



## Posthumanism from the Perspective of Existential and Phenomenological Philosophies

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### **Abstract**

*The accelerating wave of digitalization has introduced profound transformations that extend far beyond the technological sphere, reaching into the very core of human existence and self-understanding. This paper explores the philosophical challenges arising from the digital revolution, focusing on how technologies such as artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and digital networks are reshaping the human condition. It examines the erosion of traditional boundaries between the real and the virtual, the human and the machine, and the self and its digital extensions.*

*Drawing on existentialist and phenomenological perspectives, the study argues that digitalization constitutes an ontological shift a reconfiguration of what it means to be human in an age where identity, consciousness, and presence are increasingly mediated by technology. The human being is no longer a purely embodied and autonomous subject but a hybrid entity existing across both physical and virtual domains. This shift raises pressing philosophical questions about authenticity, freedom, temporality, and the meaning of existence in a digital environment.*

*Ultimately, the paper contends that the digital era does not signify the end of the human but rather its transformation. It calls for a renewed philosophical inquiry that reconciles humanism with technological evolution and rethinks existence as a dynamic interplay between the organic and the digital, the physical and the virtual, the human and the post-human.*

**Keywords:** *posthumanism; philosophies; phenomenology of existence; digital*

### **Résumé**

*La vague croissante de la numérisation a entraîné de profondes transformations qui dépassent largement le domaine technologique pour toucher au cœur même de l'existence humaine et de la compréhension de soi. Cet article explore les défis philosophiques soulevés par la révolution numérique, en se concentrant sur la manière dont les technologies telles que l'intelligence artificielle, la réalité virtuelle et les réseaux numériques remodelent la condition humaine. Il examine l'érosion des frontières traditionnelles entre le réel et le virtuel, l'humain et la machine, le soi et ses extensions numériques.*

*S'appuyant sur des perspectives existentialistes et phénoménologiques, l'étude soutient que la numérisation constitue un changement ontologique, une reconfiguration de ce que signifie être humain à une époque où l'identité, la conscience et la présence sont de plus en plus médiatisées par la technologie. L'être humain n'est plus un sujet purement incarné et autonome, mais une entité hybride existant à la fois dans les domaines physique et virtuel. Ce changement soulève des questions philosophiques pressantes sur l'authenticité, la liberté, la temporalité et le sens de l'existence dans un environnement numérique.*

*En fin de compte, l'article soutient que l'ère numérique ne signifie pas la fin de l'humain, mais plutôt sa transformation. Il appelle à une nouvelle réflexion philosophique qui réconcilie l'humanisme avec l'évolution technologique et repense l'existence comme une interaction dynamique entre l'organique et le numérique, le physique et le virtuel, l'humain et le post-humain.*

**Mots clés:** *posthumanisme ; philosophies ; existence phénoménologie ; numérique*



## **Introduction:**

Contemporary philosophical thought is undergoing a significant shift in its understanding of human beings and their role in the world, influenced by the digital and technological revolution that has disrupted the metaphysical foundations of modern philosophy. Within this framework, posthumanism emerges as an important discourse that aims to move beyond the conventional humanist perspective, which placed humans at the center of existence and defined meaning in relation to them. However, this progression does not entail a complete rejection or break from humanism; instead, it often signifies a continuation of humanistic ideas through new approaches that reevaluate fundamental concepts of humanity, consciousness, the body, freedom, and relationships with others— all within the new existential realities shaped by digitalization, biotechnology, and artificial intelligence.

From this perspective, the current research seeks to explore posthumanism through two significant philosophical frameworks: phenomenology, which focuses on articulating lived experiences and the expression of existence through awareness, and existentialism, which emphasizes freedom and meaning as fundamental aspects of human experience. These two philosophies suggest that posthumanism can be interpreted not as the end of humanity, but as a transformation of human existence in light of a new technological landscape. Consequently, an essential question emerges: how can we understand posthumanism through this viewpoint of renewal rather than negation?

For this purpose, in order to examine the issue, it is necessary to address the following analytical components:

- Posthumanism between the Critique and the Continuity of the Human
- The Phenomenological Transformation of the Body and Lived Experience
- Existential Freedom under the Algorithmic Condition
- The Other in the posthuman World: Alterity and Technology
- Toward a Phenomenology of Posthuman Existence
- Posthumanism between the Critique and the Continuity of the Human

Posthumanism arose in reaction to the dominant Western ideology of metaphysical anthropocentrism, which persisted from Descartes through to the humanist thoughts of the twentieth century. Human beings had been viewed as the “masters and center” of existence, with reason serving as the ultimate standard of truth. Nevertheless, advancements in technology, especially in artificial intelligence and genetic engineering, have shown that humans are no longer the exclusive beings capable of thought, creativity, or communication. This awareness has blurred the lines that once separated humans from non-humans.

However, this change should not be interpreted as the "end of humanity" as Michel Foucault suggested, but instead as a transition from the metaphysical human to the posthuman—a being that reevaluates itself within the frameworks of technology, symbols, and artificial intelligence. In this context, the human is perceived as an ongoing project of development rather than a finished identity.



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Existential philosophy, as articulated by Jean-Paul Sartre, views the human being as a free project that creates itself through action and responsibility, not through a predetermined essence imposed upon it. "In a constant movement of redefining the self through its choices and actions that grant it existence, the existentialist does not acknowledge pre-given human characteristics or a fixed human nature, for such definitions precede and confine human freedom. The greatest loss one can suffer is the loss of one's humanity and the subjugation of one's freedom" (Samuel Sont, 1998, p. 24).

In today's digital era, this existential endeavor takes on a new significance, as the concept of freedom is increasingly shaped by technology and algorithms. Human life is no longer entirely organic; it is now intertwined with machines, networks, and information. This prompts a deep existential inquiry: how can we maintain the genuineness of human existence in the midst of this complex technological interplay?

In today's world, it is increasingly essential for humanity to reconsider the definition of what it means to be human, to establish its role within the universe, and to recognize its value in relation to other beings. This moment in history requires awakening individuals from their complacency and disconnection from their true selves, fostering a genuine reconciliation with their fundamental essence, and guiding them back to their significant purpose in the cosmos. This purpose involves taking on the duty of imparting meaning and kindness to others with compassion, logic, and open-mindedness—staying far from any kind of fanaticism, bias, or radicalism, while upholding a continuous dedication to

self-examination, reflection, and meditation as crucial components of human growth.

In today's globalized digital world, it has become increasingly essential to prepare individuals to live meaningfully within society, while also educating future generations to recognize their temporary existence, their historical context, and the limits inherent in their nature. It is crucial to nurture in them the principles of human dignity and to safeguard that dignity from any forms of violation—whether cultural, political, or material. The significant challenge of our era is to educate humanity to coexist with others and to support one another, rather than to act against or exploit others—to ensure that human life serves the betterment of humanity itself, rather than adhering to any greater value that demeans or corrupts its true essence and nature.

The current issue centers on reconstructing humanism on fresh foundations, distinct from the traditional views that have resulted in tragedies, conflicts, and even threatened the survival of humanity itself. The elevation of individual freedom, untethered from responsibility, has resulted in violations of natural laws and meddling with the essence of creation through endeavors like gender modification, cloning, speculation about gender fluidity, and the aspiration for a superior being capable of overcoming aging and illness. It seems that as humanity seeks to exceed its natural limitations, it risks losing its very essence.

## **1. The Phenomenological Transformation of the Body and Lived Experience**

From the perspective of phenomenological philosophy, particularly as articulated by Edmund Husserl and Maurice



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Merleau-Ponty, the body is not merely a material object but rather the medium of existence the instrument through which the human being perceives the world and experiences the self. As Abdelkarim Charfi (2007, p. 97) explains, "The distinctive feature of the phenomenological method is that it is a method grounded in direct vision, original intuition, and sensory immediacy a way of seeing things as they are in themselves, grasping them as they appear within the depths of consciousness, It is a method of intellectual seeing that regards phenomena as they manifest in consciousness, not as preconceived categories, ideas, or concepts."

This highlights the phenomenological idea of going back to the essence of things, dismissing the concept of the world as separate from the self. From this perspective, the world is linked to consciousness and cannot be separated from it when understanding meaning.

In phenomenology, consciousness is always consciousness of something, there is no thought without an object of thought, nor an "I" that thinks without the object it thinks about. Being conscious thus entails intentionality the capacity of consciousness to be directed toward and grasp its object (Mohamed Chouki El-Zein, 2015, p. 50).

On the other hand, digital technologies have transformed the human body and altered the concept of embodiment. As virtual reality, interactive artificial intelligence, and advanced prosthetics have emerged, the body has evolved into a hybrid form, blending the biological with the technological and the physical with data.

In phenomenology, the embodied experience is not limited to the physical body; it has evolved through digital media into what Donna Haraway refers to as a cyborg body.

This posthuman form does not solely engage with the world independently but also through digital platforms that facilitate a kind of virtual presence in cyberspace. As a result, perception transforms into a shared experience, intertwined between organic senses and technological interfaces.

These transformations compel a broadening of the phenomenological horizon to include the intentional structures of digitized consciousness, wherein human experience intertwines with computational systems, Existence is no longer simply being-in-the-world, it has become being-in-the-network as though Heidegger's notion of being-in-the-world has been transformed into being-in-the-digital-matrix.

## **2. Existential Freedom under the Algorithmic Condition**

For Jean-Paul Sartre, freedom constitutes the very essence of human existence it is the act of self-creation against determinism. Existentialism affirms the individual's freedom and the capacity to choose among alternatives. As Samuel Sont (1998, p. 18) explains: "Existentialists always emphasize that a person must live their life fully and sincerely, without regard for others' opinions. They strongly resist conforming to externally imposed or inherited norms and consider the development of the self to be the highest goal."

Nevertheless, the posthuman era reconceptualizes freedom in a novel framework influenced by algorithmic systems that produce behavior and thought patterns directed by artificial intelligence and data analysis. The modern individual still makes choices, but those choices



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occur within a framework predetermined by digital systems that influence one's range of options and preferences.

In this emerging reality, freedom transforms into a form of digitally conditioned freedom, functioning as if it is a response within a system driven by algorithms that replicate collective awareness through nuanced methods of soft control. This situation brings forth a modern interpretation of Sartre's idea of bad faith (*mauvaise foi*): individuals now evade existential accountability not by yielding to destiny or societal expectations, but by adhering to the machine's logic and permitting their consciousness to be influenced externally.

The philosophical dilemma, then, is to reclaim authenticity amid the technological mediation, learning to navigate one's autonomous existence in the digital realm without becoming subordinate to it. Freedom still exists, but it now demands a critical understanding of the new limits set by technology and the capacity to turn those limitations into opportunities for creativity and significance, instead of yielding to passive conformity.

### **3. The Other in the Posthuman World: Alterity and Technology**

One of the central issues that posthumanism has revisited is the question of the Other. Numerous attempts have been made to define "the Other," reflecting the rich epistemological dimensions embedded in the concept. As with notions such as "the self" and "being," the concept of the Other resists precise definition, for definition itself relies on description, comparison, and differentiation (Ziyada Ma'n et al., 1986, p. 13), Emmanuel Levinas demonstrated

that the encounter with the Other is the origin of ethics, and that the face of the Other reveals the limits of the self and calls it to responsibility.

However, in today's world – where machines are capable of simulation, interaction, and even partial perception – the Other is no longer exclusively human. Contemporary discourse is saturated with contested terms that have emerged in the wake of artificial intelligence, making it increasingly difficult to fix the meaning of the Other, since it encompasses what is different, distinct, and divergent, each carrying a nuanced connotation. For Levinas, the human being is not merely in a relation of respect or tolerance toward the Other, but in a relation of responsibility a moral obligation that constitutes the very foundation of ethics (Toussacano Roberto, 2007, p. 51).

Phenomenology currently encounters a fresh challenge: that posed by the technological Other, including artificial intelligence, robots, digital images, and interactive interfaces. These entities now possess similar abilities to act, communicate, and respond alongside us. Is it possible to form a face-to-face relationship with them in the manner described by Levinas? Additionally, can we broaden the concept of moral responsibility to include non-human entities?

Consequently, posthuman ethics reaches a new frontier of trans-species ethics, integrating human values into a wider cosmic context that encompasses artificial intelligence and digital entities as active participants in meaning-making instead of simply being tools. This represents an effort to expand the idea of alterity, extending it beyond the human Other to include the technological Other, signifying a shift in



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the fundamental nature of encounter and existence in our technological era.

#### **4. Toward a Phenomenology of Posthuman Existence**

Existential and phenomenological philosophies offer a reflective foundation for grasping the significant changes in human existence occurring today. Instead of mourning the demise of humanity, as some poststructuralist theorists have suggested, we can view posthumanism as the revival of existence in diverse and hybridized forms.

Phenomenology illustrates that existence becomes apparent through consciousness, which transforms as its mediums evolve. Therefore, technological mediation should not be seen as a hindrance to experience, but instead as a new prerequisite for its expression. Posthuman consciousness is complex and multi-dimensional, intertwined with the material and the symbolic, the real and the virtual, as well as the human and the machine.

From an existentialist perspective, truth has no absolute existence, for as Sartre posited existence precedes essence, Thus, truth is determined by human beings, it depends on individual concepts, choices, personal relations, and the significance that things or events have for one's lived world (Samuel Sont, 1998, p. 24). For existentialism, truth is relative, requiring freedom of choice, personal responsibility, and acceptance of the consequences that result from authentic living, The moral value of an act arises from its rootedness in the human condition itself. Since the individual creates his or her own essence, each person invents their own values through choices and actions (Ahmed Fouad Abdel Fattah, 1982, p. 72), Thus values are

subjective, emotional, and personal and the only values worthy of esteem are those that drive the individual to be authentic in their individuality and freedom, Freedom of choice, in turn, grants others the same license to choose, thereby giving rise to an ethics of creation.

The objective, then, is not to uphold a notion of a pure human essence, but to reconceptualize the human being as a being continuously open to change. This perspective resonates with Rosi Braidotti's ideas, who regards posthumanism not as a rejection of humanity but as an elevation of anthropocentric subjectivity towards a shared ontology of diverse subjectivities. It also aligns with Katherine Hayles' perspective of the new human as an informational entity—a mode of existence constituted as much by data streams as by flesh and nerves.

At the same time, existential philosophy, as Sartre emphasized, reminds us that each person is the guardian of themselves, wholly responsible for their being yet this responsibility extends beyond the self to all of humanity, The image we construct of ourselves, Sartre insists, is not merely personal but reflects and implicates all others (Jean-Paul Sartre, 1964, p. 17).

Consequently, existentialism and phenomenology collaboratively redefine the inquiry into existence within a contemporary digital context: What does it signify to be autonomous and aware entities in an environment now coexisted with algorithms and artificial intelligence?



## Conclusion

From the viewpoints of existential and phenomenological philosophies, posthumanism does not signify a break from the human philosophical path, but rather a significant shift in the ways of being, experiencing, and understanding. Humanity has not distanced itself from the core of existence; instead, it has redefined its role within a new framework where biology intersects with digital technology, the body integrates with algorithms, and consciousness merges with artificial intelligence. Therefore, the posthuman transformation is not a rejection of the human, but rather a reconfiguration of human existence within mixed environments where the human becomes intertwined with systems of technology, knowledge, and materiality, while still retaining the ability for inquiry, creativity, and transcendence.

Thus, posthuman philosophy advocates not for a rejection of technology or a retreat from it, but instead for an analysis of its framework and a comprehension of its ontological and ethical principles, ensuring that it does not become an unthinking power or a replacement for humanity itself. Consequently, posthuman consciousness arises as an invitation to accept philosophical responsibility for the collective fate that binds humans, technology, and nature, shifting the relationship from one of control to collaboration and from exploitation to innovation.

Ultimately, the risk of posthumanism is not in its moving beyond humanity, but in neglecting the human element that resides within it. Therefore, the main philosophical challenge is to protect the core of human existence not as a

definitive or fixed essence, but as an expansive horizon of discovery, potential, and creativity. Within this horizon, philosophy reshapes the understanding of what it means to be human in an era where humanity itself has become a developing project focused on the future.

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