

Deconstructing "Cogito": Descartes' Specter and the Emergence of Posthuman Subjects

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Abstract

This paper aims to systematically explore the critical inheritance and transcendence of posthuman theory towards the Cartesian philosophical paradigm. Descartes established the rational, autonomous, and dualistic subject concept of mind and body with the assertion "Cogito, ergo sum," which has long formed the theoretical cornerstone of the modern concept of "humanity." However, in the contemporary era where artificial intelligence, biotechnology, and cognitive science are profoundly reshaping human existence, this paradigm is facing unprecedented challenges. This paper argues that posthuman theory systematically deconstructs Descartes' "cogito" subject through three key paths: embodiment, distributed cognition, and relational ontology. The posthuman condition does not signify the end of "humanity," but rather marks a paradigm shift from an isolated "thinking self" to a deeply entangled "posthuman subject." On the "ruins" of Cartesian philosophy, posthuman theory constructs a more inclusive and explanatory framework to cope with the reconstruction of subjectivity, agency, and biopolitics in the technological era.

Keywords: Descartes; cogito; posthuman; cyborg; subjectivity; Artificial Intelligence

1. Introduction: Descartes' Specter and the Subjective Dilemma of the Technological Age

When brain computer interfaces attempt to decipher thought, gene editing can rewrite the code of life, and artificial intelligence begins to mimic and even surpass certain rational functions of humans, an ancient philosophical question—"What it means to be human"—is once again presented to us in an urgent and sharp manner. In this era where the post human condition is gradually emerging, we can almost always catch a lingering philosophical ghost when we look back: René Descartes and his famous "Cogito, ergo sum" (I think, therefore I am).

Through the "cogito," Descartes established not merely an epistemic foundation for certainty, but, more significantly, a modern blueprint of the "human": a thinking subject centered on rationality, independent of the body and its situated world. This independent and self-sufficient subject image constitutes the core of self understanding of modernity. However, the rapid advancement of contemporary technology is now eroding the very stability of this figure at its roots. As intelligence can exist in "non-biological" forms, and as the boundary between body and machine becomes blurred, the Cartesian subject—built upon mind-body dualism and human exceptionalism—appears increasingly inadequate in addressing our current lived experience.

The emergence of posthumanist theory constitutes a profound theoretical response to this predicament. Contrary to some misinterpretations that regard it as announcing the "end of the human," it seeks rather to deconstruct the sanctified, autonomous, and self-sufficient modern subject, while actively exploring the diverse and complex possibilities that lie beyond it. Within this intellectual movement, the legacy of Descartes plays an ambivalent role: it serves both as a theoretical target that must be transcended and as an indispensable point of departure for the journey of thought.

Confronted with this intricate theoretical heritage, this paper aims to demonstrate that posthumanist theory systematically deconstructs the Cartesian cogito subject primarily through three intertwined pathways: embodiment challenges its fantasy of a disembodied mind, distributed cognition dismantles its fortress of isolated rationality, and relational ontology fundamentally subverts its substantialist conception of being. Upon the "ruins" of this philosophical deconstruction, a posthuman ontology is constructed—one that emphasizes intrinsic interconnectedness, materiality, and processes of becoming.

To advance this argument, we must first return to the philosophical stronghold of Descartes, clarifying the internal

structure of his cogito subject and mind-body dualism, along with their contemporary predicaments. Building on this foundation, we will delve into the core domains of posthuman theory, tracing how key thinkers have grappled with the Cartesian legacy. For instance, N. Katherine Hayles, in *How We Became Posthuman*, incisively points out that the tendency within posthuman discourse to treat information as something detachable from the fleshly body is merely a contemporary reenactment of the Cartesian fantasy of a body-mind split. Drawing on the history of cybernetics, she forcefully argues for the fundamental importance of embodiment to any cognition or existence. (Hayles, N. K. 1999) Donna Haraway, with her iconic figure of the "cyborg," launches a more radical practice of boundary politics. Her cyborg openly transgresses the Cartesian borders between human and animal, organism and machine, the physical and the non-physical, aiming to open up political and poetic space for a hybrid, heterogeneous ontology. (Haraway, D. 1991) Meanwhile, Rosi Braidotti attempts a "non-Eurocentric" transformation of the Cartesian cogito. Through her philosophy of "vital materialism," she liberates subjectivity from the confines of enclosed human reason, reinterpreting it as a generative force that permeates the very matter of life itself—a trans-species, becoming-power. (Braidotti, R. 2013)

Through a cross-examination of these theoretical pathways, this paper aims to map out an intellectual genealogy that traces the shift from the isolated Cartesian mind toward a distributed posthuman subjectivity. This endeavor is not merely an exercise in untangling a longstanding philosophical dispute, but, more importantly, a means to comprehend how technology continues to reconfigure the boundaries and meaning of the ancient concept of "the human" at its most fundamental level.

2. Descartes' Stronghold: The Cogito Subject as the Cornerstone of Modernity

To comprehend the radical deconstruction of the concept of "the human" in posthuman theory, we must first return to that philosophical edifice repeatedly challenged—the Cartesian cogito subject. Its architecture not only defined the starting point of modern philosophy but also predetermined the battleground for many subsequent debates. This section does not intend to offer a comprehensive restatement of Descartes' philosophy; rather, it aims to focus on those core components that resonate profoundly—or rather, clash intensely—with posthuman concerns: namely, the cogito subject established through methodical doubt, the ensuing problematic of mind-body dualism, and the human exceptionalism built upon this foundation. Understanding both the solidity and the fissures of this edifice is the essential intellectual precondition for all subsequent deconstructive work.

2.1 "I Think, Therefore I Am" and the Inward Turn of Reason

In his *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Descartes' radical doubt constitutes a thought experiment designed to secure an absolutely solid foundation for knowledge. After suspending sensory experience, bodily existence, and even the external world, he discovered that the very act of doubting itself remained indubitable. From this, he derived his first principle of philosophy: "I think, therefore I am." This "I," as Descartes defines it, "is nothing but a thinking thing, that is, a mind, or intellect, or reason". (Descartes, 1641/1984, p.18) This "thinking substance," stripped of history, social relations, and bodily attributes, is established as the "Archimedean point" for the entire edifice of knowledge.

The revolutionary significance of this turn, as Charles Taylor points out, lies in its complete relocation of the source of morality and the authority of cognition from the external cosmos and divine will to "inward, inner depths of the self." (Taylor, C. 1989, p.143) We may understand it this way: Descartes discovered an internal, self-evident space of reason and erected it as the tribunal for judging all certainty. This cogito subject thus became the philosophical prototype for the autonomous, rational individual of modernity. However, the very problem is embedded here: this purified core of reason, in gaining its transcendent independence, simultaneously severed itself from the body and the world upon which it nonetheless depends, thereby planting the seeds for the fantasy of a "disembodied mind."

2.2 Mind-Body Dualism: The Birth of a Philosophical Conundrum

Proceeding from the cogito, Descartes constructed the core framework of his metaphysics: mind-body dualism. The world was clearly divided into two absolutely heterogeneous substances: "thinking substance" (*res cogitans*), whose essence is thought and which does not occupy space; and "extended substance" (*res extensa*), whose essence is spatial extension and which obeys mechanical physical laws. (Descartes, 1641/1984, p. 54) While this radical division granted autonomy to reason, it also created a problem that would haunt Western philosophy for centuries: how can an immaterial, non-extended "mind" interact with a material, machine-like "body"?

Although Descartes himself attempted to locate a physiological site for their interaction in the brain's "pineal gland," this solution was philosophically feeble, appearing more as a relocation of the problem than its resolution. More far-reaching in its implications was the thorough objectification and devaluation of the body within this dualistic framework. In *Discourse on the Method*, he explicitly compared the bodies of animals and humans to "machines," whose operations, like those of intricate clocks, were determined entirely by the arrangement of parts and the flow of "animal spirits." (Descartes, 1637/1985, pp. 139-141) This "body-as-machine" model, while carrying progressive scientific

significance in its era by opposing mystical vitalism, philosophically severed the unity of mind and body. Furthermore, it implanted a profound technological metaphor—the view of living beings as analyzable, controllable automata—into the very genetic code of modernity.

2.3 *The Establishment of Human Exceptionalism*

Descartes's dualism gave direct rise to a robust version of human exceptionalism. If the "thinking substance" is the essence of being human, and if the bodies of animals and even humans are merely "machines," then, within Descartes's framework, an unbridgeable ontological chasm exists between humans and animals, and between humans and machines. Animals, lacking the rational "thinking substance," were thus seen as automatons devoid of sensation and consciousness; their cries of pain were, in his view, no different from "the noise of a spring being stretched." (Descartes, 1637/1985, p. 139)

This perspective placed reason—considered the exclusive attribute of humans—at the apex of a hierarchy of beings. As the posthuman theorist N. Katherine Hayles incisively observed, the Cartesian dualism that constructed the "human" as a free, autonomous subject simultaneously "paved the way for the disenfranchisement of the natural world by linking the body to the natural world and opposing the body to reason." (Hayles, N. K. 1999, p.5) This not only firmly established humanity's central status relative to other life forms but also preemptively excluded any possibility of machines (as pure "extended substance") possessing reason or consciousness. Many of today's debates concerning whether artificial intelligence can "think" trace their conceptual origins back to this clear, yet highly contested, boundary drawn by Descartes.

3. The "Revenge" of the Body: From Disembodied Mind to Embodied Cyborg

If Descartes' philosophical edifice was built upon the cornerstone of mind-body dualism, then one of the most potent critiques from posthuman theory is the launch of a thoroughgoing "revenge of the body." After centuries of being dismissed as a silent machine, the body now returns to the very center of philosophical thought, carrying with it its full materiality, capacity for sensation, and potential for technological fusion. This section will trace the intellectual trajectory of this "revenge": beginning with Descartes' classic depiction of the body as a passive object, proceeding to examine how N. Katherine Hayles excavates the core concept of "embodiment" from the history of cybernetics, and culminating in an exploration of how Donna Haraway's figure of the "cyborg" reconstructs the body as a dynamic field of agency where the political and the technological are inextricably intertwined.

3.1 *The Cartesian Body: A Disciplined Machine*

In Descartes' epistemological revolution, the body paid a heavy price. In the quest for epistemic certainty, it was systematically demoted to "extended substance"—a sophisticated automaton governed by mechanical laws. In *Discourse on the Method*, he meticulously described how animal and human flesh are composed of bones, nerves, muscles, and "animal spirits," their mechanisms of movement no different from the meshing gears of a clock. (Descartes, 1637/1985, pp. 134-141) While this "body-as-machine" model had the progressive merit of rebelling against vitalism, it philosophically led to a "de-animation" of the body. The body became an object observed, manipulated, and even doubted by the mind; it did not participate in the generation of meaning but was instead the source of sensory illusions and cognitive errors. This conception of the body as a silent, passive vessel paved the way for a dangerous modern fantasy—the idea that information, mind, or even consciousness could exist independently of its material substrate.

3.2 *Hayles's Critique: Why Information Needs a Body*

Countering this modern fantasy of the "disembodied mind," N. Katherine Hayles delivers a fundamental critique in *How We Became Posthuman*. Through a meticulous analysis of cybernetic history, she exposes a crucial misconception: the tendency within posthuman discourse to treat information as a pure, abstract pattern is essentially a contemporary reenactment of the Cartesian specter where "information lost its body." (Hayles, N. K. 1999, p.2)

Hayles's core argument is that all forms of cognition and existence are necessarily embodied. She insightfully notes: "Embodiment ... is not simply about having a body but about being in a body that is itself always already embedded in a larger cultural, technological, and historical milieu." (Hayles, N. K. 1999, p.196) This means thinking is never abstract computation divorced from bodily organization but is deeply dependent on our sensorimotor systems, neural architecture, and continuous interaction with the environment. A brain sustained in a Petri dish cannot engage in genuine Cartesian cogito, for the very content and structure of thought are co-shaped by a body that perceives, acts, and feels within the world. Hayles's concept of "embodiment" acts as a sledgehammer, wrenching subjectivity out of Descartes' isolated inner sanctum and re-anchoring it within a complex, specific, and technologically intertwined materiality.

3.3 Haraway's *Cyborg: The Politicized Practice of the Body*

If Hayles restored the body's reputation on an epistemological level, Donna Haraway, through the revolutionary figure of the "cyborg," thrusts the body to the forefront of political struggle and ontological reconfiguration. In her landmark *A Cyborg Manifesto*, Haraway declares: "A cyborg is a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction." (Haraway, D. 1991, p.149) This figure acts as a theoretical scalpel, incisively cutting into the foundational Western dichotomies upon which Cartesianism relies.

First, the cyborg blatantly mocks the boundary between human and machine. Pacemakers, artificial joints, neural implants—these are no longer external tools opposed to "us" but are internalized as part of "us," transforming the "body-as-machine" from a derogatory philosophical metaphor into a lived reality. Second, it thoroughly confuses the distinction between the natural and the artificial. Genetically modified crops, synthetic biology, and bionic organs dissolve the romanticized "natural" body, replacing it with a technological interface that can be designed, repaired, and enhanced. Finally, it even destabilizes the barrier between the physical and the non-physical: as our memories, emotions, and social relations increasingly depend on cloud storage and digital networks, the boundaries of the body have, in essence, expanded into the digital realm.

Haraway's cyborg is thus no longer the passive, on-call mechanical body of Descartes, but a programmable, augmentable site of political potential—an assemblage and a battleground. It represents an active, hybrid ontological position wherein the body is no longer a burden or obstacle to thought, but rather the ultimate medium and terrain through which we creatively interact with, resist, and reconfigure the entire world—including all its technological dimensions.

4. The Other of Reason: Artificial Intelligence and Distributed Cognition

Descartes' philosophy established "reason" as the unique essence of humanity, thereby drawing a clear metaphysical boundary between humans and machines, and between humans and animals. Yet, this boundary is becoming increasingly blurred and untenable in the face of the impact of artificial intelligence and the revolution in cognitive science. This section explores the second pathway of deconstruction in posthuman theory: by analyzing the complex relationship—simultaneously filial and fractious—between artificial intelligence and Cartesian rationalism, and by introducing the theory of "distributed cognition," it argues that intelligence is not confined within an isolated cogito entity but is instead a systemic phenomenon emergent from complex relational networks. This pathway fundamentally destabilizes the autonomy and self-sufficiency of the Cartesian subject.

4.1 *Descartes's Fortress of Reason: The Definition of Human Essence*

For Descartes, reason was the essential, insurmountable attribute distinguishing humans from machines and animals. This "light of reason" was innate, unified, and constituted the core of the cogito subject. In *Discourse on the Method*, he explicitly argued that machines could never possess human-like rational capacity, as they were incapable of flexibly using language and responding to diverse life situations—which for him was precisely "a demonstration of the faculty of reason." (Descartes, 1637/1985, p.140) Descartes's reason is an internal, private capacity for inference, whose authority stems from its own clarity and distinctness, requiring no dependence on external tools. This view of reason as an intrinsic, inherent human essence erected the most formidable bastion of human exceptionalism, preemptively excluding the possibility of non-biological entities possessing genuine understanding.

4.2 *The Paradox of Artificial Intelligence: The Fulfillment and Demise of the Cartesian Dream*

With a certain irony in intellectual history, the early paradigm of artificial intelligence—classical symbolic AI—exhibited a profound philosophical affinity with Cartesian rationalism. This paradigm, as articulated by Allen Newell and Herbert A. Simon's "Physical Symbol System Hypothesis," posited that intelligence resided in the manipulation and computation of abstract symbols, independent of their physical implementation or concrete connection to the world. (Newell, A., & Simon, H. A. 1976) This was essentially an engineering-driven "Cartesian" endeavor: treating the mind as a program running formal rules, with the brain or computer merely as its substrate.

However, this path soon encountered severe theoretical difficulties. John Searle's "Chinese Room" thought experiment dealt a heavy blow to this strong AI program. (Searle, J. R. 1980) Searle argued that even if a system could flawlessly process Chinese queries by manipulating symbolic rules, it would, like the room's operator who understands no Chinese, possess no understanding of the symbols' meaning. This paradox revealed that pure syntactic manipulation cannot yield semantic understanding, and the "reason" cherished by Descartes precisely included this intrinsic comprehension and consciousness. Ironically, Searle's critique in a sense echoes Descartes's own skepticism about machines' inability to truly use language. Yet, it simultaneously demonstrates that merely realizing a Cartesian disembodied reason is far from sufficient to produce genuine human-like intelligence.

4.3 *The Distribution of Cognition: Mind Beyond the Skull*

A more radical deconstruction of the isolated Cartesian rational subject comes from the rise of "distributed cognition" theory. Pioneered by Edwin Hutchins, this perspective decisively rejects the traditional notion that "cognition occurs only inside the skull," proposing instead that intelligence is a process distributed across an entire system comprising individuals, others, tools, and the environment. (Hutchins, E. 1995, pp.xiii–xiv)

The "Extended Mind" thesis proposed by Andy Clark and David Chalmers goes further, arguing radically that when external tools (like notebooks or smartphones) play a functional role in cognitive processes analogous to internal memory, they literally constitute part of the mind.(Clark, A., & Chalmers, D. 1998) This implies that a person using a calculator for complex computations has a cognitive system that extends beyond the biological brain, incorporating the technological tool. This view strikes at the very foundation of the Cartesian cogito subject: the cognitive agent is no longer a self-sufficient, inner "I," but a "human-technology" coupled system.

Reason is no longer a priori, innate endowment but emerges from real-time interaction with the external environment and technological artifacts. From a posthuman perspective, the essence of intelligence is relational, networked, and embodied. It cannot be imprisoned within Descartes's solitary "thinking substance" but flows through cognitive networks woven together by biological organisms and technological objects. When we recognize that every leap in human reason—from language and writing to maps and computers—has been accompanied by innovations in cognitive technology, the Cartesian imagination of reason as a purely internal faculty appears increasingly untenable.

5. **Beyond Dualism: The Relational Ontology of the Posthuman**

Through a systematic deconstruction of the two central pillars of Cartesianism—the body and reason—posthuman theory has not only accomplished a critical work of demystification but has also actively pointed toward a new ontological vision. If Descartes's philosophical inquiry began with the question, "What kind of substance is it?"—whether thinking substance or extended substance—posthuman theory fundamentally shifts this mode of inquiry, asking instead, "Within what relational networks does it exist?" This section synthesizes the preceding arguments to elaborate how posthuman theory constructs a relational ontology that transcends mind-body dualism, characterized by intrinsic relationality and dynamic becoming. This ontology directs us from static "substances" to fluid "relations," from passive "matter" to vibrant "actants," and ultimately compels us to reconfigure the very foundations of ethics and politics.

5.1 *From Substance to Relation: Networked Being and Agency*

At the core of Descartes's philosophy lies the pursuit of the essential properties of substances, whereas posthuman theory fundamentally shifts toward the primacy of relations. Inspired by ideas such as Bruno Latour's Actor-Network Theory, the posthuman perspective posits that being is no longer understood as the inherent property of an isolated substance but rather as an effect generated and sustained within complex, dynamic relational networks. An algorithm, a smart prosthetic, an urban infrastructure—none are isolated "things"; they are "actants" within networks, continuously exerting influence and co-shaping reality alongside other actants (including humans).

This shift thoroughly reconfigures the concept of agency. Agency is no longer the exclusive privilege of the human subject but is distributed across heterogeneous networks composed of human and non-human actants (animals, technological objects, algorithms, environmental elements). Within this framework, Descartes's autonomous, self-sufficient cogito subject is replaced by an "assemblage" constituted by multiple forces. Cognition is distributed, action is networked, and subjectivity emerges through continuous interaction with "others" (including non-human others). This is not merely abstract theoretical speculation—from the ways social media algorithms shape our attention economies to how intelligent environments discipline our behavioral patterns, real-world exemplars of relational ontology are ubiquitous.

5.2 *Vital Materialism: The Generative Force of the Non-Human World*

Complementing the relational turn is a complete inversion of Descartes's concept of passive, inert "extended substance." "Vital materialism" or "new materialism," advocated by thinkers like Rosi Braidotti, vigorously asserts that matter itself is not inert and passive but possesses an intrinsic capacity for generation, agency, and self-organizing force.

Braidotti terms this vibrant, impersonal materiality "vital matter," which permeates both organic and inorganic bodies. This view stands in sharp contrast to Descartes's "body-as-machine" model. For the latter, matter requires an external source (mind or God) to impart form and motion; for the former, matter itself contains the potential for transformation and creation. Similarly, Jane Bennett, in her work *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*, points out that non-human matter, from microbes to trash heaps, possesses the capacity "to impede or block the will and designs of humans" and to act as quasi-agents. (Bennett, J. 2010, p.viii) Applying this "vital materialism" to technological objects means technology is no longer the passive tool of human will but an actant with its own tendencies, effects, and "life," actively co-shaping

the world and ourselves alongside us. The posthuman body, as a cyborg assemblage of organic tissue, synthetic materials, and digital information, is the most concentrated embodiment of this vital matter.

5.3 New Dimensions of Ethics and Politics: Cohabiting in an Entangled World

This relational and vitalist ontology presents profound and demanding challenges for ethical and political thought. First, it compels us to expand the boundaries of moral consideration. If non-human entities (animals, ecosystems, even advanced AI) possess a form of agency or intrinsic generative force, do we bear direct moral responsibility for them? This sparks intense debate concerning the rights of non-human actants, environmental ethics, and the moral status of artificial life.

Second, it reconfigures the domain of biopolitics. In Braidotti's view, biopolitics under posthuman conditions is no longer the anthropocentric politics focused on "population" management in the Foucauldian sense, but transforms into a "politics of life itself," whose object is the technologically infused, cross-species "vital matter" itself. Technologies of gene editing, neural intervention, and human enhancement become focal points of this new biopolitics.

Ultimately, all of this points to a fundamental question: what does "cohabitation" mean in a world where all beings are deeply entangled? The task of posthuman ethics is no longer to establish absolute moral laws for the subject, but to learn how to engage in careful response and responsible interaction within a fragile and interdependent community co-constituted by humans and non-humans. This demands that we cultivate a new sensibility—remaining open not only to the suffering of others but also to their agency—and within this openness, reimagine possible forms of justice and coexistence.

6. Conclusion: Upon the Ruins of Descartes—The Future of the Posthuman Subject

This paper's journey of argument began with a systematic examination of the Cartesian philosophical edifice, and through three distinct pathways—the revenge of the body, the other of reason, and the construction of a relational ontology—delved into posthuman theory's deconstruction of its cogito subject. We have seen how N. Katherine Hayles's "embodiment" re-anchors consciousness within material existence; how theories of distributed cognition and the extended mind liberate intelligence from the isolated brain into networks woven between humans and technology; and how Donna Haraway's cyborg and Rosi Braidotti's vital materialism together depict a world of blurred boundaries and flowing forces, a world of the non-human. All these theoretical endeavors collectively shake the foundations of mind-body dualism, successfully dissolving the autonomous, self-sufficient, and reason-defined Cartesian subject.

However, we must emphasize that the purpose of deconstruction is by no means to lead to nihilistic destruction, nor to simplistically announce the "end of the human." The core thesis of this paper is to demonstrate that the posthuman condition signals the opening of a new mode of being based on intrinsic relationality, hybrid existence, and cybernetic feedback. We do not seek to abandon thought, but to transcend the metaphysical dogma that treats the cogito as the sole reality. What we are witnessing is a paradigm shift from the Cartesian "thinking self" to a posthuman subject deeply entangled with technology and the world, constituted by multiple heterogeneous forces. This subject is embodied rather than disembodied, networked rather than isolated, relational rather than substantial, and generative rather than fixed. In this sense, the ruins of Descartes's philosophy are not a graveyard for thought, but rather a fertile ground for building more inclusive ontologies and ethics capable of responding to our technological reality.

Looking forward, this posthuman horizon opens up vast and urgent new frontiers for academic inquiry. First, the systematic construction of a posthuman ethics requires in-depth development. A core challenge lies in developing an ethical framework to guide our coexistence with non-human actants—from animals and ecosystems to advanced AI—based on acknowledging their agency and intrinsic value. This demands moving beyond traditional moral philosophy centered exclusively on the "human" to contemplate a broader planetary ethics.

Second, there is a pressing need for more micro-level studies focusing on specific technological contexts. For example, in-depth analyses of how brain-computer interfaces reconfigure the concept of "autonomous will," how artificial womb technology challenges established understandings of "motherhood" and the "origin of life," or how ambient intelligent systems subtly reshape our behavioral patterns and social interactions. Such empirical case studies would provide posthuman theory with a solid empirical foundation, preventing it from becoming an intellectual ivory tower.

Finally, a highly promising direction lies in fostering deep dialogue between posthuman theory and non-Western philosophical traditions. Eastern thought, with its longstanding concepts of "non-self" (无我) in Buddhism, "the unity of things and self" (物我合一) in Daoism, and notions of the "relational self," has long contained critiques of the independent, self-subsisting subject and profound insights into the interconnectedness of all things. These invaluable intellectual resources can help us critically reflect on the predicaments of Western modernity and collaboratively sketch a map of existence that transcends anthropocentrism, one informed by a more global perspective and a spirit of civilizational dialogue. This intellectual path concerns not only theoretical coherence but also our ability, in an era

where technology profoundly reshapes being, to find a wiser, more responsible, and more vibrant mode of coexistence.

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