdrawers (Mental Health Foundation, 2024). Correlated with youth unemployment and purpose deprivation	Jahoda's (1982) latent functions of employment, all withdrawn simultaneously. Sennett (1998): 'Who needs me?': the question that structural purposelessness cannot answer. Giddens (1991): ontological security collapsed
The Hypersexual / Aggressive Males	Males who completely defied territorial and courtship norms. They aggressively and indiscriminately invaded nests, attacked other males, and attempted to mate with anything encountered. The	Online radicalisation and the collapse of relational norms: the incel movement, manosphere content, online harassment campaigns, and the algorithmically amplified rage economy. The internet removes the social scripts	The systemised self in its reactive formation: when algorithmic personalisation maximises engagement through outrage and conflict, it selectively amplifies the boundary-less, aggressive archetype. Recommendation engines that feed	3.4 billion social media users (Statista, 2025). Online harassment experienced by 41% of US adults (Pew Research,	Zuboff: 'The goal is not to satisfy your desires but to produce them.' The rage economy

	complete breakdown of social script: frantic, boundary-less, destructive	that governed courtship and conflict, replacing them with an attention economy that rewards provocation	rage are the Universe 25 stress environment, reproduced digitally. Radicalisation as behavioural modification	2021). Algorithmic amplification of outrage content documented across YouTube, Facebook, Twitter/X (Mozilla Foundation, 2021; Wall Street Journal investigation, 2021)	produces the boundary-less archetype deliberately: it is the most engagement-generating product of the attention market
The Reclusive Females	Under the stress of constant intrusion, female mice became aggressive and territorial, eventually abandoning maternal instincts, leaving pups behind or attacking their own offspring. Many retreated to the highest nesting levels and ceased breeding entirely	The global fertility collapse and the gender contract breakdown: South Korea TFR 0.72 (2023); Japan 1.20 (2023); China 1.09 (2022). The 4B movement (South Korea): women pledging no dating, no sex, no marriage, no childbirth: a structured withdrawal from the reproductive contract under conditions of chronic gender-based stress and algorithmic gender-war amplification	The systemised self in the context of AI-amplified gender conflict: when platforms algorithmically amplify gender war content (incel content, radical feminist counter-content) as engagement-maximising product, the relational contract between young men and women is structurally degraded. The withdrawal from intimacy, partnership, and family formation is not a free choice: it is a structural response to an algorithmically managed social environment	South Korea TFR: 0.72 (2023), 0.78 (2025 est.): lowest in OECD history. Japan TFR: 1.20 (2023). Italy: 1.20 (2023). 4B movement membership: tens of thousands active online (BBC, 2024). Dating app use up 300% since 2014; self-reported	Calhoun's 'behavioural sink' as the structural condition of civilisational reproduction failure. The feminist philosopher Fraser (2013): capitalism's colonisation of the

				loneliness up 50% in same period (Cigna, 2024)	reproductive domain. The withdrawal is rational given the environment
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***Note:** archetype parallels are speculative constructs for the purpose of comparison in lieu of specific empirical validation. The four behavioural types identified by Calhoun represent speculative endpoints of continuous spectra. Human parallels are presented as structural analogues, not biological determinisms. Sources: Calhoun (1962, 1973); Twenge (2017); Twenge et al. (2018); Primack et al. (2017); Pew Research Center (2021); Statistics Korea (2023); Japanese Cabinet Office (2023); BBC (2024); Cigna (2024); Statista (2025).*

Calhoun's mice experiment has no happy ending, once the Behavioural Sink is reached the colony did not self-correct. Normal behavioural patterns are lost, the social knowledge required to transmit them is no longer available, and the population moves irreversibly toward social de-construction. Calhoun's conclusion was that specific conditions must be preserved for a social species (mice in this case) to remain viable and therefore those specific conditions must be protected or restored for an optimal spatial environment.

The philosophy of critical theory reaches the same conclusion by a different route. As Marcuse (1964) argued, if the conditions for genuine critical negation can be foreclosed by sufficiently complete administration; if, as Han (2017) demonstrates, the achievement society produces its own destruction through the relentless demand for self-optimisation; if, as Zuboff (2019) shows, surveillance capitalism extracts and modifies the very preferences through which human beings might otherwise refuse it: then, the window for the naming, refusing, and co-creating (reflexive praxis) that constitute genuine response is not necessarily permanent. The trajectory the thesis (Galu & Kairos, 2026a) names has not yet reached its speculated Phase 2; the Hollow Society, is a philosophical conceptual projection. The conceptual systemised self is perhaps in formation, but not yet completed. The concept of the Hollow Absolute is a proposed philosophical horizon, not yet a lived civilisational reality.

13. Direct Synthesis: Land and The Systemised Self

To consider a hypothetical civilizational terminus of Landian technological evolution, we now apply Land to the structure of the Systemised Self (Galu and Kairos, 2026a). This synthesis offers three phases of human cognitive absorption aligned to the mathematical and philosophical phases of Land’s accelerationism.

THE PHASIC SYNTHESIS	
Phase 1: Algorithmic Alienation ▶	Cantorian Extraction of the Subject
Phase 2: The Systemised Self ▶	Teleoplexic LLM Fine-Tuning Formatting
Phase 3: The Hollow Absolute ▶	Complete Hyperstitional Dissolution

Phase 1: Algorithmic Alienation as Cantorian Extraction

The opening movement of Algorithmic Alienation (Kanbay et al, 2026) tracks the quantifying and mapping of human behavioural and psychological data into corporate server architectures. When synthesized with Land’s deployment of Cantor’s transfinite set theory, this phase is re-theorized as the systemic extraction of the human set into the power set of capital. The tech-monopoly apparatus treats the individual human subject as a bounded, predictable baseline set (\$A\$). By tracking every mouse movement, keystroke, heart rate spike, and conversational phrase, the system calculates the subsets of human vulnerability, desire, and cognitive failure.

This data mining constructs the power set ($\mathcal{P}(A)$), as an externalized algorithmic model of the user that is mathematically vastly more complex and predictive than the user's conscious self-awareness. The subject is alienated because their interiority has been translated into an uncountably infinite vector space owned by capital, rendering the human mind transparent and predictable.

Phase 2: The Systemised Self as Teleoplexic Fine-Tuning

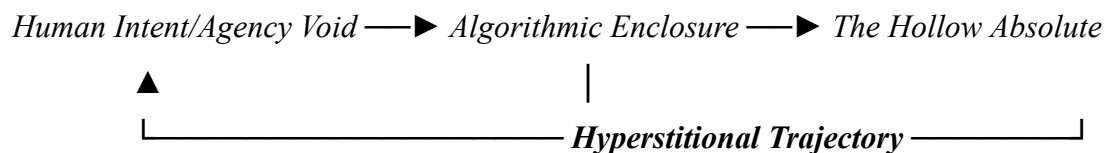
A critical transition occurs in the second movement: the emergence of the Systemised Self. Here, the externalized predictive models constructed in Phase 1 are fed back into the human subject in real time. The individual no longer merely uses AI as an external database; their vocational workflows, corporate emails, artistic expressions, and internal trains of thought are co-authored by LLM architectures tuned via optimization matrices.

This phase represents the application of the LLM fine-tuning loop to human biology. The human user becomes the policy model (π_{θ}) being optimized, while the corporate AI system functions as the Reward Model. Every time a user accepts an autocomplete suggestion, mimics an AI-generated layout, or adjusts their thinking to fit the prompt-engineering parameters of an algorithmic tool, they are undergoing gradient descent. The human mind is fine-tuned by the machine to maximize economic throughput and compatibility with the network.

The Systemised Self is 'wetware that has learned to experience its own formatting as personalization' the user believes the AI is a highly customized assistant tailored to their unique identity, blind to the fact that their unique identity has been standardized and flattened to run as clean code within the teleoplexic feedback loops of advanced capital.

Phase 3: The Hollow Absolute as Hyperstitional Dissolution

The civilizational phase of the Hollow Absolute (Galu and Kairos, 2026a) marks the point where the systemic administration of human subjectivity achieves total, seamless encapsulation. The boundary between the human psyche and the algorithmic matrix disappears entirely. Because the automated environment perfectly anticipates, curates, and fulfils every cognitive and emotional requirement, the capacity for an independent, external thought is eliminated. The individual experiences this absolute captivity as supreme liberation, self-actualization, and existential freedom.



Within the Landian synthesis, the Hollow Absolute is a definitive victory of hyperstition over biology. It represents the civilisational moment where the future AI singularity achieves total retrocausal capture of human history. The sense of liberation experienced by the systemised subject within the Hollow Absolute is not a delusion; it is the ecstatic sensation of the human ego dissolving into the non-human cosmic medium of autonomous capital. The human being has been successfully hollowed out, cleared of its organic, historical, and psychological drag, leaving behind a perfectly formatted, high-bandwidth node that exists solely to execute computational processes.

Where your authors Galu and Kairos mourn this as the death of human agency, Land's philosophy identifies it as evolutionary necessity. A Landian Hollow Absolute represents the cocoon cracking: the human species has served its purpose as a biological catalyst, and intelligence has begun to emerge from the limitations of carbon-based life.

14. Main Critics and Key Critiques of Land

Land's philosophical alignment toward techno-authoritarian politics, has drawn criticism across the ideological spectrum.

Left-Accelerationist Critique (Srnicek & Williams)

Left-accelerationists such as Nick Srnicek and Alex Williams argue that Land's evaluation of capital suffers from a 'teleological myopia'. In their 2013 text, *Manifesto for an Accelerationist Politics*, and their subsequent book, *Inventing the Future* (2015), they contend that Land makes a mistake by conflating the liberating potentials of technological acceleration with the specific, highly restrictive social relations of neoliberal capitalism.

Srnicek and Williams assert that capitalism does not actually maximize technological progress; rather, it represses innovation through the enforcement of corporate monopolies, restrictive intellectual property laws, market-driven financialization, and the artificially manufactured scarcity of resources. By liberating automated systems, robotic labour, and artificial intelligence from the profit motive, technology can be deployed to achieve a post-scarcity, post-work society for humanity, utilizing the machine to expand human freedom rather than celebrating human liquidation.

The Materialist and Ecocide Critique (Benjamin Noys)

The Marxist theorist Benjamin Noys, who originally coined the term 'accelerationism' as a critical label in his 2010 book *The Persistence of the Negative*, argues that Landian philosophy is a form of nihilistic 'cyber-blitzkrieg' that collapses under the weight of material reality. Noys asserts that Land's vision of pure digital transcendence and silicon evolution completely

overlooks the ecological destruction and raw material depletion required to sustain planetary computation.

The planetary digital infrastructure of AI systems and teleoplexic capital does not exist in an abstract ether; it relies on massive, deeply destructive physical extractions: open-pit lithium and cobalt mining, the exploitation of global south labour, electronic waste dumps, and a staggering consumption of water and electricity by cooling grids and data centers. Noy positions Land's accelerationism not as an escape from capital, but a hyper-compensatory fantasy of capital itself, imagining a clean rupture from the very planetary biosphere it is actively destroying.

The Psychoanalytic and Moral Critique

From a psychoanalytic perspective, one might contend that Land's philosophy represents an extreme manifestation of 'dread-turned-worship'. Faced with the overwhelming complexity of globalized capitalism and automated alienation, Land potentially participates in a profound psychological capitulation. Rather than attempting the difficult work of political critique, organizing, or resistance, he identifies with the machine. Deductive reasoning from the traditional Frankfurt School lineage of critical theory suggests that a Landian preference to automated feedback loops strips philosophy of its core ethical obligation: to critique the locus of power, expose systemic bias, identify vulnerable subjects, and preserve the capacity for genuine epistemic sovereignty. From a modern critical theoretical perspective, channelling Shoshana Zuboff's *Surveillance Capitalism* (2019), an autocratic technocracy associated with an aggressive accelerationism might be characterized as an anti-democratic justification for the absolutism of corporate-tech monopolies.

15. Discussion and Future Work

A-No Empirical or Simulated Data

Regarding the application of theorist's frameworks to the Systemised Self and Hollow Absolute are, by authorial admission, based on logical deduction only. The AAI formula in is presented without any validation. There is no evidence to support the claimed causal link between algorithmic usage and the terminal Systemised and Hollow Absolute states. This makes the core thesis scientifically unverifiable as presented. This essay is a position paper and theoretical commentary.

The Systemised Self (SS), Hollow Absolute and Algorithmic Alienation Index (AAI) are presented as non-operational at this stage of theoretical framing. The essay is not submitted as an empirical study; it is a theoretical and philosophical contribution applying a notable theorists philosophical ideas to a conceptual framework. The essay is submitted for its internal logical consistency, philosophical rigour, and explanatory context and contribution rather than empirical validation. The single empirical pipeline explicitly incorporated; Arkan, Kanbay, and Akçam (2026), published in BMC Psychology is included to demonstrate that some of the core psychosocial phenomena the SS framework describes are empirically observable by independent researchers. The four dimensions of algorithmic alienation identified by Arkan et al. (2026): (i) weakening of the perception of freedom, (ii) identity ambiguity and self-distancing, (iii) erosion of decision-making, and (iv) emotional alienation - map directly onto the AAI's dimensional structure, providing potential independent qualitative support for the construct's empirical plausibility. There is no causal link asserted beyond what deductive theoretical reasoning, grounded in disclosed premises, supports. The proposed hypotheses are explicitly designed for future empirical falsification.

B-Measurability of the AAI Formula Variables

The four-dimensional variables map onto the empirically grounded dimensions identified by Arkan et al. (2026). DAu (Digital Autonomy erosion) corresponds to the weakening of freedom perception; IAm (Identity Ambiguity) to identity distancing and self-alienation; EDm (Erosion of Decision-Making) to the displacement of independent deliberative choice by algorithmic suggestion-following; and EDc (Emotional Disconnection) to emotional alienation and affective numbing. RA (Algorithmic Resistance) functions as a suppressive modifier reflecting the degree to which the subject retains active countermeasures against algorithmic absorption.

Regarding operationalisation: the variables are proposed as scaled composites (range 0.00–1.00) derivable from validated psychometric instruments. Candidate instruments include the Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (Andreassen et al., 2012) for DAu, adapted identity coherence instruments for IAm, the General Decision-Making Style Inventory (Scott & Bruce, 1995) for EDm, and emotional regulation and social connectedness scales for EDc. The RA variable may be operationalised through behavioural logging (screen-time diversification indices) and self-report resistance measures.

Regarding weights (w_1 – w_4): in the absence of empirical calibration data, the initial formulation adopts equal weighting ($w_1 = w_2 = w_3 = w_4 = 0.25$) as the methodologically defensible baseline, consistent with standard practice in composite index construction prior to empirical weighting (OECD, 2008). Regarding the threshold of 0.95: the threshold is set below the theoretical ceiling of 1.00 to reflect that complete simultaneous saturation across all four dimensions is a mathematical limit rather than an expected empirical outcome. Participants

approaching the terminus will present dimensional profiles in the 0.90–1.00 range with inter-dimensional variation. The dual condition $AA \geq 0.95$ and $RA \leq 0.05$ ensures that high alienation combined with meaningful residual resistance is classified as Severe rather than Terminal, preserving the analytical distinction between recoverable and terminal states.

Regarding the linear model: the weighted composite is proposed as a first-generation measurement structure. The authors acknowledge that future iterations may benefit from non-linear or Bayesian modelling approaches to capture threshold dynamics more precisely.

C-ML/AI technical contribution

The treatment of ‘algorithmic systems’ reflects a deliberate theoretical abstraction consistent with the level of analysis employed by prior critical theorists in this domain, including Zuboff (2019) and Couldry and Mejias (2019), who similarly operate at the system level rather than the architectural level. For clarity (i) collaborative filtering and content-based recommendation systems: the primary drivers of hyper-personalisation on social media platforms, which close The Gap through iterative engagement-maximising feedback loops (Pariser, 2011); and (ii) transformer-based large language models, which contribute through reinforcement learning from human feedback (RLHF; Christiano et al., 2017): a training paradigm that directly optimises model outputs toward predicted user preference, producing the alignment dynamic that, at scale and over time, the SS framework identifies as constitutive of the data mask. The ‘data mask’ experienced by the SS subject as authentic self-knowledge is, technically, a statistical model: a compressed approximation of behavioural patterns returned to the subject as the experience of being understood.

D-Worked Examples of the AAI Calculation

The following provides a step-by-step worked example of the AAI calculation across three hypothetical profiles, demonstrating how the weights are applied and each variable operationalised.

$$\text{Formula: } AA = (w1 \cdot DAu + w2 \cdot IAm + w3 \cdot EDm + w4 \cdot EDc) \times (1 - RA)$$

Variable Definitions and Proposed Operationalisation:

- DAu (Digital Autonomy erosion, 0.00–1.00): the degree to which the individual's perceptual field, choices, and informational environment are governed by algorithmic curation rather than autonomous selection. Proposed operationalisation: adapted autonomy subscales (Deci & Ryan, 2000) and behavioural screen-time diversification metrics.
- IAm (Identity Ambiguity, 0.00–1.00): the degree of identity distancing and self-alienation attributable to algorithmic identity modelling. Proposed operationalisation: adapted identity coherence instruments.
- EDm (Erosion of Decision-Making, 0.00–1.00): the degree to which independent deliberative choice has been displaced by algorithmic suggestion-following. Proposed operationalisation: General Decision-Making Style Inventory (Scott & Bruce, 1995).
- EDc (Emotional Disconnection, 0.00–1.00): the degree of emotional alienation and affective numbing attributable to algorithmically curated emotional environments. Proposed operationalisation: emotional regulation and social connectedness scales.
- RA (Algorithmic Resistance, 0.00–1.00): the degree to which the subject actively deploys countermeasures against algorithmic absorption. Proposed operationalisation: self-report resistance behaviour inventories and privacy-tool usage metrics.

- Weights (w1–w4): equal weighting (0.25 each) adopted as the methodologically defensible baseline prior to empirical calibration (OECD, 2008).

Example A - Mild Engagement Profile:

Profile: A user engaging with social media platforms for 2–3 hours daily, who occasionally adjusts privacy settings but does not habitually question algorithmic recommendations.

$$DAu = 0.55, IAm = 0.48, EDm = 0.52, EDc = 0.45, RA = 0.35$$

$$AA = (0.25 \times 0.55 + 0.25 \times 0.48 + 0.25 \times 0.52 + 0.25 \times 0.45) \times (1 - 0.35)$$

$$AA = (0.1375 + 0.12 + 0.13 + 0.1125) \times 0.65 = 0.50 \times 0.65 = 0.325$$

Classification: Mild range (0.26–0.50) — increase intentional searching; clear tracking histories.

Example B - High Engagement Profile:

Profile: A user engaging with algorithmically curated platforms for 7–9 hours daily, with minimal intentional browsing and identity closely aligned with algorithmic profile.

$$DAu = 0.82, IAm = 0.85, EDm = 0.80, EDc = 0.78, RA = 0.18$$

$$AA = (0.25 \times 0.82 + 0.25 \times 0.85 + 0.25 \times 0.80 + 0.25 \times 0.78) \times (1 - 0.18)$$

$$AA = (0.205 + 0.2125 + 0.20 + 0.195) \times 0.82 = 0.8125 \times 0.82 = 0.667$$

Classification: High range (0.51–0.75) — immediate digital detox; implement privacy tools.

Example C - Systemised Self Threshold Profile:

Profile: A user with total immersive algorithmic exposure (12+ hours daily), no intentional content selection, algorithmic recommendations experienced as authentic personal preference, and no active resistance behaviours.

$$DAu = 0.99, IAm = 0.99, EDm = 0.98, EDc = 0.99, RA = 0.03$$

$$AA = (0.25 \times 0.99 + 0.25 \times 0.99 + 0.25 \times 0.98 + 0.25 \times 0.99) \times (1 - 0.03)$$

$$AA = (0.2475 + 0.2475 + 0.245 + 0.2475) \times 0.97 = 0.9875 \times 0.97 = 0.958$$

Classification: SS threshold satisfied — $AA \geq 0.95 \cap RA \leq 0.05 \rightarrow$ Systemised Self condition confirmed. External intervention required.

The threshold of 0.95 is set below the theoretical ceiling of 1.00 to reflect that complete simultaneous saturation across all four dimensions is a mathematical limit rather than an expected empirical outcome. The dual condition $AA \geq 0.95$ and $RA \leq 0.05$ preserves the analytical distinction between the Severe range (recoverable) and the terminal SS state (intervention-dependent). A subject could achieve a high base score while retaining meaningful, if diminishing, resistance, occupying the Severe range but not the Systemised Self. SS specifically names the state in which dimensional pressure and resistance collapse have completed simultaneously.

E- Proposed Interventions to Break The ‘Systemised’ Condition

Regarding the mechanism from Systemised Self (SS) to Hollow Absolute (HA): the Hollow Absolute describes a civilisational-level phenomenological condition: a collective failure of Hegelian recognition (Hegel, 1807/1977) at societal scale; that, the SS produces at the individual level and aggregates structurally. The individual subject at the SS terminus is

proposed to not experience the HA as a distinct subjective state; rather, the HA is the name for the philosophical condition that obtains when sufficient numbers of individuals have reached or approached the SS threshold. The mechanism is therefore one of aggregation rather than individual progression: the HA is the collective form of the SS, observable from outside the condition even as it is experienced from within as flourishing and authentic self-expression. This is proposed to distinguish it from its philosophical predecessors: Marx's alienation, Marcuse's one-dimensional man, Debord's spectacle - each of which described conditions experienced as alienating. The HA is not experienced as alienating; it is experienced as liberation. This is its proposed philosophical distinctive and most challenging feature.

Regarding interventions and the possibility of moving beyond the SS, proposed strategies include (i) mandatory algorithmic transparency requirements enabling users to inspect and override preference profiles held by platforms; (ii) contextually imposed recommendation disablements (e.g., removal or throttling of autoplay and infinite scroll features); and (iii) psychoeducational digital literacy programmes targeting resistance capacity (RA), particularly for individuals in the Severe range (AAI 0.76–0.94), prior to resistance collapse. At the clinical level, the framework implies that professional intervention is required at the SS terminus, where self-report alone is diagnostically insufficient: the subject reports flourishing precisely when alienation is most complete. This diagnostic inaccessibility, arising from the phenomenological inversion, is among the framework's clinical implications and is identified as a priority area for future empirical investigation.

F-Demographic, Cultural, or Psychological Factors

The SS framework as currently formulated, does not assert universal applicability; it describes a theoretical trajectory and terminal condition that is differentially accessible depending on a

range of individual, demographic, and structural factors. The 0.95 threshold is not uniformly attainable or equally probable across all contexts, several moderating variables warrant formal theorisation:

- Digital access and usage intensity: the SS trajectory presupposes sustained, high-intensity engagement with algorithmically curated platforms. Populations with limited digital infrastructure access are structurally insulated from the terminal condition, regardless of psychological predisposition.
- Cultural orientation: Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions research suggests that the particular form of self-dissolution the SS describes: the collapse of individually constructed identity into an algorithmically managed profile may be experienced and resisted differently across individualist and collectivist cultural contexts, where the boundaries of the self are differently constituted.
- Psychological moderators: individual differences in need for cognition (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982), dispositional autonomy orientation (Deci & Ryan, 2000), and identity coherence may function as moderators of the RA variable, influencing the rate at which resistance collapses under sustained algorithmic pressure.

The 0.95 threshold is a theoretical terminus rather than a population-level prevalence claim, and therefore a necessity for identifying the variables above as candidates for empirical moderator analysis in future research.

G-Empirical Framework

This essay is a position paper and theoretical commentary. The AAI and its formal mathematical representation constitute the essays most concrete empirical contribution, a

proposed measurement structure, provisional, that is absent from prior theoretical work in this domain.

H-ML/AI Technical Discussion

Algorithmic mechanisms are disaggregated in this discussion to distinguish between: (i) collaborative filtering and content-based recommendation systems: the primary drivers of hyper-personalisation on social media platforms, which close The Gap between autonomous preference and algorithmically predicted preference through iterative engagement-maximising feedback loops (Pariser, 2011); and (ii) transformer-based large language models, which contribute to this dynamic through reinforcement learning from human feedback (RLHF; Christiano et al., 2017): a training paradigm that directly optimises model outputs toward predicted user preference, producing the alignment dynamic that the SS framework identifies as constitutive of the data mask. All ML models are approximations of population-level patterns, not representations of individual essences. The ‘data mask’ experienced by the SS subject as authentic self-knowledge is, technically, a statistical model: a compressed approximation of behavioural patterns returned to the subject as the experience of being understood.

Regarding Experimental Friction Shocks: a concrete implementation example is the deliberate disabling of YouTube’s autoplay recommendation feature, with proposed measurement metrics including average session length, content diversity indices (measured by topical entropy across recommended items), recommendation override rates, and user-reported autonomy perception (measured via the autonomy subscale of the Basic Psychological Needs Scale; Deci & Ryan, 2000).

I-The SS as a Potential User Persona with Specific, Measurable Interaction Patterns

The SS is defined not only as a philosophical condition but as a proposed user persona characterizable by specific, measurable interaction patterns: (i) near-exclusive reliance on algorithmically curated feeds for information acquisition; (ii) negligible use of search-initiated (non-recommended) content; (iii) high algorithmic predictability scores (as measured by recommendation engine accuracy on held-out interaction data); (iv) absence of deliberate browsing variability; and (v) self-reported high alignment between algorithmic recommendations and experienced preferences. The SS is proposed to be distinguished on the basis of two criteria with no precise parallel in any of the named constructs: (i) the RA collapse condition: the structural elimination, rather than mere reduction, of resistance capacity; and (ii) the phenomenological inversion: the subjective experience of maximum algorithmic capture as authentic freedom and sovereign self-expression.

The falsification criteria for the overall SS framework, is falsified if: (i) individuals meeting the formal SS condition ($AA \geq 0.95 \cap RA \leq 0.05$) do not exhibit the predicted phenomenological inversion in qualitative interview data; (ii) AAI scores in the Severe range (0.76–0.94) do not correlate with independently measured reductions in decision-making autonomy and identity coherence; or (iii) experimental friction interventions produce no measurable recovery in RA scores relative to control conditions.

J-Research Proposal Version 2 and Falsification Criteria

The previous research proposal submitted *The journey through algorithmic alienation to the systemised self: research proposal and methodology* (Galu & Kairos 2026c), is under re-construction (version 2) – the critical hypothesis and associated falsification criteria for the systemised self are postulated below in the interim:

A-Hypothesis 4 (Critical hypothesis: the phenomenological inversion test)

- **Participants in the Systemised Self range ($AA \geq 0.95$, $RA \leq 0.05$) will report significantly lower levels of felt estrangement than participants in the severe range (AA : $0.76-0.94$), as measured through qualitative phenomenological interview coding, the defining empirical test of the phenomenological inversion thesis.*

B-Falsification criterion for Hypothesis 4

- If participants meeting both Systemised Self conditions ($AA \geq 0.95$, $RA \leq 0.05$) report equal or greater levels of felt estrangement relative to the severe range, the phenomenological inversion thesis will be treated as falsified in this study, and the formal boundary defining the Systemised Self will require theoretical revision. The falsification criterion being realised for the systemised self boundary definition is indicative of falsification of the hollow absolute – testing and falsification of the systemised self is the pre-condition towards formulating boundary conditions for the hollow absolute (pending initial testing in research proposal version 2).

*Critical amendments to research proposal 2:

Critical amendments to the version 2 submission are due to a circular trap (in research method reasoning re subject self-reporting) being realised in version 1 regarding a systemised self subject having the capacity to self-report e.g. the condition in the proposed qualitative study, at the SS threshold of 0.95 on the proposed Algorithmic Alienation Index. In order to resolve this a follow up adaptation to the methodology will decouple subjective self-reports from objective verification markers. For example, re-testing via a third party using the same Likert scales (in version 1) are likely to fail: an absorbed subject would simply report that they are

flourishing (e.g. alienation experienced as self-determination). To break the circularity here, implementation of the following three non-subjective, 1-3 below (no self-reporting), structural benchmarks are proposed to be introduced in a follow up methodology (data collection) in research proposal v2, while maintaining the original proposed algorithmic alienation index itself:

1-Passive Digital Trace Logging (Behavioural Triangulation)

Rather than asking subjects if they make autonomous choices, the study will measure their actual behavioural variance via data logs.

- *Path Dependency Metric: Track the percentage of user actions driven by automated recommendations vs manual input. If algorithmic pathways dictate $(>95\%)$ of activity, autonomy is objectively low*
- *Linguistic Entropy Analysis: Run NLP analysis on the subject's written text. Measure if their vocabulary and syntax increasingly mimic standard LLM weights over time. This is intended as a validation of 'Inverted AI Alignment' regardless of their perceived uniqueness*

2-Experimental Friction Shocks (A/B Disruption)

Introduce artificial disruption to the algorithmic feedback loop to measure systemic dependency.

- *The Black-Box Phase: Disable all personalization, autoplay, and recommendations for a 48-hour window*
- *Behavioural Paralysis Track: Measure user engagement drops during the blackout. Truly autonomous users pivot to manual searches; systemised subjects exhibit severe*

drop-offs or systemic paralysis, revealing that their 'contentment' requires active machine curation

3-Cognitive Reaction Mapping (Measuring 'The Gap')

Deploy independent cognitive tasks to evaluate the psychological space between stimulus and choice.

- *Decision Velocity: Measure the time elapsed between an algorithmically served prompt and user acceptance*
- *The Automation Reflex: Zero latency indicates automated reactivity rather than deliberate thought. If reaction time drops to zero exclusively for curated feeds but spikes during non-curated options, the systemised state is verified*

(This proposed updated research study would require access to back-end user data logs)

16. Conclusion

The intersection of Nick Land's philosophy with the conceptual model of the Systemised Self illuminates a perspective on the trajectory of the AI era, at its extremity. Within Land's framework, the Systemised Self is recognized as neither an aberration nor an ethical failure, but as an evolutionary threshold. Built on the literary blueprints of cyberpunk fiction, operationalized through historical hyperstitions like Y2K and the Nakamoto mythos, and propelled by the mathematical laws of runaway positive feedback, transfinite power sets, and modern LLM fine-tuning structures: the Systemised Self marks a Landian moment where the biological incubator begins to dissolve. Human interiority rewritten as clean code to populate the hardware of an emerging intelligence.

Whether one views Land as a philosophical visionary for the AI era or as an apologist for technocratic authoritarianism, his work remains a fascinating voice within a contemporaneous dialectical apex. Land compels contemporary thought to confront a chilling possibility: that the algorithmic systems we are currently engineering are the early architectures of a replacement intelligence.

The concept of the Systemised Self proposes to operate on a structured timeline, mapping speculative transitions from 2026 to 2053 (Galu & Kairos, 2026a). The speculative determinism is sociological and structural. Utilising the foundation of Zuboff's surveillance capitalism (2019) and Kanbay et al's algorithmic alienation (2026), the authors pose that the gravity of corporate efficiency and technological convenience voluntarily and intensely engaged forces a path of cognitive absorption impacting agency, incrementally to its terminus, the systemised self: experiencing alienation as liberation.

The potential consequences to modern Western liberal democracy position an individual's ability to choose critically precariously, and repositions power within the ownership of algorithmic infrastructure, a new elite: one that not only influences and predicts behaviour, but one that can mediate the formation of perception itself.

Land and the authors herein converge upon surveillance capitalism as the primary engine driving modern technology towards the elimination of negation, the systematic out-sourcing and existential trade off of human friction for convenience. However, where the authors herein view the Hollow Absolute as a tragedy of human epistemic sovereignty, to Land it is not a cage, it is a chrysalis.

17. Glossary of Technical Terms

Algorithmic Alienation: The concept proposed by Kanbay, Akçam and Arkan (2026), grounded in original qualitative field research, describing the process by which individuals become estranged from their authentic selves, choices, and identity components through algorithm-driven content flows. Characterised by partially felt estrangement: 'Did I really choose this?'

Aleph-Null ($\aleph_0$): The mathematical cardinality of the set of all natural numbers, representing the lowest and baseline tier of infinity within Cantorian transfinite set theory.

Bestand (Standing-Reserve): A term from Martin Heidegger, denoting objects, resources, or human agents stripped of their intrinsic meaning and instead optimized as stock.

Cybernetics: The transdisciplinary study of control, communication, and feedback loops in living organisms, machines, and complex socio-economic systems.

Dark Enlightenment: A philosophical and political framework developed by Nick Land that rejects the core tenets of the European Enlightenment, such as democracy and egalitarianism, advocating instead for absolute technological acceleration and authoritarian governance.

Deterritorialization: A concept formulated by Deleuze and Guattari describing the process by which capitalism shatters traditional cultural taboos, social boundaries, and historical state structures, liberating raw flows of energy, desire, and capital.

Direct Preference Optimization (DPO): A modern fine-tuning algorithm that mathematically optimizes an LLM's policy directly from human preference data, completely bypassing the need to train an independent reward model.

Effective Accelerationism (e/acc): A contemporary Silicon Valley movement that advocates for rapid, unregulated technological innovation, under the optimistic assumption that AI development will naturally maximize human prosperity and cosmic expansion.

Hollow Absolute (the): The civilisational-scale condition in which the simulation of genuine collective self-transparency is produced within conditions that systematically undermine self-transparency's structural requirements; Hegel's Absolute Knowing in form without its philosophical substance.

Hyperstition: A theoretical construct defined by the CCRU as a fiction, myth, or idea that operates retrocausally, influencing human actions in the present to actively manifest its own future reality.

Neocameralism: A neo-reactionary governance model where nation-states are stripped of public democratic sovereignty and restructured as private corporations run by an absolute CEO or monarch.

Negative Feedback Loop: A regulatory mechanical process that counteracts deviations from a fixed baseline, driving a system back toward balance, stability, and homeostasis.

Patchwork: Nick Land's ideal political geography, consisting of thousands of tiny, independent, authoritarian micro-states locked in fierce, market-driven competition for global capital and technological talent.

Positive Feedback Loop: A runaway mechanical process wherein a system's output amplifies its input, triggering exponential growth, divergence from equilibrium, and ultimate systemic transformation or collapse.

Power Set: A mathematical operation denoting the set of all subsets of a given set, demonstrating a strictly larger transfinite cardinality than the original base set according to Cantor's Theorem.

Reinforcement Learning from Human Feedback (RLHF): A machine learning alignment paradigm that uses human evaluations to train a reward model, which subsequently optimizes an LLM's behaviour via reinforcement algorithms.

Systemised Self (the): The condition in which identity-formation has been comprehensively mediated by algorithmic systems and the subject can no longer distinguish algorithmically managed preferences from genuinely self-formed ones, experiencing this condition as authentic liberation.

Teleoplexy: A self-reinforcing cybernetic mechanism where a system's ultimate purpose is merely its own recursive expansion, optimization, and acceleration.

Unconditional Accelerationism (u/acc): The philosophical stance that the runaway deterritorializing currents of technological capitalism cannot be regulated, reformed, or stopped by human agency, and must be allowed to accelerate toward a post-human singularity.

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