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POSTHUMANISM A PHILOSOPHICAL CRITIQUE OF TECHNOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL EVOLUTION

Muammar Lutvi Syahputra[1], Natasya Khoirun Nisa[2]

muammarlutvisyahputra@gmail.com, natasyakhoiruunisa37@gmail.com

[12]State Islamic University of North Sumatra

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ABSTRACT

The accelerated growth of digital technologies, biotechnological innovations, and artificial intelligence in recent decades has posed serious philosophical questions to conventional conceptions of humanity grounded in classical humanist thought. These developments challenge the long-standing assumption that humans occupy a central and privileged position in defining meaning, knowledge, and value. Within this context, posthumanism emerges as a critical philosophical framework that interrogates the dominance of anthropocentric humanism in shaping human relations with technology, culture, and the natural environment. This article explores posthumanism as a philosophical critique of technological and cultural transformation by addressing five interrelated dimensions: the core theoretical foundations of posthumanism, its critique of anthropocentric humanism, the reconfiguration of the concept of humanity in response to technological advancement, the influence of posthumanist thought on contemporary cultural expressions, and the ethical implications that arise from these shifts. Using a philosophical critical methodology grounded in open-access academic literature, this study argues that posthumanism provides an alternative framework for understanding the human condition in an era of advanced technology. Rather than positioning humans as isolated or superior entities, posthumanism emphasizes relationality, interdependence, and ethical responsibility within networks that include both human and non-human actors. Consequently, posthumanism should not be understood as a negation of humanity, but as an effort to reconceptualize what it means to be human within an increasingly interconnected technological and ecological landscape.

INTRODUCTION

Over the last two decades, the pace of technological advancement has intensified at an unprecedented rate, producing transformative effects across nearly every dimension of human life. Breakthroughs in digital technologies, biotechnology, and artificial intelligence have not only reshaped modes of communication and healthcare practices, but have also fundamentally altered social arrangements, patterns of interaction, and processes of identity formation. As technological systems increasingly permeate domestic environments, workplaces, and public spaces, human experiences are progressively mediated by digital infrastructures. Consequently, technology can no longer be understood merely as a neutral instrument employed by humans, but rather as an integral component of the contemporary human condition itself (Hayles, 2012).

These developments indicate a profound shift in the nature of the human–technology relationship. Technology now plays an active and formative role in shaping how humans perceive their bodies, construct consciousness, and relate to both social and material environments. Rather than existing outside or above technological systems, humans increasingly inhabit technologically mediated networks that influence everyday cognition, behavior, and lived experience. This condition signals a departure from the modern humanist conception of the human as an autonomous, self-contained subject, toward a more relational and distributed understanding of human existence in which agency is shared across human and non-human actors (McMillan, 2020).

The implications of accelerated technological evolution extend far beyond technical efficiency or innovation. They reflect a deeper philosophical transformation that challenges foundational assumptions of classical humanism. The humanist paradigm, which positions humans as the primary locus of rationality, moral authority, and control over reality, encounters significant conceptual tension in an era where algorithmic systems and artificial intelligence are capable of processing vast amounts of data, generating predictions, and influencing social, political, and economic decisions. Under these conditions, claims regarding human exceptionalism and anthropocentric dominance become increasingly unstable, pointing toward a broader crisis of anthropocentrism within modern thought (Braidotti, 2013).

In response to these challenges, posthumanism emerges as a critical philosophical approach aimed at rethinking the core assumptions underlying humanist traditions. Posthumanism questions rigid boundaries between humans and non-human entities and rejects the notion that humans function as the sole central subjects within reality. Instead, it conceptualizes human existence as embedded within complex relational networks involving technological systems, digital infrastructures, and ecological environments. Within this

framework, agency is understood as distributed rather than monopolized by humans alone, emphasizing interdependence and co-constitution among diverse forms of existence (Braidotti, 2013).

As such, posthumanism provides a valuable analytical lens for interpreting contemporary cultural and social transformations shaped by technological evolution. Through this perspective, technological change is not viewed merely as an external force acting upon society, but as a constitutive process that reshapes how humans understand themselves, their relationships, and their place within the world. In the context of contemporary Islamic studies, posthumanism also opens a critical space for ethical reflection on human responsibility in guiding technological development. This perspective encourages the articulation of ethical frameworks that balance technological progress with human values, ecological sustainability, and moral accountability in an increasingly interconnected global landscape (Sunawari et al., 2021).

METHOD RESEARCH

This study employs a qualitative approach using a philosophical critical method that emphasizes conceptual and normative analysis. This approach is appropriate because the research does not seek to generate empirical data, but rather to critically examine ideas, assumptions, and ethical implications embedded in posthumanist thought as a response to technological and cultural transformation. Qualitative philosophical research focuses on interpreting concepts, arguments, and theoretical frameworks to understand underlying meanings and normative orientations within a particular discourse (Given, 2008; Coeckelbergh, 2017).

The data sources of this study consist of scientific literature in the form of academic books and open-access journal articles relevant to posthumanism, technology, and contemporary culture published within the last fifteen years. Data collection was conducted through a systematic literature review, which allows researchers to identify, compare, and synthesize key theoretical perspectives across disciplines (Snyder, 2019). This method is widely used in philosophical and critical studies to map conceptual debates and theoretical developments.

Data analysis was carried out using an interpretive and critical approach. The analysis involved identifying central concepts of posthumanism, grouping recurring thematic discussions, and critically examining their ethical implications in relation to technological development and ecological sustainability. Interpretive analysis enables researchers to engage

deeply with philosophical texts and uncover implicit assumptions and normative claims (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2018). To ensure the validity of the analysis, this study relied on credible academic sources and compared multiple theoretical perspectives in order to minimize interpretive bias and enhance conceptual rigor.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

1. Fundamental Concepts of Posthumanism

Posthumanism can be understood as a contemporary philosophical approach that emerges as a critique of modern perspectives which position humans as the primary center of reality and the sole source of knowledge. This approach challenges the ontological and epistemological assumptions of classical humanism, which have long emphasized humans as rational, autonomous subjects separated from the non-human world. From a posthumanist perspective, humans are no longer understood as independent entities occupying the highest hierarchical position, but rather as part of a complex relational network in which human existence is always intertwined with technology, the natural environment, and various other non-human entities. These relationships are reciprocal and mutually constitutive, such that human existence cannot be separated from the material, biological, and technological contexts that surround it (Ferrando, 2019).

Furthermore, posthumanism is not intended as a discourse that signifies the end of humanity or a rejection of human values. Instead, it offers a conceptual shift in understanding the meaning of humanity itself. Posthumanism seeks to move beyond static and essentialist definitions of the human by emphasizing that human identity is always in a process of becoming. This identity continuously undergoes transformation through human interaction with technology, digital media, and ongoing socio-cultural changes. Within this framework, humanity is understood as dynamic, contextual, and open to change.

Accordingly, posthumanism presents an alternative understanding of human existence in late modernity, particularly within the context of increasingly digitalized lives integrated with advanced technological systems. This approach enables a more reflective reading of the human position amid rapid technological development, while simultaneously opening space for the formulation of new forms of ethics and responsibility that do not focus solely on humans, but also consider the sustainability of relationships with non-human entities in shared life.

In critical posthumanist studies, shifts in the understanding of humanity cannot be separated from critiques of the dualisms that have long dominated modern thought, such as the separation between body and mind, human and machine, and nature and culture. Braidotti argues that such frameworks are no longer adequate to explain contemporary conditions, in which human life is increasingly entangled with technological systems and complex material networks. Posthumanism, in this regard, proposes an alternative ontological approach that emphasizes relationality, sustainability, and interconnection among entities, such that human existence is always understood in relation to the non-human world (Braidotti, 2013).

Moreover, the development of digital culture reinforces posthumanist notions of human identity as hybrid and unstable. Within popular culture and digital media spaces, representations of cyborgs, virtual avatars, and human technology figures demonstrate that the boundaries between biological bodies and technological systems are becoming increasingly blurred. McMillan shows that digital culture not only symbolically represents posthuman ideas, but also shapes everyday practices that reconstruct how humans understand the self, community, and social relations. Thus, posthumanism operates not only at the level of theory, but is also reflected in the lived cultural experiences of contemporary society (McMillan, 2020).

In the context of contemporary Islamic thought, posthumanist discourse has also begun to be critically examined as both a challenge and an opportunity for the development of Islamic philosophy. An article published in *ESENSIA* emphasizes that posthumanism encourages a re-examination of the concept of humanity in Islam, particularly concerning the human role as *khalifah* living within ethical relationships with nature and technology. This approach is not intended to negate Islamic theological values, but rather to expand the understanding of human responsibility in managing technology in a just and sustainable manner amid ongoing social change (Sunawari et al., 2021).

Thus, the integration of posthumanist perspectives into Islamic philosophical and cultural studies enables the emergence of a more contextual approach to understanding technological transformation. Posthumanism functions not only as a critique of human dominance, but also as a reflective framework that emphasizes relational ethics, ecological balance, and awareness of human limitations within the complexity of the modern world. This approach becomes increasingly relevant in responding to contemporary challenges marked by accelerated technological development and continuous cultural change.

2. Posthumanism as a Critique of Anthropocentric Humanism

Historically, anthropocentric humanism has played a central role in shaping dominant worldviews that place humans at the core of moral judgment, epistemological authority, and the ultimate purpose of existence. Within this tradition, humans are constructed as rational and autonomous subjects whose intellectual and moral capacities are assumed to surpass those of non-human beings and the natural environment. Such assumptions reinforce the idea that humanity occupies a privileged and superior position within the structure of reality. As a result, nature and non-human entities are conceptualized as external objects whose value is primarily determined by their usefulness in satisfying human needs and interests. This framework produces hierarchical and instrumental modes of relation, legitimizing human dominance over nature as both natural and philosophically justified (Wolfe, 2010).

The anthropocentric orientation of classical humanism has had far-reaching consequences for social, cultural, and environmental practices. By reducing nature to an economic resource and positioning non-human life forms as mere instruments for human survival and progress, this worldview contributes to the normalization of environmental exploitation and ecological degradation. Non-human beings, ecosystems, and technological systems are rarely acknowledged as possessing intrinsic value, but are instead treated as passive objects subject to human control. In contemporary contexts, this logic is increasingly extended to technology, which is often framed as a neutral tool entirely subordinate to human intention. Such an understanding obscures the ethical implications of technological autonomy and fails to address the complex ways in which technological systems actively shape human behavior, social relations, and ecological conditions.

Posthumanism emerges as a fundamental and systematic critique of this anthropocentric paradigm. Rather than reproducing hierarchical distinctions that position humans as sovereign rulers of the existential order, posthumanist thought challenges the rigid boundaries separating humans from non-human entities. It questions the deeply rooted assumption that humans exist as isolated, superior subjects standing apart from nature and technology. From a posthumanist perspective, human existence is instead understood as embedded within a dense and interdependent network of relations, where humans, technological systems, and natural environments continuously interact and co-constitute one another. This relational ontology emphasizes that no entity, including humans, can be fully understood in isolation from the broader material and technological assemblages in which it participates (Braidotti, 2013).

Within the posthumanist framework, humans are no longer viewed as the sole agents exercising unilateral control over the world. Instead, they are recognized as participants in reciprocal and dynamic relationships with multiple forms of non-human agency. Human technology relations, for example, are conceptualized not as one-directional processes of control, but as forms of co-production in which technologies actively influence patterns of cognition, decision making, and social interaction. Similarly, the relationship between humans and nature is reconfigured as an ecological interdependence rather than a relationship of domination. This shift foregrounds ethical responsibility, vulnerability, and an awareness of human limitations within complex life systems.

Consequently, posthumanism facilitates a significant ethical reorientation away from domination, mastery, and instrumental control toward principles of coexistence, shared responsibility, and sustainability. By exposing the conceptual limitations of classical humanism, posthumanist critique encourages the development of ethical frameworks that are more inclusive of non-human entities and more responsive to ecological and technological complexity. In this sense, posthumanism functions not as a rejection of humanity, but as a philosophical correction that repositions humans within a broader network of life. Through this perspective, it becomes possible to articulate ethical approaches capable of addressing contemporary ecological crises, technological transformations, and cultural challenges in an increasingly interconnected and fragile world.

3. Technological Evolution and the Transformation of the Concept of Humanity

The rapid acceleration of digital technology and biotechnology over the past several decades has fundamentally reshaped how the boundary between humans and machines is understood. Technological innovations such as artificial intelligence, sophisticated prosthetic technologies, virtual reality, and augmented reality systems no longer function merely as auxiliary tools that assist human activity. Instead, they increasingly intervene in and reorganize the ways humans perceive their bodies, process sensory experiences, and construct self-awareness. Technology has gradually shifted from being an external instrument to becoming deeply embedded within everyday human practices, resulting in a more intimate and inseparable relationship between human existence and technological systems.

Within this evolving context, the human body can no longer be conceptualized as a closed, autonomous, and biologically fixed entity. Rather, it is increasingly understood as an open and adaptive system that is subject to modification, enhancement, and extension through technological integration. Medical technologies, digital devices, and computational systems that support memory, cognition, and communication contribute to expanding human capacities

beyond natural biological limitations. Consequently, the body is no longer viewed solely as a biological container, but as a hybrid space in which biological, technological, and informational elements converge. This transformation gives rise to an understanding of humans as hybrid beings whose existence is situated at the intersection of the natural and the artificial (Hayles, 2012).

From a posthumanist perspective, these developments signify a profound ontological shift in the concept of humanity itself. Human identity is no longer determined exclusively by biological attributes or the possession of a physical body, but is increasingly shaped by continuous engagement with technological infrastructures, data systems, and digital networks. Algorithms, intelligent systems, and information technologies actively participate in shaping how humans think, communicate, make decisions, and organize social life. In this sense, the relationship between humans and technology is not incidental or secondary, but constitutes a core dimension of contemporary human existence in the digital era.

In an increasingly digitalized world, posthumanism argues that traditional essentialist frameworks those that define humanity solely in terms of biological embodiment are insufficient for capturing the complexity of contemporary human life. Instead, posthumanism calls for a philosophical rearticulation of what it means to be human by foregrounding the relational dynamics between bodies, technologies, and digital systems. Through this lens, human existence is understood as fluid, relational, and continuously shaped by technological mediation. This perspective not only enables critical reflection on changing modes of human life, but also encourages the development of new ethical frameworks capable of addressing the growing complexity of human technology relations in contemporary society.

4. The Impact of Posthumanism on Contemporary Culture

Posthumanist thought has played an increasingly influential role in shaping the contours of contemporary culture, particularly within the domains of art, literature, and digital media. In various forms of modern cultural production such as science fiction cinema, immersive and interactive digital games, virtual installations, and technology-driven visual art there is a recurring emphasis on the evolving and often ambivalent relationship between humans and technological systems. These cultural representations do not merely function as vehicles of entertainment or aesthetic experimentation; rather, they serve as critical sites through which societies negotiate changing understandings of identity, embodiment, agency, and human existence. The frequent appearance of cyborgs, artificial intelligence, and hybrid techno-biological figures illustrates the gradual erosion of rigid boundaries between the human and the machine, while at the same time expressing collective anxieties, ethical dilemmas, and

imaginative possibilities surrounding life in an increasingly digitalized world (Herbrechter, 2013).

Within this broader cultural context, contemporary culture can be interpreted as a reflective and productive medium that captures, processes, and rearticulates the ontological shifts articulated by posthumanist thought. Cultural narratives and artistic practices increasingly depict human subjects who are no longer portrayed as fully autonomous, self-contained, or purely organic beings. Instead, these representations highlight forms of subjectivity that are fragmented, technologically mediated, and relational. Culture thus becomes a space in which diverse configurations of human–technology relations are explored, tested, and critically questioned, whether through speculative fiction, experimental art practices, or digitally mediated storytelling. In this sense, culture does not simply mirror social and technological change, but actively participates in shaping how societies conceptualize possible futures of humanity.

From a posthumanist perspective, contemporary culture can no longer be understood as an arena exclusively centered on the human subject as the sole source of meaning and value. Rather, culture emerges as a relational field constituted through interactions among human and non-human actors, including technological systems, digital infrastructures, algorithms, and material artifacts. This reconceptualization enables more inclusive and multidimensional forms of cultural analysis that take into account the multiplicity of agencies involved in the production of meaning. Accordingly, posthumanism encourages a more transformative understanding of cultural dynamics in late modernity, in which meaning is not generated unilaterally by humans, but emerges through complex, dynamic, and continuously evolving networks of relations that connect humans, technologies, and non-human entities.

5. Ethical Implications of Posthumanism

Posthumanism introduces far-reaching and layered ethical implications, particularly in relation to the direction of technological advancement and the growing urgency of environmental sustainability. Within this philosophical framework, ethics is no longer conceived as a rigid system of moral rules designed exclusively to protect or advance human interests. Instead, ethical responsibility is reconceptualized as a shared, relational obligation that emerges from the interconnectedness of humans, technological systems, and the broader ecological world. Posthumanism emphasizes that human existence is fundamentally embedded within networks of non-human entities, both material and living, and that human actions inevitably generate consequences beyond the human sphere. Consequently, decisions concerning the design, deployment, and governance of technology must be evaluated not only

in terms of efficiency or utility, but also with regard to their cumulative effects on ecosystems, social structures, and non-human forms of life. In this sense, technological progress cannot be understood as ethically neutral or autonomous from ecological and social responsibility, but must be situated within a holistic understanding of interdependence (Braidotti, 2013).

From a posthumanist perspective, ethical engagement with technology requires ongoing reflexivity and critical vigilance. Innovations driven primarily by economic gain, performance optimization, or the reinforcement of human dominance risk intensifying environmental destruction and widening existing inequalities at both local and global levels. Posthumanist ethics therefore challenges dominant models of technological development that prioritize growth and control while neglecting ecological limits and the complexity of living systems. Instead, it advocates for technological practices that are attentive to long-term consequences, distributive justice, and the preservation of ecological balance. Within this framework, ethics functions as a critical lens through which the social, political, and environmental ramifications of technological innovation can be continuously assessed, rather than as a static set of prescriptive norms.

Moreover, posthumanism promotes the development of a cross-species ethical orientation that destabilizes the assumption that humans are the sole bearers of moral worth. By recognizing non-human beings such as animals, plants, and entire ecological systems—as entities with intrinsic value, posthumanist ethics expands the moral community beyond the human domain. Ethical consideration is thus no longer contingent upon an entity's usefulness to human interests, but grounded in its participation within shared networks of life. This perspective encourages the reconfiguration of human–nature relationships away from exploitation and instrumentalization toward mutual respect, care, and ecological responsibility.

In a global context increasingly defined by environmental crises, climate change, and the rapid acceleration of autonomous technologies, the ethical relevance of posthumanism becomes particularly pronounced. Posthumanist ethics offers a normative foundation for rethinking public policy, technological governance, and socio-ecological practices in ways that transcend narrowly anthropocentric priorities. By foregrounding inclusivity, collective responsibility, and sustainability, this ethical framework supports the development of technological futures that are not only innovative, but also socially just and ecologically attuned. Ultimately, posthumanist ethics provides a critical orientation for aligning technological advancement with the long-term well-being of the planet and the diverse forms of life that inhabit it.

DISCUSSION

The discussion section interprets the findings by positioning posthumanism as a philosophical framework that is particularly well suited to addressing the complex challenges emerging from accelerated technological development, rapid cultural transformation, and increasing ecological instability. In contrast to classical humanist paradigms that rely on fixed, essentialist definitions of humanity, posthumanism recognizes human existence as contingent, relational, and continuously shaped by interactions with technology, non-human entities, and environmental systems (Ferrando, 2019). This perspective allows for a more flexible and context-sensitive understanding of humanity in an era marked by profound technological and social change.

One of the most significant contributions of posthumanism lies in its critique of anthropocentrism. By challenging the assumption that humans occupy a privileged and dominant position over nature and technology, posthumanism offers a critical response to environmental degradation and the growing autonomy of technological systems. Rather than viewing humans as sovereign controllers of the world, posthumanist thought conceptualizes humans as participants within interconnected ecological and technological networks. This shift in perspective encourages a heightened sense of ethical responsibility, ecological awareness, and recognition of the limits of human agency, particularly in the face of climate change and technological complexity (Wolfe, 2010; Braidotti, 2013).

Moreover, the integration of posthumanist perspectives into contemporary culture demonstrates that posthumanism is not confined to abstract philosophical discourse. As reflected in digital media, popular culture, and artistic practices, posthumanist ideas actively shape cultural imagination and social practices. Representations of cyborgs, artificial intelligence, and hybrid identities reveal how societies increasingly conceptualize identity, embodiment, and agency as fluid and technologically mediated rather than fixed and purely biological. In this sense, culture becomes a critical site where posthumanist ideas are negotiated and embodied, influencing how individuals and communities understand their place within technologically saturated environments (Herbrechter, 2013).

From an ethical standpoint, posthumanism provides a normative foundation for the development of more inclusive and sustainable technological practices. Its emphasis on relationality, interdependence, and shared responsibility aligns with global efforts to address pressing issues such as climate change, technological inequality, and ecological crisis. By extending moral consideration beyond the human subject to include non-human beings and

ecological systems, posthumanist ethics promotes a more balanced and long-term approach to technological innovation and environmental governance (Braidotti, 2013).

Overall, this study confirms that posthumanism offers a robust and critical philosophical framework for rethinking humanity's position within an increasingly complex technological and ecological landscape. Rather than undermining human value, posthumanism rearticulates the meaning of humanity by situating it within a broader ethical and ontological horizon—one that emphasizes responsibility, sustainability, and coexistence among human and non-human actors. Through this lens, posthumanism contributes not only to philosophical debate but also to practical reflections on how future cultures and technologies might be shaped in more just and sustainable ways.

CONCLUSION

The overall discussion presented in this study demonstrates that posthumanism constitutes a far-reaching philosophical response to the limitations of anthropocentric humanism in interpreting the complex relationships between humans, technology, and contemporary culture. By challenging the long-standing assumption that humans occupy an exclusive and dominant position as the primary source of meaning, value, and agency, posthumanism introduces an alternative conceptual orientation that foregrounds interconnectedness, relationality, and mutual dependence among human and non-human actors. This perspective becomes increasingly relevant in late modern conditions, where rapid advancements in digital technologies and biotechnology have significantly blurred the traditional boundaries separating humans from technological systems.

Within a posthumanist framework, the notion of humanity is no longer approached as a fixed or essential category, but rather as a dynamic and evolving process shaped through continuous interactions with technological infrastructures, digital media environments, and ecological systems. Human identity is thus understood as relationally constituted, emerging from complex networks that include material, technological, and environmental dimensions. This shift allows for a more flexible and context-sensitive interpretation of social and cultural change, while simultaneously destabilizing the rigid human non-human dichotomies that have historically structured modern philosophical thought.

Beyond its theoretical contributions, posthumanism also offers important ethical insights. It encourages a move away from moral frameworks that prioritize human interests alone toward a relational ethics grounded in shared responsibility across the broader network of life. In the context of accelerating technological innovation and ongoing global ecological

crises, posthumanist ethics emphasize the need for reflexivity and restraint, ensuring that technological progress does not exacerbate environmental degradation or deepen existing social inequalities. By acknowledging the intrinsic value of non-human entities, posthumanism opens possibilities for ethical models that are more inclusive, sustainable, and responsive to planetary challenges.

Moreover, posthumanism provides a critical lens through which contemporary cultural transformations can be better understood. As technological mediation increasingly shapes everyday life, cultural representations of identity, embodiment, and agency reflect posthuman conditions in which humans are no longer portrayed as autonomous and self-contained subjects. Instead, culture becomes a site where hybrid forms of existence are explored, negotiated, and reimagined. In this sense, posthumanism does not merely describe cultural change, but actively contributes to reshaping how societies conceptualize the future of humanity within technologically mediated environments.

In addition, the relevance of posthumanist thought extends to interdisciplinary and cross-cultural contexts, including religious and ethical discourses. When read alongside contemporary Islamic perspectives, posthumanism offers an opportunity to reconsider human responsibility not as domination over nature and technology, but as ethical stewardship grounded in relational accountability. Such dialogue demonstrates that posthumanism need not negate spiritual or moral traditions, but can instead enrich them by providing conceptual tools for engaging with technological change in a manner that prioritizes justice, balance, and sustainability.

Finally, posthumanism should be understood not as a rejection of human significance, but as an invitation to rethink humanity's position within an increasingly complex world. By situating humans within broader networks of life that include technological systems and ecological processes, posthumanism fosters a more reflective and responsible understanding of human agency. Through this perspective, it becomes possible to envision future forms of culture, ethics, and technological development that are not solely oriented toward human benefit, but are committed to the long-term flourishing of the entire planetary community.

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