

Story-telling, Earth-Sciences and Geoethics

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This essay is discussing narratives as means for people to associate themselves with matters studied by earth sciences, with the intersection of people's activities with the geosphere, and finally with geoethics...

The human species is a storyteller by evolution. This basic human trait should be used for developing earth science narratives, also to foster geoethics.

To recall: Geoethics...

...embrace a rich set of issues, bearing on professional and common sense...

...connect various value-loaded public issues, matters or concepts...

Earth-society-centric Story-telling, traditionally

- When natural phenomena were inexplicable the marvelous and thinking based on beliefs was used to:

- ...encode accumulated experience

- ...coerce the believer into behaviour fostering sustained existence

- ...strike a balance between "earth-centric" or "society-centric"

- Traditional *earth - society -centric* narratives:

- ...sustained the intersection of people's activity and the geosphere

- ...were part of a complex social and economic fabric

History of earth-society-centric Story-telling

- Traditional “earth-society-centricity” perished as its sacrum-based foundations got questioned in the global urbanisation / industrialisation process.
- Modern “earth-society-centricity” emerges from natural sciences describing how human interventions intersect with Earth systems.
- The humankind's development path of the last centuries exposes a geo-history how people, finally entered into the Anthropocene.

Modern earth-society-centric Story-telling

Modern earth-society-centric narratives offer opportunities to develop informed positions about humankind's place within earth-systems.

Narratives are means to bundle:



- Expertise in sciences and humanities
- Insights in practices and values of practitioners of common trades

Natural sciences and humanities tell a double story:



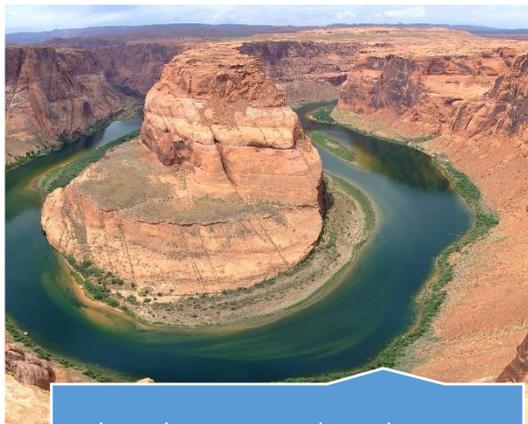
- Of the unplanned making of the Anthropocene
- How to shape a mature Anthropocene

Opportunities for earth-society-centric Story-telling...

...are many:

Art, history and
quotidian
environment
provide many
opportunities for
earth-sciences
narratives, they
range from
geomorphology to
the reference to the
'sacrum'.

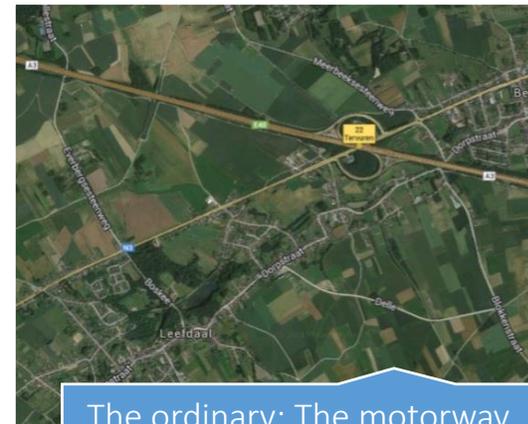
(Bohle 2015)



The obvious: Colorado River
(USA)



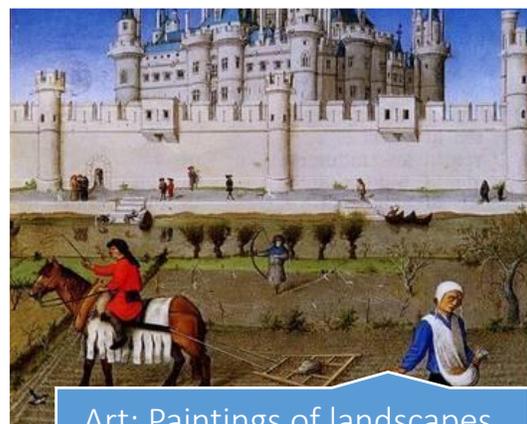
The pleasant: The Banyoles
Lake (Spain)



The ordinary: The motorway
stretching east from Brussels
(Belgium)



History: landscapes marked
with mining-sites (Arizona,
USA)

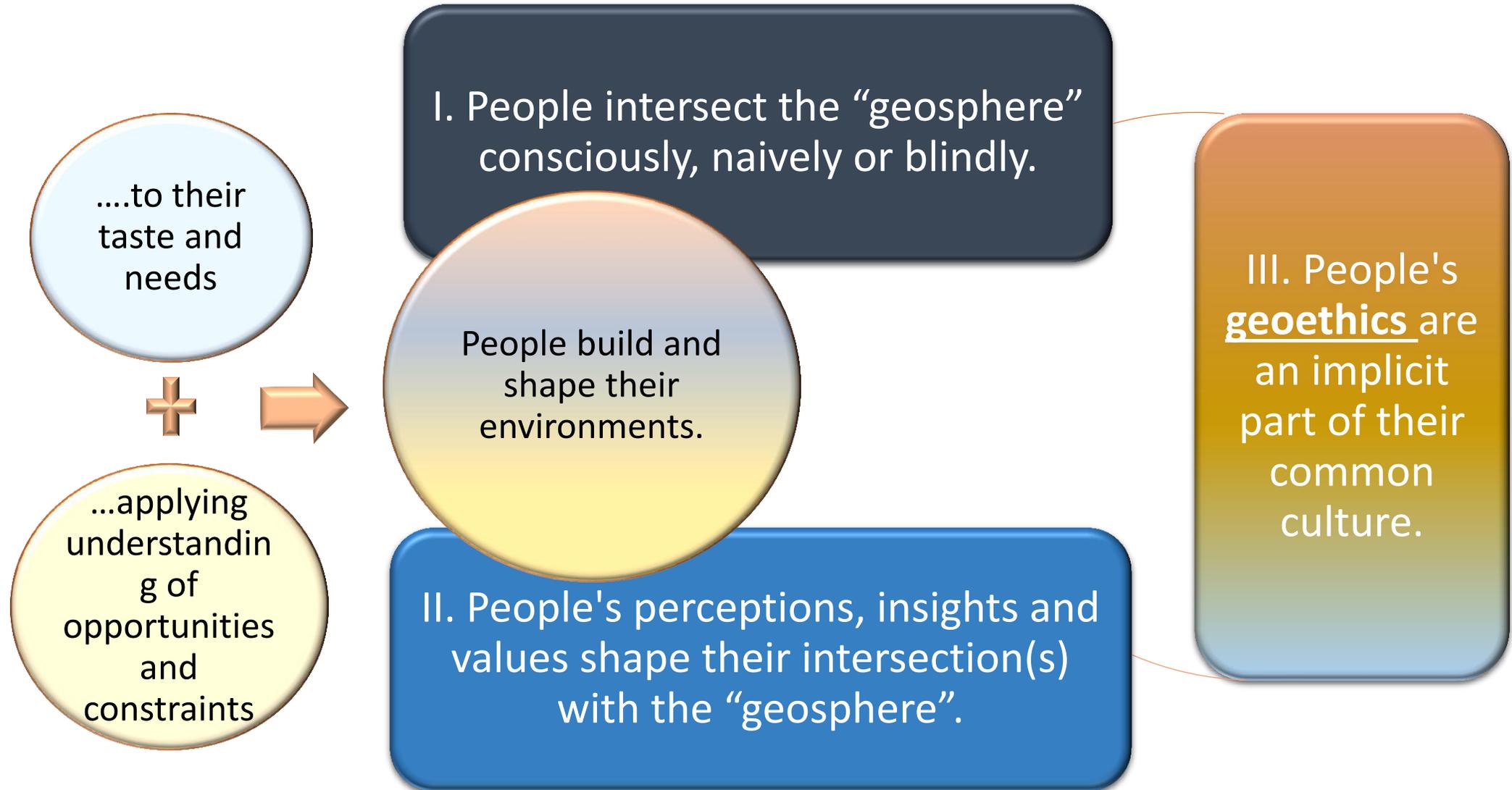


Art: Paintings of landscapes.
*Tres riches heures du Duc de
Berry*, (Chantilly, France)



Sacrum: Crater Lake in
Oregon (USA)

Discussion - People



Discussion - Stories

People like stories & media flood public with narratives:

➤ to appreciate events or people

➤ to bring events and people into context

➤ to value behaviour of people

- Telling narratives is a skilful practice to perceive values in different contexts.
- People enforce common views (values) by sharing stories with peers, relatives, neighbours...

Discussion - Science

- People's narratives about intersections with the geosphere have a history.
- Modern narratives about people and their intersections with the geosphere can be both earth-centric and society-centric.

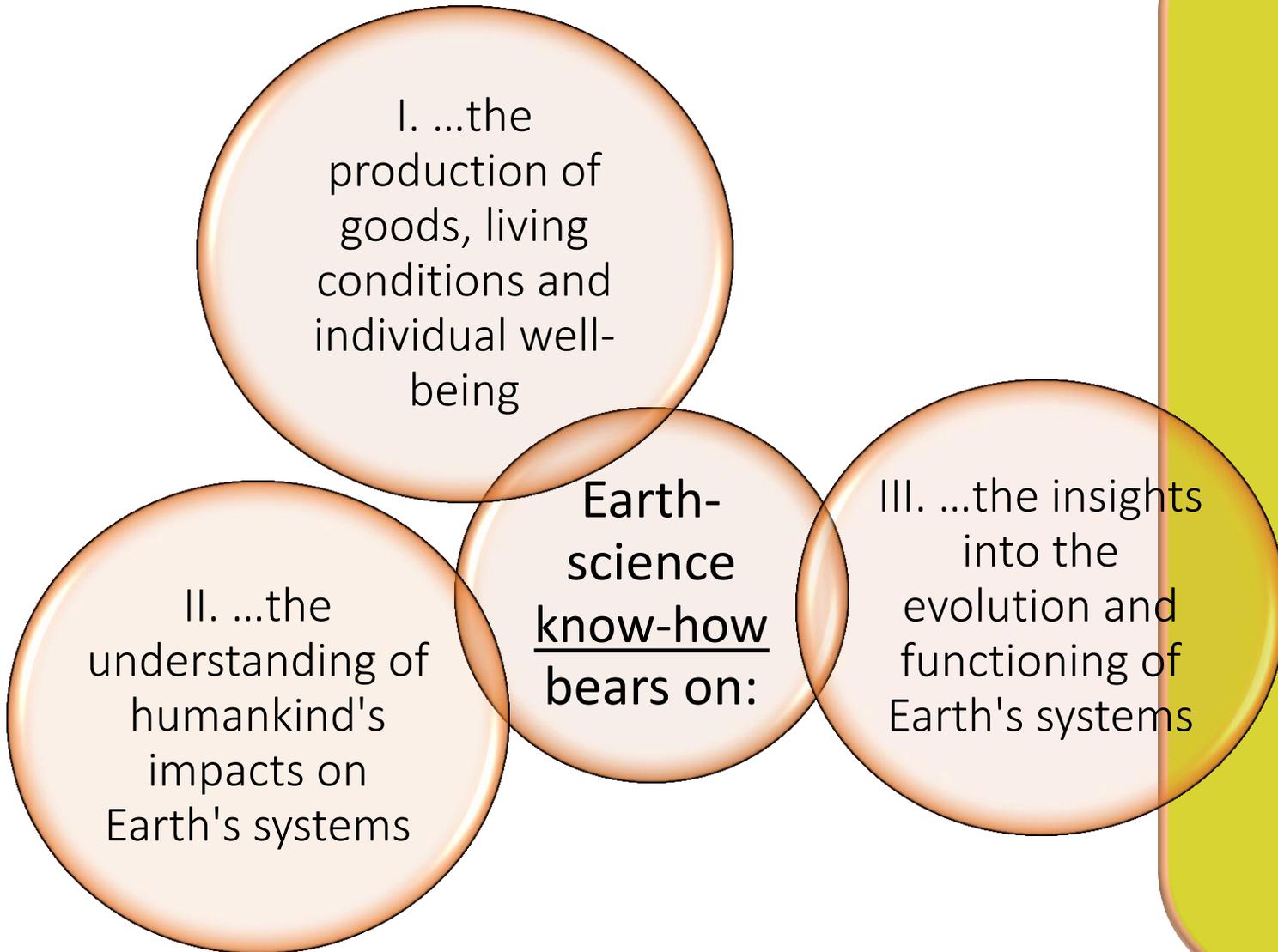
Modern earth-society-centric narratives:

➤ Can offer rich content and insights

➤ Enforce behaviour for sustained existence

➤ May overcome doomsday-cry

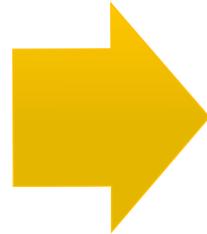
Discussion – Interlacing (1/2)



- *When interlaced further with (e.g.) arts, linguistic and cultural histories, the multiple bearings of earth sciences can offer very rich earth-society-centric narratives of people's intersections with the geosphere.*

Conclusion – Narratives (1/2)

Why modern
earth-science
narratives are
needed'?



To influence how
people's activities
intersect the
“geosphere”.

Conclusion – Narratives (2/2)

How to narrate earth sciences?



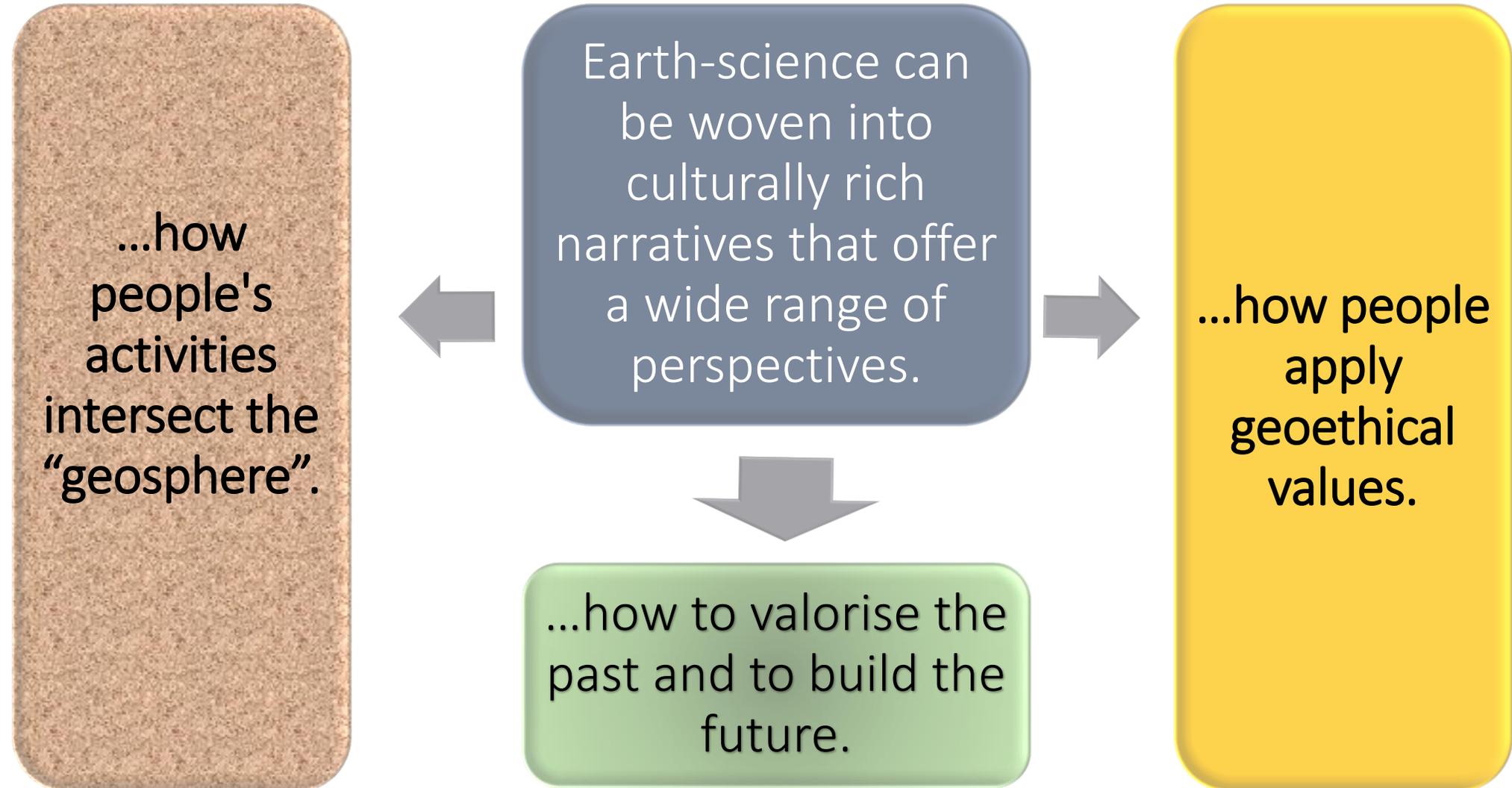
Gather diverse concerns and draw on a wide range of perspectives (e.g.):

...beauty or particularity of ordinary or special phenomena...

...hazards for or from mundane environments...

...scholarly investigation and concerns of citizens at large...

Conclusion - Geoethics



Thanks to Contributors:

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Disclaimer:

For the lawyers:

This are our thoughts not those of our employers.

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