




Ontological Alienation and the Ecological Self: Re-appropriating the Human–Environment Relationship through Literary Mediation

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Abstract

This paper applies Rahel Jaeggi's philosophical notion of *alienation* as a disrupted mode of *appropriation* to the analysis of the human-environment relationship. In the Anthropocene, this sense of alienation crosses social and cultural structures to shroud the broken relationship between people and the natural world. Environmental crises, resource exploitation, and the commodification of nature are argued to be expressions of the ensuing ontological alienation. This paper foregrounds Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* as a literary instance to illustrate how literature reveals the human experience of alienation in ecologically deteriorating environments. The text expresses a deep sense of loss, meaning, continuity, and rootedness that reflects Jaeggi's analysis of alienation as the inability to genuinely engage with one's world. By placing Jaeggi's idea of overcoming alienation in the context of sustainability discourse, the study establishes an eco-critically aware definition of the concept of appropriation as a proactive ethical and ecological process of re-engagement with the environmental world, which facilitates the reconstitution of the ecological self as a part of an interdependent web of existence rather than as a passively uninvolved observer or exploiter.

Keywords: alienation; Anthropocene; literature; sustainability; Margaret Atwood; philosophy; ecology

1 Introduction

The Anthropocene signifies an epoch where human activity becomes the primary driver of planetary change, with impacts that are global, profound, and potentially irreversible (Summerhayes et al., 2024; Zalasiewicz et al., 2021), resulting in a fundamental alteration of the Earth's environmental parameters (Blok & Jensen, 2019). The designation of the contemporary epoch as the Anthropocene also signifies a continual and intensified estrangement between nature and human societies on a collective level as well as on the individual ontological level. Such estrangement points to a deeper relational crisis that proliferates beyond material degradation. This estrangement manifests its effects on both sides. In the natural world, it manifests in an acceleration of biodiversity loss, climate instability, and the pervasive instrumentalization of ecosystems. For human existence, this relational estrangement occurs in two kinds. These are interrelated but distinct. One pertains to a collective estrangement of a population within which a breakdown of shared practices, communal meaning, and intersubjective relations takes place, giving rise to social fragmentation, institutional distrust, and ultimately to the disintegration of ecological and civic solidarity. The other kind manifests as an existential condition within the individual psyche.

The individual is subjected to a disorientation in relation to the world. This causes a loss of continuity, agency, and the capacity to identify with one's surroundings.

The Anthropocene as a contemporary meta-narrative presents a totalizing account of the Earth system that corresponds to a dystopian outlook rather than a progressive one (Chernilo, 2016). As the exploitation of planetary resources reaches extremes, the very existence of humanity becomes precarious. Within this context, Margaret Atwood's dystopian fictional narrative, *Oryx and Crake*, offers a uniquely ecological account that facilitates the examination of the very structures of ecological alienation in a world that is approaching systemic collapse. The novel's portrayal of techno-scientific hubris, corporate extractivism, and the dissolution of meaningful human-environment relations makes it a conducive site for interrogating the ontological dimensions of alienation in the Anthropocene. It is for this reason that the present study takes Atwood's work as its literary corpus for analysis, positioning it as a narrative mediation through which the experiential and existential registers of ecological alienation become legible. Scientific data alone cannot make climate change feel real or urgent; imaginative processes are also required to help us imagine its scale and consequences (Trexler, 2015, p. 5). Literary studies as a field of study has long shown how novels capture deep cultural shifts; therefore, literary fiction such as *Oryx and Crake* is not a diversion from reality, but a necessary medium for cultivating the affective, ethical, and narrative cognizance of the Anthropocene.

Popular formulations of alienation, such as in the traditions of Hegel and Marx, remain confined to analyses of broader contexts of labour, social recognition, or economic exploitation. While such theorizations provide seminal insights into structural inequities, they are not sufficient to understand alienation as it operates at the ontological level of human-environment relations. Ecological alienation cannot be reduced to a by-product of capitalist production. It must be, rather, understood as a constitutive failure in the modes by which the world is engaged, interpreted, and inhabited.

Rahel Jaeggi's conceptualization of *alienation* as a disruption of *appropriation* offers a theoretical base that can be employed to address this gap. In Jaeggi's (2014) theorization of the condition, alienation is defined as a breakdown in the individual subject's ability to identify with, participate in, and shape the given conditions of their existence. Appropriation signifies an active relation to the world that is characterized by the individual's agency, coherence, and responsiveness, rather than passive reception of the given or instrumental control by higher

power structures. Alienation ensues when this capacity becomes impaired. It not only corresponds to a subjective isolation, but constitutes a structural impediment to genuine world-belonging.

Applying this framework to the ecological domain enables a diagnosis of contemporary environmental crises as an expression of ontological dis-appropriation. The commodification of nature and the dissolution of intergenerational environmental memory are interpreted as symptoms of the incapacity to relate meaningfully with the more-than-human world. It is towards this very end that Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* is taken as a literary mediation, a narrative form that is uniquely capable of presenting alienation as embodied, temporal, and affective experience that facilitates a philosophical-literary analysis of ontological alienation within an ecologically collapsed world. Furthermore, Jaeggi's (2014) theoretical lens allows for the articulation of a remedial alternative which proposes ecological re-appropriation as a practice of ethical re-embedding. In this conception, the self is reconstituted as a node within an interdependent web of existence and not as a passive agent.

2 The Anthropocene in *Oryx and Crake*

The novel *Oryx and Crake* can be rigorously analyzed through Fredric Jameson's methodological directive by employing anthropocentrism as the interpretive master code, thereby exposing the text's structural critique of human exceptionalism and the corporate-scientific pursuit of ontological separation (Jameson, 2002, p. x).

The anthropocentric worldview finds its apotheosis in the novel's corporate-scientific structure of hegemony. Nature is systematically reconfigured through unrestrained bioengineering that functions as the primary instrument of this hubris. Genomes become editable code, species boundaries become outdated constraints that need to be surpassed, and evolutionary processes are deemed as inefficient software awaiting optimization.

The Anthropocene in *Oryx and Crake* is institutionally embodied in a network of biotech conglomerates, OrganInc, HelthWyzer, RejoovenEsense, NooSkins, and AnooYoo, with portmanteau names that signal their operation(s) on the foundational anthropocentric premise that nonhuman life exists for human utility. Their products are other forms of life that are redesigned, optimized, and deployed in the service of humans and ultimately profit. Such a project demands not only technological sovereignty over nature, but spatial and social insulation from its consequences. This logic materializes in the fortified Compounds, which Jimmy's father (a leading scientist in the biotech companies) explicitly describes as modern

"castles" designed "for keeping you and your buddies nice and safe inside, and for keeping everybody else outside" (Atwood, 2013, p. 32). The resulting ethical blind spot is total, as the system treats life as entirely fungible: the Pigeons are created solely to grow multiple human organs as a "transgenic knockout pig host"(p. 25) through gene splicing, literally treating animal life as a production platform for human maintenance and profit. The organs grown could be customized to needs and frozen till needed (p. 27). The creation of other engineered life, such as the dangerous snat (snake-rat splice) and the ultimately successful Rakunks transgenic raccoon-skunk hybrids, selectively bred to retain aesthetic appeal while eliminating the raccoon's aggression and the skunk's defensive odor, and the wolvogs (wolf-dog composites engineered to appear docile yet conceal lethal predatory instincts) further reinforce this mindset where to "create-an-animal was so much fun... it made you feel like God" (p. 48). Crake's philosophical justification for humanity's destructive tendencies is rooted in this same exceptionalism, arguing that humans are "doomed by hope"(p. 97), which he defines as the "desperation" to project the human self forward through reproduction, unlike other animals, which "cut down on the eggs" in lean seasons. This systematic optimization culminates in the Paradise Project and Crake's creation of the Crakers, a new species of human life that is designed to get rid of evolutionary traits such as territoriality, hierarchy, and misplaced sexual energy that are problematic. Crake cynically understands that human exceptionalism is inherently flawed, confirmed by his hypothetical scenario that diseases designed for "maximum profit" require "the patient would have to live a long time". This structural critique culminates when Crake's creation of the virulent JUVE virus, deliberately embedded in the widely distributed BlyssPluss libido-enhancing pills, becomes the ultimate weaponization of this corporate-scientific logic, where the instrument of human hubris becomes the instrument of global species destruction, forcing Homo sapiens to join the long list of the Extinctathon.

3 Ecological Impacts of the Anthropocene in Oryx and Crake

Having exposed the anthropocentric logic that authorizes the redesign of life, the novel then renders its inescapable corollary: the systemic unraveling of the Earth system itself, not as speculative fiction, but as the empirically grounded trajectory of a world in which nature has been treated as infinitely pliable. Human society, as functioning on the principles of the Anthropocene, is described within the narrative as "a giant slug eating its way relentlessly through all the other bioforms on the planet, grinding up life on earth and shitting it out the backside in the form of pieces of manufactured and soon-to-be-obsolete plastic junk" (p. 285)

Within the text, the negative ecological consequences become apparent and ostensible when “the coastal aquifers turned salty, and the northern permafrost melted, and the vast tundra bubbled with methane, and the drought in the midcontinental plains regions went on and on, and the Asian steppes turned to sand dunes, and meat became harder to come by” (p. 27). These are not fictional exaggerations, but extrapolations of Anthropocene forcing, each corresponding to observable trends driven by fossil-fuel dependence, land-use change, and industrial agriculture, the very foundations upon which the Compounds’ prosperity rests. Even seasonal rhythms that were once reliable markers of time and place have dissolved. Where June used to be sunny and moderate temperatures, it had become the wet season with frequent thunderstorms all the way (p. 203). Crucially, the degradation is lived unevenly, while the elite retreat behind Compound walls, its human costs manifest in the Pleeblands, where ecological instability precipitates social breakdown. In this degraded landscape, even rivers are assigned a grim utility and deemed fit only “for the garbage and the dead people and the babies that get thrown away, and the shit” (p. 158). Oryx’s childhood sale, forced by her family amid crop failures, is caused by “weather [that] had become so strange and could no longer be predicted – too much rain or not enough, too much wind, too much heat” (p. 136). Climate disruption does not operate in abstraction, but as a vector of dispossession that renders the vulnerable expendable within the logic of biocapital. Other ecological elements like the rivers are deemed useful “for the garbage and the dead people and the babies that get thrown away, and the shit.” (p. 158).

4 Anthropocentric Pessimism

The Anthropocene leaves subjects “mired in pessimistic resignation with regard to the possibility of making significant transformations in our politico-economic situation” (Sholtz, 2018, p. 175). This resignation is a structural paralysis, perfectly encapsulated by the insulated, decadent apathy of the Compounds with manufactured security that keep the inhabitants away from the polluted, riotous outside world, the *pleeblands*. This paralysis is reinforced by the perceived inevitability of techno-scientific rationality, Jimmy’s own academic path, shunted at the obsolescent Martha Graham Academy, trained him only to craft persuasive packaging for commercial ventures like AnooYoo, not to challenge the system itself. The sense that the entrenched logics of global capitalism, techno-scientific rationality, and extractive governance are so deeply woven into the fabric of modern life that any alternative appears unthinkable finds its bleakest expression in Crake’s philosophy, a character who rejects any ethical or aesthetic value in human civilization, stating that rebuilding society after collapse is impossible

because "all the available surface metals have already been mined," making "no iron age, no bronze age, no age of steel, and all the rest of it" possible (p. 261).

Such pessimism contributes directly to ecological alienation because it forecloses the imaginative and practical horizons through which collective re-appropriation of the world might otherwise become possible. Within this climate of perceived inevitability and systemic inertia, environmental degradation, such as the loss of coastal cities, which were washed away with the rest of the beaches when the sea-level rose so quickly and were struck by a huge tidal wave (Atwood, 2013, p. 57), or the drying up of the Everglades and a Florida grapefruit orchard after the rains had stopped coming (57) is experienced less as a call to action than as an unavoidable trajectory, reinforcing the very patterns of disconnection and passivity that this paper seeks to address. As Bould (2021, p. 2) deems, the Anthropocene is "a future of foreclosed possibilities", a reality that Jimmy only manages to cope with through ritualized self-deception in the immediate aftermath of the plague, when he engages in excessive drinking to "blank himself out" from the overwhelming collapse of his species (Atwood, 2013, p. 259). Even in such a state of pervasive alienation, nature's redemptive potential foregrounds itself when Jimmy (now Snowman) witnesses a "luscious, unreal green" caterpillar spiralling gently toward him, evokes a "sudden, inexplicable surge of tenderness and joy" (p. 46).

5 Appropriation vs. Domination: The Failure of Control

Anthropocentric motivations translate into pro-environmental action only when individuals recognize a concrete, self-interested benefit (Kopnina et al., 2018). This means that a person will act in the interest of the ecology only if natural elements within that ecology can be appropriated to serve themselves (e.g., cleaner air for personal health, conserving resources for future consumption, maintaining ecosystem services for economic stability).

For Jaeggi, appropriation describes how individuals relate to the aspects of the given world in meaningful ways that form part of their practical identity. When this relation becomes instrumental, restricted, or distorted by social conditions, the subject fails to establish a meaningful connection to the world, and their agency becomes alienated. Therefore, anthropocentric ecological action represents an instrumental mode of relationship, in which the environment is taken up only as a resource for personal benefit. This aligns with Jaeggi's critique of alienated forms of appropriation, where subjects can engage with the world only under limited, self-preserving paradigms, not as an open field of shared meaning, value, or

responsibility. Consequently, environmental action grounded solely in self-interest reflects and reproduces an alienated relation to nature rather than overcoming it.

The tragedy of *Oryx and Crake* is the tragedy of failed appropriation masquerading as total domination. The genetic engineers of the RejoovenEsense compound do not appropriate the biological sciences; they attempt to dominate biological processes. They treat the genetic code as a raw material to be cut and pasted, devoid of context or ethical weight. This failure to appropriate results in the independent existence of their creations. The creatures and viruses thus manufactured do not remain passive tools; they develop a life of their own and eventually escape the control, destroying the civilization that birthed them. This trajectory maps onto Jaeggi's description of alienation, where relations take on an "independent existence (Verselbständigung) that stand over and against those who constitute them" (Jaeggi, 2014, p. 4). The anthropocentric utopia envisioned through science and technology destroys the bond between humans and their environment. This doesn't lead to freedom as intended by agents of the Anthropocene in the novel, but to a decline in social, spiritual, and ecological ecosystems.

Another expression of anthropocentric alienation in the novel is the reification of the human being itself. The BlyssPluss pill, a health product marketed as a total solution to human desire and health, is actually a sterilization agent. In this instance, the anthropocentric drive, having consumed the natural world, turns inward to consume the human subject itself.

The inhabitants of the compounds live lives of performative happiness and manufactured consent. They are pale, incomplete, strange, artificial men. Their desires are not their own; they are implanted by marketing algorithms and biological imperatives manipulated by corporations. They suffer from meaninglessness, not because they lack stimulation, but because they lack the capacity to appropriate their own desires. They are alienated from their own bodies, which become sites of pharmaceutical intervention rather than lived experience. In *Oryx and Crake*, within the Anthropocene, the failure of appropriation is not merely psychological or social; it is planetary and ontological. Pushing anthropocentric logic to its ultimate extreme, Crake assumes the role not of a cosmological engineer, rather of a liberator. His "Great Rearrangement" of the world by a deliberate sterilization of the human population to produce the "Great Emptiness". This is an attempt at appropriation by elimination of the very source of disturbance, the Homo sapiens, not by restoring the declining ecological balance. The dystopia of *Oryx and Crake* serves as a negative dialectic.

6 Jaeggi's Alienation and the Anthropocene

An understanding of the mechanisms of this anthropocentric dystopia requires a move beyond colloquial understandings of alienation as mere social isolation or psychological malaise. Therefore, to engage with a social-philosophical framework that can account for the ontological dimensions of this estrangement becomes crucial. Rahel Jaeggi, in her *Alienation* (2014), provides such a theoretical apparatus. By integrating Jaeggi's rearticulation of alienation as a "relation of relationlessness" (Jaeggi, 2014, p. 1) and a "disturbed appropriation" (p. 151) of self and world, one can critically present the ontological consequences resulting from the deep structural failures of the anthropocentric project depicted in Atwood's novel.

Oryx and Crake dramatizes such a condition of alienation through literary mediation, where the subject, entrapped in an instrumental rationality and an anthropocentric delusion, generates a world that takes on an independent existence" that ultimately turns against its creators in a final, fatal act of reification. The narrative acts as a phenomenological study of a humanity that has lost the capacity to "will" in a meaningful sense, resulting in a bifurcation of the self and a surrender to the "monstrosity of a giant machine" (Fromm, 1980 as Cited in Jaeggi, 2014, p. 24) of its own creation.

Jaeggi's paradoxical formulation suggests that alienation is not the absence of a relationship, but a specific kind of relationship, a deficient, distorted, or paralyzed relation to something (oneself, the world, or others) with which one ought to have a connection. It is a state where the subject is related to an object or an aspect of themselves in a mode of unconnectedness, foreignness, or indifference. This becomes acutely relevant in an ecological context. Anthropocentrism positions humanity at the center of the universe and assumes a hierarchy where human needs (or greeds) supersede the integrity of the biotic community. However, as Atwood illustrates, this mastery is illusory and self-deceiving. The anthropocentric subject deems itself ontologically distinct and superior, failing to recognize that nature is its constitutive partner in existence. This failure creates the relation of relationlessness, a practical and psychological disconnection.

In *Oryx and Crake*, the relation of relationlessness manifests in the very material corporate compounds where the elite live, surrounded by the products of their acts of bio-engineering. Yet, they lack a meaningful relationship with the biological reality of these creatures. The relationship between the two is that of consumers or producers, a deficient relation that renders the world indifferent and alien. This echoes Jaeggi's analysis of the "indifferent world" as a symptom of self-estrangement. When the world is deprived of any

intrinsic meaning and reduced to instrumental utility, the experiencing subject fails to identify with it. On the individual, experiential level, the condition in which a conscious and sentient being such as Jimmy/Snowman exists is one in which, as he reflects, one can “never be old enough, no sane human being could ever...” (Atwood, 2013, p. 26) to endure “this, this – what can it be called? The situation” (p. 26), an unnameable predicament that crystallizes the anthropocentric world in its full alienating force, extending from the collective structures of this biocapitalism down to the fractured subjectivity of the survivor. After the catastrophe of the Great Rearrangement, the Children of Crake inherit the Earth, while the remnants of humanity, epitomized by Snowman (Jimmy), become the true aliens: solitary, temporally dislocated, and existentially out of joint with the new world. To the Crakers, his inclusion is not recognition, but mythic containment. They accept his “monstrousness” and acknowledge him as a “separate order of being” (p. 116), not as an equal, but as a necessary anomaly within their mythic cosmology. He is an unpleasant reminder to the new un-human human species of what they had been before, “*I am your past*, he might intone. *I’m your ancestor, come from the land of the dead. Now I’m lost, I can’t get back, I’m stranded here, I’m all alone. Let me in!*” (p. 123). This post-human world resulting from anthropocentric extreme is alienating at the individual ontological level; an individual is estranged from not only the external elements of the world but from their own self. Jimmy becomes “tired of being himself, he wants to be someone else” (p. 127).

Jimmy’s mother, once a microbiologist at OrganInc, is also alienated in the Marxist sense. She becomes disillusioned and indifferent to the whole project and gives up her job; she becomes increasingly estranged from her work upon realizing its ethical bankruptcy: her labor does not fulfill human needs or express creative potential, but reproduces systems of control and ecological harm. The whole system of companies producing life-altering biological products is nothing but a “moral cesspool”, that is “immoral”, even “sacrilegious” to her (p. 64). She lives a life of passive acquiescence accompanied by a sense of “neurotic guilt” (p. 65), “as if she was a bystander, someone on the sidelines” (p. 58) until she is executed as a prisoner (p. 303).

Crake’s father, whom he explicitly likens to Jimmy’s mother (p. 215), embodies the same trajectory of disillusionment, but with a crucial divergence: rather than withdraw, he attempts active appropriation through moral resistance, seeking to reassert a truthful relation to his world by exposing HelthWyzer’s deliberate sabotage of public health, most egregiously, the insertion of engineered pathogens into therapeutic products to generate chronic illness and

profit. His whistleblowing, however, does not restore coherence; instead, it precipitates his violent silencing, confirming that within an alienated order, even the effort to repair a disturbed relation is met not with dialogue, but with erasure. His death is presented as an accident in the official records, but Crake knows it to be an execution. His death is not only a personal tragedy for Crake, but also instantiates the structural consequence for a subject who is neutralized while trying to overcome instrumentalization.

7 Ecological Appropriation

Crake symbolizes the attempted appropriation of the dystopian anthropocentric predicament through domination and total replacement. His project epitomizes the paradox of anthropocentric critique. Even when seeking the end of humanity's destructive tendencies, Crake only replicates its core logic of favouring engineered stasis to meaning, memory, and relational vulnerability. Towards the end of the narrative, when the Crakers engage in spontaneous myth-making that deifies Snowman (Jimmy), it establishes the failure of Crake's endeavour. This reveals that domination, however rationalized, cannot resolve alienation. It merely displaces it. What remains unaddressed is the ontological deficit at the heart of the crisis, the inability to sustain a non-instrumental, co-constitutive relation to the world.

Kopnina et al.'s (2018) critique of anthropocentric motivations highlights a basic limitation of contemporary environmental ethics, as long as ecological concern is grounded in self-interested benefit, pro-environmental action will remain conditional, fragile, and ultimately inadequate for addressing planetary-scale crises. Jaeggi's theory of *appropriation* offers a way to reformulate this problem at a deeper, ontological level, which pulls off the shroud of the failure of self-interested ecological motivation. This motivation is not only a moral deficit but a symptom of an alienated mode of relation to one's world. In Jaeggi's (2014) framework, appropriation is the process through which the subject makes aspects of the given world their own in the sense of forming meaningful, practical relations that enrich one's capacities and identity, and not in the sense of ownership or instrumental possession. Alienation occurs when this relation is reduced to instrumental usage, of which the anthropocentric attitudes are an exemplification. Even the seemingly counter-anthropocentric claim that humans bear a responsibility to protect nature only reaffirms the core anthropocentric assumption (Jandt, 2004). To assert responsibility for nature is to claim authority over it, which positions humans as stewards or moral arbiters.

Therefore, to remedy anthropocentric alienation requires a reconfiguration of the basic ontological understanding of the human–nature relation. Instead of thinking of the environment as a set of external objects, Jaeggi’s (2014) appropriation prescribes that the subject to recognize their embedded and interdependent nature within the ecological systems. At the ontological level, this implies seeing it as part of the total structure through which human identity is constituted. This shift destabilizes the anthropocentric illusion of a separate self that is independent of its ecology. It is within this conception of the self-nature relationship that a subject’s relation to his ecology can be de-instrumentalized and subsequently, forms of ecological responsibility that are grounded in belonging, co-agency, and shared vulnerability, rather than anthropocentric utility, can be cultivated.

It is only when alienation can be resolved at the ontological level, we can facilitate the resolution of broader Anthropocene concerns. Efforts of appropriation that merely try to expand self-interest to include “environmental benefits” still operate within the paradigm of instrumental appropriation that produced the ecological crisis in the first place. By contrast, a non-alienated mode of appropriation allows for an ethics and politics in which ecological concern is not an optional adjunct to human well-being but a constitutive dimension of it. If ecological action is to move beyond the fragile calculus of personal benefit and toward modes of relationality capable of sustaining life in the Anthropocene, such a transformation becomes necessary.

The character of Crake symbolizes the attempt at resolution of the anthropocentric predicament by domination, which ultimately fails, as it lacks the chief quality of constructing a relationship of meaning and belonging, thus keeping the issue of an alienated ontology unresolved. Jaeggi’s approach invites us to reimagine appropriation not as taking control, but as entering into partnership with nature as an autonomous other, and in doing so, to recover an ecological self capable of belonging, care, and renewal in a world we still share.

8 Conclusion

Through the reinterpretation of Rahel Jaeggi’s concept of alienation and its application in the context of environmental crisis, this study has attempted to foreground how the Anthropocentric worldview inhibits the human capacity to appropriate the ecological world it inhabits. This theorization is further employed on Margaret Atwood’s *Oryx and Crake* to demonstrate that the disintegration of environmental continuity is an internal ontological crisis that affects the sense of meaning, belonging, and relationality. Atwood’s literary narrative

reveals environmental degradation and commodification of nature as symptoms of a deeper condition in which individuals are subjected to an estranged relationship with their existence. Building on Jaeggi's account of appropriation within contemporary sustainability discourse, the paper advocates for an active and ethical appropriation of partnership that respects the autonomy of the other (nature). Ultimately, this shall make possible new pathways toward an ecological self that inhabits the world as a participant invested in the renewal of relational, environmental, and existential bonds, rather than as an indifferent user.

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