CIPSH International Academy on Chinese Culture and Global Humanities 2026

International Seminar:

"Geoethics and Global Ethics in a Time of Polycrisis: Comparative Perspectives on Human–Earth Relations"

Fifth Circular

Assisi (Italy), 16-18 November 2026

With the patronage of:

ISTITUTO NAZIONALE
DI GEOFISICA E VULCANOLOGIA

CITTÀ DI ASSISI
SERAPHICA CIVITAS

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZING AND SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

- Silvia Peppoloni, Committee Chair and CIPSH Chair on Geoethics Representative
- Giuseppe Di Capua, Committee Secretary and IAPG Representative
- Luiz Oosterbeek, CIPSH Representative
- Torbjörn Lodén, CIPSH Referent for Global Ethics

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS

- International Association for Promoting Geoethics (IAPG)
- International Council for Philosophy and Human Sciences (CIPSH)
- CIPSH Chair on Geoethics, Italy
- Istituto Nazionale di Geofisica e Vulcanologia (National Institute of Geophysics and Volcanology) – Sezione Roma 2 (Rome 2 Section), Italy
- Geosciences Center of the University of Coimbra, Portugal
- Commission on Geoethics of the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS)
- Geoethics Working Group of the European Geosciences Union (EGU)

RATIONALE

Contemporary global challenges, such as climate change, environmental degradation, natural hazards, resource exploitation, and increasingly pervasive technological interventions in the Earth system, are no longer isolated phenomena but interconnected and mutually reinforcing processes. Together, they form what is increasingly described as a polycrisis: a condition in which multiple crises interact across scales and domains, amplifying their impacts and generating complex ethical, social, and governance dilemmas. These dynamics raise profound ethical questions that transcend disciplinary, cultural, and geopolitical boundaries. Addressing them requires ethical frameworks capable of integrating scientific knowledge with social responsibility, respect for cultural diversity, and a long-term vision of planetary stewardship.

Geoethics (https://www.geoethics.org)[1] offers a conceptual and practical foundation for responding to these needs and for articulating a form of global ethics suited to a globalized

[1] Geoethics is a field of theoretical and applied ethics focused on studies related to human-Earth system nexus. It is defined as the research and reflection on principles and values which underpin appropriate behaviours and practices, wherever human activities interact with the Earth system. Geoethics deals with ways of creating a global ethics framework for guiding individual and social human behaviours, while considering human relational domains, plurality of human needs and visions, planetary boundaries and geo-ecological tipping points (Peppoloni S. and Di Capua G., 2023. Geoethics for Redefining Human-Earth System Nexus. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-22223-8_2).

world. It promotes critical reflection on the principles and values that should guide human behaviours and decision-making wherever human activities interact with the Earth system. Geoethics emphasizes responsibility and care for both present and future generations, while acknowledging the complexity of human–Earth relationships.

Within this perspective, a crucial role is played by comparative geoethics, which examines and contrasts human ethical values, behaviours, and responsibilities toward the Earth system across diverse cultural, social, and geographical contexts. It fosters structured dialogue among scholars from different backgrounds and supports the critical evaluation of the various approaches to human–Earth relationships. In particular, Chinese cultural traditions, including Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist ethical and cosmological thought, offer profound insights into the interconnectedness of humans and nature, the importance of harmony between human activity and the natural world, and the cultivation of virtue, responsibility, and care across generations. By engaging with these traditions alongside Western and other global ethical systems, comparative geoethics fosters mutual understanding, ethical pluralism, and the identification of shared principles that can support collective action at the global level.

Against this background, the proposed international seminar aims to explore global ethics grounded in geoethics, with particular emphasis on comparative geoethics as a means of bridging cultural traditions, knowledge systems, and ethical visions from the West and East, with special attention to Chinese philosophical and cultural contributions, as well as from the Global North and Global South. The seminar seeks to provide an interdisciplinary and intercultural space for reflection, dialogue, and cooperation on ethical responses to the polycrisis and to the evolving challenges of the Earth system in an interconnected and rapidly changing world.

OBJECTIVES

The seminar aims to:

- Explore geoethics as a conceptual and practical foundation for global ethics in the context of Earth system governance, including perspectives inspired by Chinese philosophical traditions that emphasize harmony between humans and nature, moral cultivation, and long-term responsibility.
- Promote comparative geoethics by examining how different cultural, philosophical, and societal traditions conceptualize human–Earth relationships, with particular attention

to Chinese cultural, ethical, and cosmological frameworks alongside other global traditions.

- Foster interdisciplinary dialogue between geosciences, humanities, social sciences, philosophy, and ethics.
- Encourage ethical reflection on the social roles and responsibilities of scientists, scholars, educators, policymakers, and institutions in a challenging and changing time.
- Contribute to the development of inclusive ethical frameworks that respect cultural diversity while addressing global planetary challenges, integrating values and approaches emerging from Chinese traditions with those from other regions of the world.
- Build an engaged, interdisciplinary community to tackle the global polycrisis collaboratively, fostering dialogue and cooperation across cultures, regions, and knowledge traditions, with special attention to East–West and Global North–South exchanges.

THEMATIC FOCUS AREAS

The seminar will address, among others, the following themes:

- Geoethics and Global Ethics in Earth System Governance: Examining geoethics as a conceptual and practical foundation for guiding ethical decision-making in the management and governance of the Earth system.
- Comparative Geoethics and Cross-Cultural Perspectives: Exploring diverse cultural, philosophical, and societal approaches to human–Earth relationships, fostering dialogue and mutual understanding across ethical traditions. Special emphasis will be placed on Chinese cultural and ethical perspectives, including Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist thought, alongside other global traditions, to illuminate shared principles and culturally specific approaches to environmental and societal challenges.
- Interdisciplinary Integration and Knowledge Collaboration: Promoting collaboration between geosciences, humanities, social sciences, philosophy, and ethics to address complex global challenges holistically.
- Ethics of Responsibility and the Role of Knowledge Actors: Encouraging reflection on the social responsibilities of scientists, scholars, educators, policymakers, and institutions in addressing global risks and ethical dilemmas.
- Inclusive Ethical Frameworks and Community Building for the Global Polycrisis: Developing inclusive, culturally sensitive ethical frameworks and fostering engaged

interdisciplinary communities capable of collaboratively addressing interconnected global crises.

FORMAT AND STRUCTURE

The seminar is conceived as an international and cross-disciplinary event, combining:

- Keynote lectures by leading scholars and experts (30 minutes each).
- Contributed presentations (20 minutes each).
- Discussions to foster intercultural and interdisciplinary exchange, identify shared conclusions, and outline possible future initiatives.

The format will encourage active participation, dialogue, and critical reflection among participants from diverse disciplinary and cultural backgrounds.

SPEAKERS

Name (alphabetical order)	**Affiliation**	**Country**	**Title**
Francesc Bellaubi	Silene Association, Spain; University Iberoamericana Puebla, Mexico	Spain	Religion, geosciences and techno-culture: the case of Silene Association (Catalonia, Spain)
Hernán Bobadilla	University of Copenhagen, Denmark	Denmark/Chile	Contributions from the philosophy of science to geoethics
J. Baird Callicott	University of North Texas	USA	The *Topos* of *Mu* and the predicative self
Maria Angela Capello	Red Tree Consulting LLC, Houston	USA	Redefining sustainability as responsibility: a comparative geoethics of gender and leadership in the energy transition
Claudia Carpanese	University of Graz	Austria/Italy	Uncertain grounds: geoethical dimensions of mineral exploration in the Austrian Alps
Ying Kit Chan	University of Louisville	USA	Toward an aesthetic of the Anthropocene: art, Chinese philosophy, and geoethical perspectives in a time of polycrisis
Mauricio F. Collao Quevedo	York University	Canada	Inhuman materialism: a post-postmodern response to a world beyond 1.5°C

Name (alphabetical order)	**Affiliation**	**Country**	**Title**
Göran Collste	Linköping University	Sweden	Human dignity in the Anthropocene
Daniele Conversi	Universitat Politècnica de València - UPV, Spain	Spain/Italy	Geoethics, “survival cosmopolitanism" and the nationalist threat in a time of polycrisis
Vincent S. Cronin	International Association for Promoting Geoethics (IAPG)	USA	Developing a brief geoethics primer for geoscience professionals and students
Giuseppe Di Capua	Istituto Nazionale di Geofisica e Vulcanologia; International Association for Promoting Geoethics; IUGS Commission on Geoethics; EGU Geoethics Working Group	Italy	From principles and values to decisions: Relational Geoscientific Pragmatism as the operational methodology of geoethics
Johan Elverskog	Southern Methodist University	USA	Does the Buddha or St. Francis of Assisi have the answer?
Robert Frodeman	University of North Texas	USA	Geoethics as *Summum Bonum*
Stephen M. Gardiner	University of Washington, Seattle; University of St Andrews	USA	Beyond institutional denial: the imperative of a global constitutional convention for future generations
Sjoerd J. Kluiving	Vrije University Amsterdam	The Netherlands	Humans in the Anthropocene, about weak and strong forces: towards an empathic society?
Mrinalini Kochupillai	Hanken School of Economics	Finland/India	On a cross-cultural framework to implement ethics-aware AI in the geosciences: insights from Earth observation
Torbjörn Lodén	Stockholm University; The Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities	Sweden	Chinese cultural traditions as resources for a green approach to human-Earth relations
Francine M.G. McCarthy	Brock University	Canada	2026: an Anthropocene Odyssey

Name (alphabetical order)	**Affiliation**	**Country**	**Title**
Thierry Ngosso	Institute for Business Ethics, University of St. Gallen, Switzerland; Ethics and Public Policy Laboratory (EthicsLab), Catholic University of Central Africa, Cameroon; Department of Philosophy and Psychology, University of Maroua, Cameroon	Switzerland/Cameroon	Relationality before rationality: a relationistic paradigm for climate responsibility in African burdened societies
Rachel R.Y. Oh	National University of Singapore	Singapore	Beyond ecocentrism: cross-cultural values, social norms and human–nature connections for collective environmental action
Luiz Oosterbeek	Geosciences Centre, Polytechnic University of Tomar; Earth and Memory Institute, Mação	Portugal	Beyond false appearances: performing words through a matrix of relations
Mathias Oppermann	Global Ethic Foundation	Germany	Global ethics in practice: interreligious dialogue and democracy education through the impact project
David W. Mogk	Montana State University	USA	The intersection of geoethics and geoheritage
Gerassimos A. Papadopoulos	Hellenic Mediterranean University, Crete	Greece	Protection of cultural heritage from earthquakes and other geohazards
Silvia Peppoloni	Istituto Nazionale di Geofisica e Vulcanologia; International Association for Promoting Geoethics; CIPSH Chair on Geoethics; IUGS Commission on Geoethics; EGU Geoethics Working Group	Italy	Beyond the logic of domination: geoethics for living responsibly in a new human–Earth era
Frank Fuh-Yuan Shih	National Taiwan University Hospital, Taipei	Taiwan	Calamity and hope: reflections on emergency care and disaster governance in Taiwan

Name (alphabetical order)	**Affiliation**	**Country**	**Title**
Harold P. Sjursen	New York University	USA	What can traditional Chinese cultural and ethical perspectives contribute to contemporary geoethics?
Bronislaw Szerszynski	Lancaster University	United Kingdom	The deep timescape: rethinking the age(s) of the Earth
Kok-Chor Tan	University of Pennsylvania	USA	Wildlife conservation and global justice
Aida Terblanche-Greeff (Botha)	North-West University	South Africa	Ubuntu, Deep Ecology, and Degrowth: toward a comparative geoethics between Global North and Global South
Julia Adeney Thomas	University of Notre Dame	USA	Earth System Agency and the new ethics of the Anthropocene
Andreas Günter Weis	Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, Sinology, Germany; Shandong University, Advanced Institute for Confucian Studies, China	Germany/China	Humans, Earth, and the *Dao* 道: early German studies of the Chinese *Doctrine of the Mean* (*Zhongyong* 中庸) and their lessons for global ethics
Jan A. Zalasiewicz	University of Leicester	United Kingdom	The Anthropocene: the weaker the ethics, the greater the geological change?

LANGUAGE

The working language of the seminar is English.

PRESENTATION FORMAT

Speakers will present their work using digital slides. This format will facilitate the understanding of concepts that may be unfamiliar to scholars from different disciplinary and cultural backgrounds, thereby fostering interdisciplinary and intercultural dialogue. All speakers will be provided with a standard slide template to use when preparing their presentations, ensuring visual consistency across the sessions.

SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMME

Introduction

The programme is conceived not simply as a thematic grouping of contributions, but as a coherent intellectual journey across its three sessions. Together, they develop a progressive argument that moves from understanding the profound transformation of the human–Earth relationship, through the exploration of diverse ethical and cultural resources for rethinking that relationship, to the challenge of translating ethical reflection into responsible decisions and practices.

The three sessions are therefore organized around three interconnected questions:

- Session I — What has happened to the human–Earth condition?
  Rethinking the human–Earth condition: Anthropocene, responsibility and planetary governance
- Session II — From which ethical and cultural resources can we rethink it?
  Plural ethical worlds, shared Earth: comparative and cross-cultural geoethics
- Session III — How can this rethinking be translated into responsible action?
  From ethical reflection to responsible action: knowledge, decisions and professional practices

Session I establishes the conceptual and planetary context of the seminar. Beginning with the material transformation of the Earth System in the Anthropocene, it examines how human agency, geological time, technological power, cultural assumptions, dignity, justice and political institutions must be reconsidered in light of humanity's growing capacity to alter planetary processes. The session thus moves from diagnosing the changing human–Earth condition to examining the ethical and political responsibilities that arise from it.

Session II introduces the plurality of ethical worlds through which human–Earth relations can be understood and reimagined. Rather than assuming that a global ethics must emerge from a single philosophical tradition or universal vocabulary, the session explores dialogue and comparison among Chinese, Buddhist, African, Indigenous, religious and other intellectual and cultural perspectives. It considers relationality, different understandings of the self and nature, intercultural translation, ethical pluralism and shared responsibility, asking how diverse traditions can contribute to a global geoethics without erasing their differences.

Session III turns from ethical reflection to implementation. It examines how values and principles can inform scientific practice and responsible decision-making, and how geoethics can be translated into professional education, technological development, institutional leadership, resource governance, Indigenous governance, stewardship, heritage protection and community engagement. In this way, the final session explores the practical and institutional conditions through which geoethical responsibility can become embedded in decisions and actions.

The programme also has a deliberate conceptual symmetry between its beginning and its conclusion. It opens with Zalasiewicz, whose contribution confronts the material and geological transformation of the Earth System and its relationship with ethics and governance, and concludes with Bellaubi, whose case study brings together geosciences, religion, culture, conservation and governance in a concrete interdisciplinary practice. Between these two points, the seminar traces a continuous movement from planetary transformation to human responsibility, from ethical reflection to cultural plurality, and from principles to decisions and practices.

The overall intellectual trajectory of the seminar can therefore be summarized as: Earth System change → human condition → ethical responsibility → cultural plurality and dialogue → responsible decision-making → societal practice.

Through this progression, the seminar aims to explore geoethics not only as a field concerned with the responsibilities associated with geoscientific knowledge and practice, but also as a potential meeting ground between geosciences, philosophy, humanities, social sciences, cultural and religious traditions, and different knowledge systems in the search for more responsible ways of inhabiting a shared Earth.

Session I - Rethinking the human–Earth condition: Anthropocene, responsibility and planetary governance

What does it mean to be human in an Earth system profoundly transformed by human action, and what new forms of responsibility derive from it?

#	Speaker	Title
1	**Jan A. Zalasiewicz**	*The Anthropocene: the weaker the ethics, the greater the geological change?*
2	**Julia Adeney Thomas**	*Earth System Agency and the new ethics of the Anthropocene*

#	Speaker	Title
3	**Bronislaw Szerszynski**	*The deep timescape: rethinking the age(s) of the Earth*
4	**Mauricio F. Collao Quevedo**	*Inhuman materialism: a post-postmodern response to a world beyond 1.5°C*
5	**Silvia Peppoloni**	*Beyond the logic of domination: geoethics for living responsibly in a new human–Earth era*
6	**Robert Frodeman**	*Geoethics as Summum Bonum*
7	**Göran Collste**	*Human dignity in the Anthropocene*
8	**Sjoerd J. Kluiving**	*Humans in the Anthropocene, about weak and strong forces: towards an empathic society?*
9	**Kok-Chor Tan**	*Wildlife conservation and global justice*
10	**Daniele Conversi**	*Geoethics, "survival cosmopolitanism" and the nationalist threat in a time of polycrisis*
11	**Stephen M. Gardiner**	*Beyond institutional denial: the imperative of a global constitutional convention for future generations*

Zalasiewicz starts from the physical change of the Earth System and directly connects ethical deterioration, governance, and the intensification of geological transformation.
Thomas immediately develops the philosophical-political consequence: humanity now possesses a new form of Earth System Agency but continues to use ethical categories developed for a much more stable planet.
Szerszynski then broadens the horizon from the planetary scale to planetary temporality, showing how deep time can transform knowledge, identity, subjectivity, and action.
Collao Quevedo and his "inhuman materialism" represents a theoretical radicalization of the geologic turn—that is, an attempt to think the totality of geo-social reality within the context of planetary transformation.
Peppoloni introduces the geoethical response to this diagnosis. Her abstract identifies a cultural root of the polycrisis in the "logic of domination" and proposes a transition from domination to coexistence, exploitation to reciprocity, and control to participation, making geoethics a responsible way of "inhabiting the Earth."
Frodeman further expands the function of geoethics: not merely an ethics of geosciences, but a possible governance framework for knowledge production in a world where knowledge, universities, technology, and corporate research are changing radically.

The second half of the session thus shifts from the general framework to the political-moral construction of responsibility:

Collste links dignity, anthropocentrism, environmental responsibility, and global justice.

Kluiving introduces empathy, conviviality, and community science as potential "soft forces" capable of countering polarization and fragmentation.

Tan addresses the concrete tension between duties to animals and duties of justice toward human beings.

Conversi ultimately brings the reflection to the geopolitical scale, with survival cosmopolitanism as an ethical alternative to nationalism in a world of shared vulnerability.

Gardiner then forms a natural institutional conclusion, shifting the discourse toward a global constitutional convention for future generations.

The internal progression is therefore: Earth System transformation → human agency → planetary temporality and deep time → geologic thought → the geoethical transition from domination to coexistence → governance of knowledge → dignity, environmental responsibility, and global justice → empathy, conviviality, and community science → conflicts between human and non-human justice → survival cosmopolitanism → global institutions for future generations.

Session II — Plural ethical worlds, shared Earth: comparative and cross-cultural geoethics

How to build a global geoethics while respecting cultural plurality, conceptual differences, and different forms of relationship with the Earth.

#	Speaker	Title
12	**Luiz Oosterbeek**	*Beyond false appearances: performing words through a matrix of relations*
13	**Torbjörn Lodén**	*Chinese cultural traditions as resources for a green approach to human–Earth relations*
14	**Harold P. Sjursen**	*What can traditional Chinese cultural and ethical perspectives contribute to contemporary geoethics?*
15	**Andreas Günter Weis**	*Humans, Earth, and the Dao 道: early German studies of the Chinese Doctrine of the Mean (Zhongyong 中庸) and their lessons for global ethics*
16	**Ying Kit Chan**	*Toward an aesthetic of the Anthropocene: art, Chinese philosophy, and geoethical perspectives in a time of polycrisis*
17	**J. Baird Callicott**	*The Topos of Mu and the predicative self*

#	Speaker	Title
18	**Johan Elverskog**	*Does the Buddha or St. Francis of Assisi have the answer?*
19	**Thierry Ngosso**	*Relationality before rationality: a relationistic paradigm for climate responsibility in African burdened societies*
20	**Aïda C. Terblanché-Greeff**	*Ubuntu, Deep Ecology, and Degrowth: toward a comparative geoethics between Global North and Global South*
21	**Rachel R.Y. Oh**	*Beyond ecocentrism: cross-cultural values, social norms and human–nature connections for collective environmental action*
22	**Mathias Oppermann**	*Global ethics in practice: interreligious dialogue and democracy education through the ImpACT project*

Oosterbeek shows that seemingly universal words like ethics, geo, and crisis assume different meanings in German, Arabic, Russian, and Chinese traditions; from this, he arrives at the proposal for a "convergent polyethics" rather than a single homogenizing global ethics. This provides the methodological key to the entire session.

Lodén starts from the modern critique of human sovereignty over nature and argues that premodern traditions, particularly Chinese ones, can provide resources for a global "green" approach to human–Earth relations.

Sjursen develops the same issue directly in terms of a cross-culturally acceptable ground principle for global geoethics, placing Confucianism, Legalism, Daoism, and Buddhism in dialogue with Western thought.

Weis appropriately adds historical depth, reconstructing the circulation of Chinese concepts of Heaven–Earth–human beings in early twentieth-century Germany.

Chan then brings the dialogue into the aesthetic field: contemporary art, Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism become tools to make visible the relationship between human actions, environmental consequences, justice, and empathy.

Callicott serves as a very effective turning point: drawing from the Kyoto School, he arrives at the idea of the self as constituted by socio-environmental relations, while also showing how evolution and ecology can produce a similar shift in Western culture.

Elverskog follows immediately after as a salutary critique of intercultural idealizations: he shows that it is not enough to automatically attribute an ecological sensitivity to Buddhism or Daoism, shifting the focus to the relationship between tradition, reinterpretation, and concrete action.

Ngosso proposes replacing the primacy of autonomous rationality with a relational conception of personhood and applies this perspective to climate responsibility in African societies, including internal justice, vulnerability, future generations, and the more-than-human.

Terblanché-Greeff continues almost naturally with Ubuntu, Ukama, sufficiency, and Degrowth, explicitly proposing an intercultural contribution to Earth System governance.

Oh constitutes an essential transition from philosophical comparison to the empirical verification of ethical pluralism. Her results show that there is no single ecocentric motivation necessary for stewardship: different values can converge on environmentally positive behaviours. The conclusion explicitly favours an ethical pluralism capable of producing collective global action.

Taking the idea of a Global Ethic shared across religions and cultures, Oppermann shows how it can be translated into educational practice, democratic participation, intercultural dialogue, and shared responsibility.

The internal progression is therefore: semantic plurality and convergent polyethics → Chinese resources for rethinking human–Earth relations → cross-cultural foundations for global geoethics → historical circulation of ideas → aesthetic mediation → relational conceptions of the self → critique of intercultural idealizations → African relational ethics and climate justice → Ubuntu, Ukama, and Earth System governance → empirical ethical pluralism → intercultural education and democratic practice.

Session III — From ethical reflection to responsible action: knowledge, decisions and professional practices

How to transform knowledge, principles and values into decisions, education, governance, and responsible practices?

#	Speaker	Title
23	**Hernán Bobadilla**	*Contributions from the philosophy of science to geoethics*
24	**Giuseppe Di Capua**	*From principles and values to decisions: Relational Geoscientific Pragmatism as the operational methodology of geoethics*
25	**Vincent S. Cronin**	*Developing a brief geoethics primer for geoscience professionals and students*
26	**Mrinalini Kochupillai**	*On a cross-cultural framework to implement ethics-aware AI in the geosciences: insights from Earth observation*

#	Speaker	Title
27	**Francine M.G. McCarthy**	*2026: an Anthropocene Odyssey*
28	**Maria Angela Capello**	*Redefining sustainability as responsibility: a comparative geoethics of gender and leadership in the energy transition*
29	**Claudia Carpanese**	*Uncertain grounds: geoethical dimensions of mineral exploration in the Austrian Alps*
30	**David W. Mogk**	*The intersection of geoethics and geoheritage*
31	**Gerassimos A. Papadopoulos**	*Protection of cultural heritage from earthquakes and other geohazards*
32	**Frank Fuh-Yuan Shih**	*Calamity and hope: reflections on emergency care and disaster governance in Taiwan*
33	**Francesc Bellaubi**	*Religion, geosciences and techno-culture: the case of Silene Association (Catalonia, Spain)*

Bobadilla poses the theoretical problem of values in science and their political legitimization through deliberative and agonistic forms.

Di Capua affirms that if principles and values are not sufficient in the face of uncertainty, conflicts, and irreversible consequences, an operational methodology is needed: Relational Geoscientific Pragmatism (RGP) thus combines geoscientific evidence, interdisciplinarity, stakeholder participation, ethical reasoning, and public deliberation.

Cronin marks the transition from methodology to professional training and responsibility. His primer addresses scientific integrity, codes of ethics, conflict of interest, negligence, professional standards, beneficence, and the obligations of geoscientists toward society and the future.

In Kochupillai, the Intention–Knowledge–Action Framework is precisely an example of a cross-cultural operational framework: it integrates Western and Eastern ethical approaches, the EU AI Act, human rights, stakeholder collaboration, and four concrete Earth Observation case studies.

McCarthy questions the trust in AI as an automatic solution to the Anthropocene and calls attention to bias, social justice, and the water, energy, and critical mineral consumption of AI data centres.

Capello then opens the block on economic institutions and resources. Her abstract is not generically about leadership: it interprets sustainability as responsibility toward the Earth and future generations, identifies recurring features of systems thinking and the

translation of Earth-system knowledge into strategy, and connects the whole to resource governance and gender equity.

Carpanese immediately brings this discussion into the daily practice of mineral exploration. Her contribution shows that the geologist is not a mere neutral observer: they contribute to constructing what is defined as “resource” or “reserve” and mediate between companies, investors, the State, communities, and the Earth system under conditions of uncertainty.

Mogk develops professional and civic responsibility through geoheritage, education, schools, citizen science, NGOs, public administration, and stewardship.

Papadopoulos then brings this responsibility onto extremely concrete ground: protecting cultural heritage from earthquakes and other geohazards through historical knowledge, databases, and prevention.

Shih extends this responsibility to emergency medicine and disaster governance, drawing on Taiwan’s experience to explore tensions between long-term sustainability and immediate community needs. His contribution highlights preparedness, risk reduction, social justice, and resilience, showing how geoethical principles can inform effective and responsible action.

In the Bellaubi’s presentation, the Silene Association constitutes a concrete case in which geoethics, religion, cultural values, geosciences, conservation, protected areas, and governance are brought together. The seminar thus closes with an interdisciplinary community of practice, which could be the final message of the seminar.

The internal progression is therefore: values in science → operational decision-making → professional ethics and training → cross-cultural ethical frameworks → critical assessment of technology → institutional responsibility → resource governance → civic stewardship and education → heritage protection and risk prevention → disaster governance and resilience → interdisciplinary societal practice.

DETAILED SEMINAR SCHEDULE

The Scientific Programme and Schedule, including the dates and times of all oral presentations, is provided below. While the programme is considered substantially confirmed, minor adjustments may still be required for organisational reasons or due to unforeseen circumstances. Any changes will be communicated promptly to all participants.

Day 1: 16 November 2026	
09:00-09:30	Participants' arrival and registration
09:30-10:00	Welcome and institutional addresses
10:00-10:15	Opening talk (Giuseppe Di Capua)
10:15-10:45	Coffee/Tea break
Session I - Rethinking the human–Earth condition: Anthropocene, responsibility and planetary governance	
10:45-11:15	**Keynote n. 1: The Anthropocene: the weaker the ethics, the greater the geological change?** (Jan A. Zalasiewicz) – **to be confirmed**
11:15-11:35	**Earth System Agency and the new ethics of the Anthropocene** (Julia Adeney Thomas)
11:35-11:55	**The deep timescape: rethinking the age(s) of the Earth** (Bronislaw Szerszynski)
11:55-12:15	**Inhuman materialism: a post-postmodern response to a world beyond 1.5°C** (Mauricio F. Collao Quevedo)
12:15-12:35	**Beyond the logic of domination: geoethics for living responsibly in a new human–Earth era** (Silvia Peppoloni)
12:35-12:55	**Geoethics as *Summum Bonum*** (Robert Frodeman)
12:55-14:00	Light Lunch
14:00-14:20	**Human dignity in the Anthropocene** (Göran Collste)
14:20-14:40	**Humans in the Anthropocene, about weak and strong forces: towards an empathic society?** (Sjoerd J. Kluiving)
14:40-15:00	**Wildlife conservation and global justice** (Kok-Chor Tan)
15:00-15:20	**Geoethics, "survival cosmopolitanism" and the nationalist threat in a time of polycrisis** (Daniele Conversi)
15:20-15:40	**Beyond institutional denial: the imperative of a global constitutional convention for future generations** (Stephen M. Gardiner)
15:40-16:10	Coffee/Tea break
Session II — Plural ethical worlds, shared Earth: comparative and cross-cultural geoethics	
16:10-16:40	**Keynote n. 2: Beyond false appearances: performing words through a matrix of relations** (Luiz Oosterbeek)

16:40-17:00	**Chinese cultural traditions as resources for a green approach to human–Earth relations** (Torbjörn Lodén)
17:00-17:20	**What can traditional Chinese cultural and ethical perspectives contribute to contemporary geoethics?** (Harold P. Sjursen)
17:20-18:00	Discussion about future documents and editorial projects
20:00	Social dinner: Restaurant *"Il Menestrello"*

Day 2: 17 November 2026	
09:30-10:00	Participants' arrival
10:00-10:20	**Humans, Earth, and the Dao 道: early German studies of the Chinese Doctrine of the Mean (Zhongyong 中庸) and their lessons for global ethics** (Andreas Günter Weis)
10:20-10:40	**Toward an aesthetic of the Anthropocene: art, Chinese philosophy, and geoethical perspectives in a time of polycrisis** (Ying Kit Chan)
10:40-11:00	**The *Topos* of *Mu* and the predicative self** (J. Baird Callicott)
11:00-11:45	Coffee/Tea break
11:45-12:05	**Does the Buddha or St. Francis of Assisi have the answer?** (Johan Elverskog)
12:05-12:25	**Relationality before rationality: a relationistic paradigm for climate responsibility in African burdened societies** (Thierry Ngosso)
12:25-12:45	**Ubuntu, Deep Ecology, and Degrowth: toward a comparative geoethics between Global North and Global South** (Aïda C. Terblanché-Greeff)
12:45-13:05	**Global ethics in practice: interreligious dialogue and democracy education through the ImpACT project** (Mathias Oppermann)
13:05-14:15	Light Lunch
Session III — From ethical reflection to responsible action: knowledge, decisions and professional practices	
14:15-14:35	**Contributions from the philosophy of science to geoethics** (Hernán Bobadilla)
14:35-14:55	**From principles and values to decisions: Relational Geoscientific Pragmatism as the operational methodology of geoethics** (Giuseppe Di Capua)
14:55-15:15	**Developing a brief geoethics primer for geoscience professionals and students** (Vincent S. Cronin)
15:15-15:45	Coffee/Tea break

15:45-16:05	**On a cross-cultural framework to implement ethics-aware AI in the geosciences: insights from Earth observation** (Mrinalini Kochupillai)
16:05-16:25	**2026: an Anthropocene Odyssey** (Francine M.G. McCarthy)
16:25-16:45	**Redefining sustainability as responsibility: a comparative geoethics of gender and leadership in the energy transition** (Maria Angela Capello)
16:45-17:00	**Group photo**
19:00-20:00	**Medieval music concert: "In Festa" by *I Giocolari* of the *Ensemble Micrologus***

Day 3: 18 November 2026	
09:00-09:30	Participants' arrival
09:30-09:50	**Uncertain grounds: geoethical dimensions of mineral exploration in the Austrian Alps** (Claudia Carpanese)
09:50-10:10	**The intersection of geoethics and geoheritage** (David W. Mogk)
10:10-10:50	Coffee/Tea break
10:50-11:10	**Protection of cultural heritage from earthquakes and other geohazards** (Gerassimos A. Papadopoulos)
11:10-11:30	**Calamity and hope: reflections on emergency care and disaster governance in Taiwan** (Frank Fuh-Yuan Shih)
11:30-11:50	**Religion, geosciences and techno-culture: the case of Silene Association** (Catalonia, Spain) (Francesc Bellaubi)
11:50-12:30	Closing remarks and acknowledgements
12:30-14:00	Light Lunch
14:30-17:00	**Guided tour: a walk through Assisi's historic centre and a visit to the Basilica of Saint Francis to admire Giotto's world-renowned frescoes**

ABSTRACTS

Please, refer to the Appendix to this circular.

HOSPITALITY

The organization will provide coffee breaks and a light lunch on all three days of the seminar.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

For participants receiving financial support, reimbursement will be made after the seminar upon submission of a reimbursement request form, which will be provided by the Seminar Secretariat. Reimbursement requests must be accompanied by electronic copies of the relevant travel and/or accommodation receipts, submitted by email to the Seminar Secretariat.

LOCATION

Assisi, Umbria Region, Italy, is a historic town in central Italy renowned for its cultural heritage, spiritual legacy, and enduring message of peace and universal fraternity. Closely associated with Saint Francis of Assisi, whose teachings emphasized respect for nature, humility, and responsibility toward all living beings, Assisi embodies ethical values that resonate deeply with the principles of geoethics and global ethics. Its harmonious relationship between human settlements and the surrounding landscape, combined with a long tradition of intercultural and interreligious dialogue, makes Assisi an ideal setting for reflective discussion, ethical inquiry, and international exchange on the human–Earth relationship. Read more about Assisi's history: https://www.exploring-umbria.com/en/assisi/history-of-assisi/

VENUE

Palazzo dei Priori, Conciliazione Hall, Piazza del Comune n. 10, Assisi

Read more about the Conciliazione Hall and Palazzo dei Priori:

- https://assisipaxmundi.org/paxmundi/en/conciliazione-hall/
- https://www.visit-assisi.it/en/monuments/medieval-buildings/palazzo-dei-priori/

ACCOMMODATION

Assisi offers a wide range of accommodation options, including hotels, guesthouses, monasteries, and bed & breakfasts, suitable for different budgets and preferences. Participants are encouraged to book their accommodation well in advance, as early reservations increase the likelihood of securing the best rates and availability. Accommodation in Assisi can be easily booked through the main international online booking platforms (for example: http://booking.com/, https://www.expedia.com/, https://www.hotels.com/, https://www.trivago.com/, etc.).

Since the seminar venue will be located at the Town Hall (Palazzo Comunale), in Piazza del Comune, the main square of the historic city centre, participants are advised to look for accommodation within the city centre. This will allow easy access to the venue on foot and provide the opportunity to fully experience the unique cultural and historical atmosphere of Assisi.

City of Assisi Official Tourist Information Website: https://www.visit-assisi.it/en/

HOW TO REACH ASSISI

By air

The nearest airport is Perugia "San Francesco d'Assisi" International Airport, located approximately 15 km from Assisi, with both domestic and international connections. Alternative airports include Rome Fiumicino Airport, Rome Ciampino Airport, Florence Airport, and Bologna Airport, all of which are connected to Assisi by train and bus services. Please note that, if you are travelling from outside Italy, you are most likely to arrive at Rome Fiumicino Airport, the country's main international gateway.

By train

Assisi railway station is located on the Florence–Rome railway line and is served by regional and intercity trains. Regular train connections are available from major Italian cities, including Rome, Florence, Milan, and Bologna. From the Assisi railway station, the historic city center can be reached by local bus, taxi, or private transfer in approximately 10–15 minutes. The available railway companies are:

- Trenitalia: https://www.trenitalia.com/en.html
- Italo: https://www.italotreno.com/en/booking-train-ticket

By bus

Assisi can be reached through several national and regional bus services connecting the city with major Italian destinations, including Rome, Florence, Milan, and Perugia. Participants may consult the following websites for schedules, routes, and ticket reservations:

- FlixBus: https://www.flixbus.co.uk/
- Busitalia (regional and local transport services): https://busitaliashop.it/en

Local bus services connect the Assisi railway station, parking areas, and nearby cities with the historic center.

By car

Assisi is well connected to the Italian motorway network. From the north or south, participants may take the A1 Motorway and exit at Valdichiana or Orte, then continue towards Perugia-Assisi via the E45 highway. Parking facilities are available outside the historic city center, which has restricted traffic access.

SOCIAL PROGRAMME

This will include a **social dinner**, a **medieval music concert** and a **guided visit to the historic city center and the Basilica of Saint Francis**, offering participants the opportunity to admire the renowned frescoes of Giotto (1267-1337) and while experiencing one of the world's most significant cultural and artistic sites, inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Social dinner (16 November 2026, 20:00)

The social dinner will take place in a traditional restaurant ("Il Menestrello"; address: via San Gregorio n. 1/A, Assisi) located in the heart of Assisi's historic city centre. It will provide an opportunity for participants to continue discussions in an informal and convivial atmosphere while enjoying the local cuisine and experiencing the unique charm of one of Italy's most remarkable medieval towns.

The menu will include a starter, a first course, a main course, a side dish, dessert. A vegan menu will also be available for those who have requested it.

Traditional menu: *Starter* (Potato gratin, Cannara onion parmigiana, shepherd's cheese, rustic homemade salami), *First Course* (Casarecce pasta with wild boar ragù), *Main Course* (Pork tenderloin with Cannara onion cream), *Side Dish* (Roast potatoes), *Dessert* (Tiramisu), *Water* and *House Red Wine*, *Bread* and *Focaccia*.

Vegan menu: *Starter* (Pappa al pomodoro: rustic tomato and bread soup; and cooked greens), *First Course* (Penne with fresh seasonal vegetables), *Main Course* (Panzanella: traditional Umbrian salad with rustic homemade bread), *Side Dish* (Roast potatoes), *Dessert* (Fresh fruit salad), *Water* and *House Red Wine*, *Bread* and *Focaccia*.

Website: https://www.ristorantepizzeriailmenestrello.it/

Medieval music concert (17 November 2026, 19:00–20:00)

Address: Palazzo dei Priori, Conciliazione Hall, Piazza del Comune n. 10, Assisi.

Concert entitled "In Festa", medieval songs of love and celebration, performed by *I Giocolari* of the *Ensemble Micrologus*.

Ensemble Micrologus

Among the many early music ensembles in Italy, *Ensemble Micrologus* is the longest-established group dedicated to the performance and revival of medieval music. Celebrating more than forty years of activity, the ensemble continues to explore new artistic directions and innovative approaches to interpretation, attracting an ever-growing international audience through concerts in Italy and around the world. Founded in 1984 by the Umbrian musicians Patrizia Bovi, Goffredo Degli Esposti, and Gabriele Russo, together with Adolfo Broegg (1961–2006), *Micrologus* has created more than sixty productions, some conceived as theatrical performances with sets and costumes, and has recorded twenty-nine CDs. Among its numerous accolades are two "Diapason d'Or de l'Année" awards, the Goldberg Magazine "Best of 2000 Award", and the Boston Globe's "Biggest Surprise" recognition in its 2009 list of the year's top classical albums. The ensemble is regularly invited to perform at many of Europe's most prestigious festivals and concert venues, including the Urbino Early Music Festival, Montpellier Festival, Vienna Konzerthaus, Cité de la Musique in Paris, Southbank Centre in London, York Early Music Festival, Festival des Flandres, and the festivals of Kraków and Jarosław in Poland. It has also undertaken extensive international tours in Japan, Mexico, Canada, and the United States. *Micrologus*'s work is grounded in

rigorous historical and musicological research and is deeply informed by the study of traditional musical practices. This scholarly approach, combined with an exceptionally vivid and engaging performance style, has earned the ensemble recognition as one of the world's leading interpreters of medieval repertoire. Its distinctive sound blends a rich variety of historical instruments with vocal polyphony, making medieval music both authentic and accessible to contemporary audiences. The ensemble has also collaborated extensively with theatre and cinema. In addition to composing and performing numerous film soundtracks, *Micrologus* arranged and performed the score for the film "Mediterraneo", directed by Gabriele Salvatores, winner of the 1991 Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film. Between 2007 and 2010, the ensemble participated in the contemporary dance production Myth, created by the Belgian choreographer Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, performing throughout an extensive world tour. Thanks to its versatility and openness to different artistic forms, *Micrologus* has also collaborated with musicians from a wide range of musical traditions, producing recordings and concerts with distinguished artists including Daniele Sepe, Ramberto Ciammarughi, Banco del Mutuo Soccorso, Giovanna Marini, and Vinicio Capossela.

I Giocolari of the *Ensemble Micrologus* is a branch of the renowned *Ensemble Micrologus* composed by a smaller group specializing in the medieval tradition of minstrels and itinerant performers. *I Giocolari* performs some of the most immediately engaging repertoire of the European Middle Ages, including troubadour songs, Carmina Burana, festive songs, miracle tales, ballads, and dances, presented in a variety of languages, including Latin, Italian, French, and German. The group's performances recreate the spirit of the medieval minstrel tradition, in which voices and musical instruments serve not only as vehicles for music but also as expressive tools for theatrical performance and storytelling. Among the historical instruments featured are several characteristic medieval drones, including the vielle (medieval fiddle), the three-hole pipe and tabor (played simultaneously by a single performer), and the bagpipe.

Performers of *I Giocolari* of the *Ensemble Micrologus*

- Patrizia Bovi – voice and harp
- Goffredo Degli Esposti – three-hole pipe and tabor, transverse flute, double flute, recorder, and bagpipe
- Gabriele Russo – vielle, rebec, shawm, and medieval trumpet
- Enea Sorini – voice and percussion

Concert programme

CANTI D'AMORE – PRIMAVERA (Songs of Love – Spring)

- Calenda Maya - estampida di Rainbaud de Vaqueiras - sec. XII (Instrumental)
- A l'entrada del temps clar - ballade - sec. XII
- Cantigas n. 52-48 (strumentali)
- Tuit cil qui sunt – Bonne amourette - rondeau - sec. XII

AMORE E CAVALIERI (Love and Chivalry)

- L'homme armè – canzone - sec. XIV
- V Estampie – danza - sec. XIII

AMORE - IL TIGLIO (Love – The Linden Tree)

- Under der linden - minnelied di Walther von der Vogelweide - sec. XIII
- Tempus transit - conductus - sec. XIII (dai Carmina Burana)

CANTI D'AMORE (Songs of Love)

- Ecco la primavera - ballata di Francesco Landini - sec. XIV
- Salterello - sec.XIV
- Amor mi fa cantar - ballata - sec. XIV
- Salterello - sec. XIV

CANTI DEL BERE (Drinking songs)

- Vinum bonum et suave - conductus dalla Festa dell'asino - sec. XIII
- Bacche bene venies - conductus - sec. XIII (dai Carmina Burana)
- Cantigas n. 94-23 (strumentali)

CANTI DI FESTA (Festive songs)

- Orientis partibus - conductus dalla Festa dell'asino - sec. XIII
- Gregis pastor Tityrus - conductus dalla Festa dell'asino - sec. XIII
- D'un bel matin d'amor - canto - sec. XV
- Petit riens - ballo - sec.XV

Guided tour (18 November 2026, 14:30-17:00)

Meeting point: Piazza del Comune n. 10, Assisi.

Participants may join a guided walking tour of Assisi's historic city centre, exploring its medieval streets, squares, and landmarks before concluding with a visit to the Basilica of Saint Francis, one of Italy's most celebrated cultural and spiritual monuments. The visit includes the chance to admire the world-renowned frescoes by Giotto (1267-1337) and his workshop, masterpieces of medieval art that profoundly influenced the development of Western painting. To ensure that all participants can comfortably follow the English-language commentary throughout the tour, personal audio headsets will be provided. Tour Guide: Maura Baldoni (English-speaking).

The Basilica of Saint Francis houses one of the most celebrated cycles of medieval frescoes in the world. Attributed to Giotto and his workshop, the frescoes depicting the Life of Saint Francis were painted between the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries and are widely regarded as masterpieces of Western art. Their remarkable naturalism, expressive human figures, and innovative use of space marked a decisive turning point in the history of painting, paving the way for the artistic developments of the Renaissance. Together with the Basilica itself, these frescoes form part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site Assisi, the Basilica of San Francesco and Other Franciscan Sites.

TOURISTIC INFORMATION

Some of the most remarkable and evocative sites and attractions in Assisi and the surrounding area, all well worth a visit:

In Assisi

You may explore the app *"Assisi – Le Pietre Parlano"* (*Assisi – The Stones Speak*), where accessible original content narrates the beauty of the 14 UNESCO sites of Assisi:

ASSISI LE PIETRE PARLANO

Google Play

Apple Store

Near Assisi (easy day trips)

- **Spello** (15 km from Assisi): One of Italy's prettiest hill towns, famous for flower displays and Roman gates.
- **Perugia** (25 km): Umbrian capital with medieval streets, art museums, chocolate shops, and vibrant atmosphere.
- **Bevagna** (30 km): Charming medieval village known for traditional crafts and Roman mosaics.
- **Montefalco** (35 km): Renowned for its exceptionally well-preserved medieval centre, the masterpieces of Renaissance painter Benozzo Gozzoli (1420-1497), the world-famous Montefalco Sagrantino DOCG wine, one of Italy's finest red wines, and panoramic vineyard landscapes.
- **Spoleto** (45 km): One of Umbria's most historic and elegant towns, famous for the impressive Duomo di Spoleto with frescoes by Filippo Lippi (1406-1469); the monumental Ponte delle Torri, a medieval aqueduct bridge dating from the 13th–14th centuries; the Rocca Albornoziana fortress (1359-1370); the beautiful Roman and medieval architecture throughout the old town.

- **Gubbio** (45 km): A timeless medieval town, with its picturesque stone-built historic center, associated with Saint Francis and the "Wolf of Gubbio" legend.
- **Clitunno Springs** (Fonti del Clitunno) (45 km): A peaceful natural park known for its crystal-clear, spring-fed pools and lush vegetation, celebrated by poets and writers since antiquity. Nearby stands the early medieval Tempietto del Clitunno, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

WEBSITE

https://www.geoethics.org/cipsh-academy-2026

SECRETARIAT

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International Association for Promoting Geoethics
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International Council for Philosophy and Human Sciences (CIPSH) is a non-governmental organization within UNESCO, which federates hundreds of different learned societies in the field of philosophy, human sciences and related subjects.
The CIPSH coordinates the international works and researches carried out by a huge constellation of centres and networks of scholars. It favours the exchange of knowledge among faraway scholars and fosters the international circulation of scholars, in order to improve the communication among specialists from different disciplines, enforce a better knowledge of cultures and of the different social, individual and collective behaviours and bring to the fore the richness of each culture and their fruitful diversity.
The International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies was founded on 18 January 1949, in Brussels, at the request of UNESCO and under its auspices, following a meeting organized by the Union Académique Internationale to bring together representatives of nongovernmental organizations. From 1 January 2011, it adopted the designation "International Council for Philosophy and Human Sciences". Website: https://cipsh.one/

The International Association for Promoting Geoethics (IAPG) is a multidisciplinary, scientific platform for widening the discussion and creating awareness about problems of Geoethics and Ethics applied to the Geosciences. The IAPG is legally recognized as a not-for-profit association, has more than 3350 supporting members in 131 countries on 6 continents, and can count on a network of 38 national sections. Website: https://www.geoethics.org/

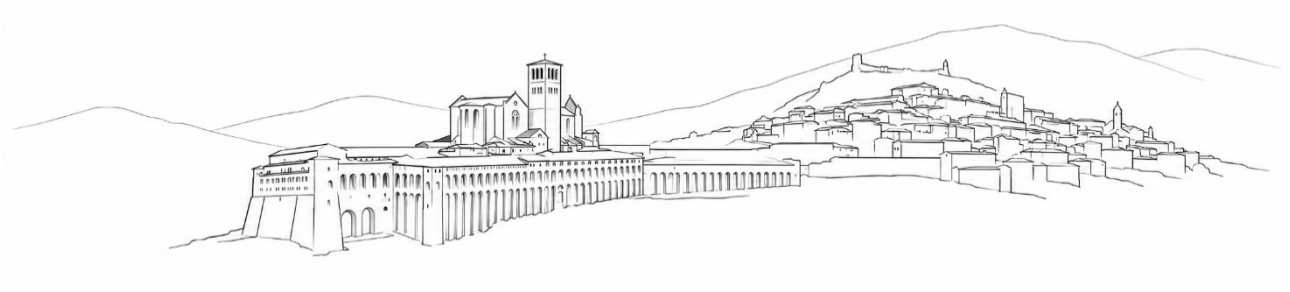
CIPSH International Academy on Chinese Culture and Global Humanities 2026

International Seminar:

"Geoethics and Global Ethics in a Time of Polycrisis: Comparative Perspectives on Human–Earth Relations"

APPENDIX

Book of abstracts



Session I

Rethinking the human–Earth condition:

Anthropocene, responsibility and planetary governance

The Anthropocene: the weaker the ethics, the greater the geological change?

Jan A. Zalasiewicz[1]

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Abstract

The Anthropocene represents a fundamental change to the Earth System away from the long-standing stability of Holocene times, experienced through such phenomena as global warming, biodiversity loss and chemical pollution, with their myriad harmful impacts on human and non-human communities (Zalasiewicz et al., 2024). At all societal levels, not least those where wealth, power and political agency are concentrated, this is now clear – even if commonly denied or minimized (Supran et al., 2023). It is also clear that several previous major environmental problems, such as leaded petrol, acid rain and the ozone hole, were successfully resolved, as the ethical case for the protection of future generations in practice overcame resistance from the commercial interests making immediate profits from the harmful agents involved. Currently – as exemplified by the case of climate change – 'business-as-usual' is widely ascendant, and growing through steeply increased investments into hydrocarbon development, even as the evidence for global warming strengthens and as that warming accelerates. Diminishing ethical considerations are mirrored by growing malignancy of governance, both national and corporate, undermining collective responses. Understanding this relation, which lies at the heart of the rapidly evolving Anthropocene Earth System (Rockström et al., 2026), seems to need close comparison or even confrontation of the emerging geological consequences with their sociopolitical drivers. This is challenging, because the former are essentially simple and clear even while newly emergent, while the latter are complex, often opaque, and marked by conflicting and emotionally charged belief/value systems with deep historical roots. Nevertheless, reducing the scale of Anthropocene planetary change would seem to need such an effort.

Keywords: Anthropocene, Geoethics, Climate, Hydrocarbons, Environmental problems

References

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Supran G., Rahmstorf S. and Oreskes N. (2023). Assessing ExxonMobil's global warming projections. Science, 379(6628). https://doi.org/10.1126/science.abk0063

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Earth System Agency and the new ethics of the Anthropocene

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Abstract

Humanity, in the Anthropocene, has gained an extraordinary new form of agency—Earth System Agency—and thus a new, disquieting form of ethical and political responsibility. Earth System Agency, the integrated, transgenerational, global network designed and controlled by no one but supplying us all, has already altered the way the planet functions, yet we are only just beginning to understand the responsibilities it entails. The reason for this lag is that we still use ethical and political concepts developed for the far more predictable planet when individuals and collectives of various sorts were subject to customary, institutional, and philosophical constraints. Back then, it was still possible to live within planetary boundaries; now, everyone, even the poorest societies, depends on the insatiable technosphere's ability to extract resources far beyond their regenerative capacities, thus endangering ourselves and the web of life. This paper does three things. First, it describes the novel aspects of Earth System Agency as opposed to earlier notions of individual and collective agency. Second, it details the conundrums facing us as we recognize both the necessity of the technosphere and its destructive, extractive powers. Finally, it proposes some ways, rooted in concepts of "persistent biological disruptors" and "*satoyama*," through which we might undermine the relentless growth of the technosphere while minimizing harm to the world's people who depend on it. The ultimate goal of Anthropocenic planetary stewardship is to restabilize Earth within an altered but humanly habitable envelop of variability.

Keywords: Anthropocene, Earth System Agency, Technosphere, *Satoyama*, Geoethics

References

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The deep timescape: rethinking the age(s) of the Earth

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Abstract

The modern concept of deep, planetary time has been hailed as one of the great intellectual achievements of humanity (Rudwick 2005; Bjornerud 2018: 8) – but also criticised as human-centred, Western, modernist and linear, and as diverting attention from present challenges and injustices (Bastian 2024; Sideris 2017: 7; Skrimshire 2018). Sharing similar criticisms, Bensaude-Vincent (2022) calls for it to be replaced by a 'polychronic' understanding of the Earth's temporality – seeing it as what Barbara Adam (1998) called a 'timescape'. But in this paper, I argue that the modern idea of deep, planetary time should *itself* be understood as a timescape: a meshwork of human and nonhuman temporalities, that draws on wider cultural ideas and experiences of time (Heringman 2023), and that – properly understood – can give us a radical new idea of human existence and responsibilities. I first examine the complex set of meanings of the English word 'deep', to show how its application to planetary time does more than imply vast timescales but invokes a rich set of ideas relating to our experience of being embodied beings produced by and living in a planetary environment. I then lay out four dimensions of the deep timescape, each relating to different meanings of the word 'deep' and different kinds of deep-time experience: firstly, deep time not as quantitative, chronological time but as qualitative kairological time; secondly, deep time not as involving not just temporally distant events but also slow processes and long time-units; thirdly, deep time as part of a long human cultural dynamic involving the separation of and stabilisation of relations between lived, experienced, passing time and timeless, immortal time; and, fourthly, deep time as involving a flickering on and off of the indexical situatedness of human subjectivity as a reference point. I summarise the various uses of deep-time thinking for individuals and society: the enhancement of knowledge, the deepening of experience, the transformation of identity, and the guidance of action. I conclude by arguing that this radical redescription of geological can give us clues towards a transformed geoscience, one that includes a correspondingly transformed understanding of human subjectivity.

Keywords: Deep time, Chronos, Kairos, Timescales, Timelessness

References

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Inhuman materialism: a post-postmodern response to a world beyond 1.5°C

Mauricio F. Collao Quevedo[1]

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Abstract

Critical thought is undergoing a "geologic turn" (Collao Quevedo, 2025a, 2025b) whereby the science of geology and the notion of "the geologic" are repeatedly conjured to think through the historical and socio-ecological challenges of our time. This paper examines the material and discursive conditions that shaped this "geologic turn," distinguishing it from two bodies of scholarship commonly associated with it: Earth System Science research on the Anthropocene and post-anthropocentric theories of the non-human. Although the geologic turn is intellectually indebted to this scholarship, I argue that it is possible to identify within it a distinct theoretical and analytical framework I call "inhuman materialism." I describe inhuman materialism as a "big theory" attempt to theorize the totality of geo-social reality in the Anthropocene, in "geo-centric" (Collao Quevedo, 2025a) fashion, and beyond the realm of progressive historicity. By outlining its key tenets, I argue that inhuman materialism is well suited to address the shortcomings of the current climate regime, the naivete of green capitalism, and the broader challenges of a planet undergoing state transformation.

Keywords: Critical thought, Geologic turn, Anthropocene, Non-human, Geo-historical conjuncture

References

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Beyond the logic of domination: geoethics for living responsibly in a new human–Earth era

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[2] International Association for Promoting Geoethics (IAPG)
[3] Chair on Geoethics of the International Council for Philosophy and Human Sciences (CIPSH)
[4] Commission on Geoethics of the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS)
[5] Geoethics Working Group of the European Geosciences Union (EGU)

Abstract

The accelerating polycrisis of the twenty-first century cannot be understood merely as the convergence of climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, resource conflicts, and geopolitical instability. It exposes a deeper cultural crisis rooted in a logic of domination that reduces the Earth, other living beings, and even human beings to resources to be controlled, exploited, and optimized. This logic manifests itself through extractivism, technocratic control, productivism, and the uncritical pursuit of efficiency. Technological innovation and environmental policies, while essential, remain insufficient without transforming the values that shape human–Earth relations.

This presentation argues that geoethics provides not only an ethical framework for the geosciences but also a cultural and practical orientation for living responsibly in a new human–Earth era. By integrating geoscientific knowledge with ethical reflection, geoethics invites human beings to recognize themselves as interdependent and accountable participants within the Earth system, rather than as its external managers. It thereby reframes development, progress, and well-being in light of planetary boundaries, intergenerational justice, and ecological responsibility.

Drawing on ecological humanism, the presentation advances a relational understanding of human dignity in which human centrality does not justify superiority over or domination of nature. Instead, human freedom, responsibility, and flourishing are understood as inseparable from the integrity and resilience of the Earth system. Geoethics therefore represents more than a set of environmental principles: it offers a responsible way of inhabiting the Earth. By encouraging a transition from domination to coexistence, exploitation to reciprocity, control to participation, and short-term efficiency to planetary responsibility, geoethics offers the foundations for a global ethics capable of guiding humanity through the transformations of this emerging and complex era.

Keywords: Geoethics, Polycrisis, Ecological humanism, Human–Earth relations, Planetary responsibility

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Geoethics as *Summum Bonum*

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Abstract

21st century knowledge culture is transforming: the university is in decline, technological advances present unprecedented challenges and dangers, and the public square has become a space of misinformation. A reconstituted discipline of geology would help.

Knowledge production has been a largely *laissez faire* affair: researchers developed insights, and engineers in the service of business made objects for public good and private profit. There were also checks on the system. Universities were the central epistemic institution in society, and they had guardrails – ethics committee, IRBs, and a remit focused on the public good. And science and technology, while powerful, were not promethean in nature.

Both points have changed. Knowledge production today is driven by corporate research, whose ruling imperative is profit. And knowledge itself has become incredibly powerful, raising the possibility of enabling authoritarian movements, DIY terrorism, industrial accident, and environmental calamity. Science and technology have transcended themselves: they now raise dangers of knowledge beyond human comprehension or control.

Universities sensed that things were changing. They spent decades promoting interdisciplinarity to make academic knowledge more relevant. But today has become *too* relevant, too powerful. Society needs a governor on knowledge. This is a role suited to a dedisciplined field of geoethics or geophilosophy.

Knowledge production needs to be governed by the concept of sustainability, a multi-disciplinary notion containing elements that are ethical, political, and geo-ecological in nature. Geoethics should become the framework for all knowledge production. Universities need to frame both research and education in terms of geoethics.

Keywords: University, Knowledge governance, Philosophy, Geology

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Human dignity in the Anthropocene

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Abstract

The world faces several interconnected crises. A 2019 United Nations report estimates that around one million animal and plant species are threatened with extinction. At the same time, many climate scientists expect global warming to exceed the goals of the Paris Agreement, with projections often reaching at least 2.5°C and, in many cases, 3°C or more. These crises have prompted theories that emphasize human dependence on nature and ecological systems, as well as human responsibility in the Anthropocene.

This paper asks whether anthropocentrism should be rejected in the Anthropocene, an epoch marked by humanity's deep and enduring impact on the Earth's climate, ecosystems, and geology. Like the idea of human dignity, anthropocentrism draws on both the Judeo-Christian tradition and the Enlightenment. It has been criticized for justifying human domination over nature and for reinforcing the ideas behind today's ecological crises. I argue, however, that this diagnosis is mistaken. The crises are better understood as consequences of the dominant socio-economic growth paradigm, which directs attention to the global economic and social institutions that sustain the present unjust world order.

Because human beings depend on ecosystems, the exploitation of animals, species, and nature harms both present and future generations. Anthropocentrism can therefore be reconciled with respect and care for animals and nature. A dignified human life requires that humans live in harmony with nature and with one another. In this sense, anthropocentrism grounded in human dignity supports both environmental responsibility and global justice.

Keywords: Anthropocene, Anthropocentrism, Human dignity, Human responsibility, Global justice

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Humans in the Anthropocene, about weak and strong forces: towards an empathic society?

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Abstract

What does it mean to be human in the Anthropocene? Are we able, with our limitations and restrictions ('weak or soft forces'), to stand up to the strong forces we have set in motion? Rather than talking about 'weak forces', we need to talk about 'soft forces', that may actually be very strong. The degree of empathy we muster depends on the degree of kinship, but in a basic sense we can empathise with all living individuals and species (De Mul, 2023). Does a possibly emerging empathic civilisation not contrast sharply with human's inability steering the Anthropocene as a force majeure that cannot be stopped? Does an empathic society not directly oppose the recent dangerous turn to polarisation (e.g Ecker-Ernhardt, 2025)? 'Scientific evidence that we are a fundamentally empathic species has profound and far-reaching consequences for society and may well determine our fate as a species' (Rifkin, 2022). How fast can global empathic consciousness grow in today's increasingly stressful conditions (e.g. polarisation, wars, pandemics), or precisely under the pressure of them? May we assume that humanity may turn out to be more resilient than some seem to think possible and plausible (Rifkin, 2022)? What can we learn from comparative geoethics as a means of bridging cultural traditions, knowledge systems, and ethical visions from the non-western societies and communities? This contribution makes a bridge between science, humanities and social science focussing on topics of geoethics, convivialism and a new form of community science.

Keywords: Empathy, Geoethics, Conviviality, Polarisation, Community Science

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Wildlife conservation and global justice

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Abstract

I start with the following premises: (1) wildlife conservation is a global responsibility, and (2) conservation matters because of our direct moral duties to animals. But how do we reconcile this non-anthropocentric conservation ethics with what we owe to our fellow human beings? This is a particularly significant question given that we live in a world marked by extreme international inequality and that the burdens and benefits of global conservation do not fall on societies evenly. I call this the question of wildlife conservation justice. Inserting justice (for people) in the conservation-ethics equation is not a retreat into anthropocentrism, as some conservation ethicists and biologists might worry. Rather, it is a reminder that while people are not all that matter (anthropocentrism), people still matter. The key challenge for conservation justice, then, is to see how we can maintain a non-anthropocentric conservation ethics while simultaneously honouring our justice-duties to our fellow human beings. I focus on three dimensions of justice that are especially significant in the context of global conservation: (i) distributive justice, (ii) deliberative justice, and (iii) cultural justice. The realization of conservation justice will require attention to these dimensions of justice and proper resolution of the potential tensions between what we owe to people and what we owe to animals.

Keywords: Animal ethics, Conservation ethics, Cultural rights, Environmental philosophy, Global justice

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Geoethics, "survival cosmopolitanism" and the nationalist threat in a time of polycrisis

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Abstract

The contemporary polycrisis—marked by climate disruption, geopolitical conflict, ecological degradation, and resource insecurity—has intensified nationalist responses that undermine the international cooperation required to address planetary challenges. This paper argues that geoethics offers a normative framework for resisting this fragmentation by grounding responsibility in humanity's shared dependence on the Earth system. Drawing on Daniele Conversi's concept of "survival cosmopolitanism", it proposes geoethics as an ethical foundation for planetary solidarity based on the recognition that human survival depends on transnational cooperation and the responsible stewardship of Earth's interconnected systems.

The paper situates survival cosmopolitanism in relation to two influential theories of catastrophe. Unlike Jean-Pierre Dupuy's "enlightened catastrophism", which seeks to motivate preventive action through the anticipation of inevitable catastrophe, and Ulrich Beck's "emancipatory catastrophism", which sees global risks as potential drivers of cosmopolitan political transformation, survival cosmopolitanism locates the imperative for cooperation in the material conditions of shared vulnerability and collective survival. Rather than relying on catastrophe as either a heuristic or an emancipatory force, geoethics advances an ethic of responsibility grounded in scientific knowledge, environmental justice, and intergenerational stewardship. In a time of polycrisis, the convergence of geoethics and survival cosmopolitanism offers a robust ethical alternative to nationalist politics and a pathway toward a more cooperative and resilient planetary future.

Keywords: Geoethics, Survival cosmopolitanism, Enlightened catastrophism, emancipatory catastrophism, Nationalism, Polycrisis

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Beyond institutional denial: the imperative of a global constitutional convention for future generations

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Abstract

Humanity is in deep institutional denial. Current institutions are failing future generations, in part because there is a governance gap when it comes to promoting intergenerational concern. This gap facilitates a tyranny of the contemporary that puts the young and other future generations at risk. Climate change is a prime example. This paper compares the United Nations' effort to improve intergenerational institutions through its Summit for the Future in 2024 with my more robust proposal for a global constitutional convention focused on future generations (Gardiner 2014, 2019). It argues that the failure of the Summit for the Future was always likely due to its neglect of the problems of intergenerational tyranny and intergenerational moral corruption. To address these problems, the project of the global constitutional convention should be taken much more seriously, as should the critical issue of institutional design.

Keywords: Future generations, Global governance, Intergenerational ethics, Justice and institutions, Sustainability

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Session II

Plural ethical worlds, shared Earth:
comparative and cross-cultural geoethics

Beyond false appearances: performing words through a matrix of relations

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Abstract

What does it mean to stand for geoethics as a global ethics utopia? To what extent does the concept of *Ethics,* as related to an individual choice in face of dilemmas, fully correspond to the German *sittlichkeit* and its relation to a collectively embodied understanding, which seems closer to the Arab *akhlāq* (as both operate within the sciences of the spirit – *geisteswissenschaften* and *'Ilm al-Akhlaq*, respectively)? And how do they all relate to the Russian concept of *Nravstvennost*, a kind of morality guided towards goodness, or the Chinese concept not only of *Lúnlǐ 倫理,* as the study of the principles ruling interpersonal relations, but of *dào-dé 道德,* as the path for virtue?

This brief overview of a single concept and few of its cultural variations evidences that, even if some common interest is shared, in promoting a balanced web of human performances, the angle to approach it varies in each case: individual, collective, formal, mindful, moral or not.

The same could be said concerning other keywords: *geo* should be primarily perceived as a system or a web of meanings? *Crisis* should be understood first as a disruption (as in French), as the exhaustion of an internal contradiction (as in the German idealism tradition), as a deadlock (as in the Arab *Azmah*), as a transition (as in Russian) or as a dangerous turning point (as in the Chinese *Wēijī* 危機)?

In this paper we will discuss how, building from different conceptual traditions and *praxis*, it may be possible to build a geoethics, not necessarily as a global ethics, but as a convergent polyethics.

Keywords: Ethics, Praxis, Translation, Meaning, Polyethics

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Chinese cultural traditions as resources for a green approach to human-Earth relations

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Abstract
Modernity, as it emerged in Europe and then spread across the world, was founded on the conviction that human beings could become masters of both their own lives and the natural world. Nature was seen as an inexhaustible reservoir of resources, capable of underpinning a civilization defined by material abundance and affording all people the leisure necessary for self-realization. This vision formed part of the Enlightenment project of liberating individuals from the constraints of philosophical and religious dogma.
It is evident that humanity's claim to sovereignty over nature has come at a profound cost. Climate change and environmental degradation now threaten human civilization itself.
What is urgently needed, therefore, is a different form of liberation: emancipation from the myth that nature can be exploited without consequence. This calls for a new green approach to human-earth relations. Just as there is an increasing need for a global ethic that transcends national and cultural boundaries, this renewed conception of human–earth relations must likewise be global in scope.
This paper advances two main claims. First, premodern cultural traditions from around the world—both written and oral—offer valuable intellectual and moral resources for articulating a new green approach to human-earth relations. Particular attention will be given to the exceptionally rich contributions of Chinese traditions in this regard. Second, a green approach to human–earth relations, informed by the principles of geoethics, should form a central part of the global ethic required for the twenty-first century.

Keywords: Geoethics, Human–Earth relations, Chinese philosophy, Sustainability ethics, Global ethics

What can traditional Chinese cultural and ethical perspectives contribute to contemporary geoethics?

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Abstract

As the globe's capitalist centre is shifting from the West to East Asia and especially to China, the responsibility for the future well-being of the Earth is likewise increasingly acquiring Chinese characteristics. European and American leaders are often fearful of these trends, in large part due to China's recent history as a Communist dictatorship. But the degraded condition of the natural environment including the continual stresses that are reducing its capacity to recover, has created a global crisis that cannot be addressed without the involvement of China. A compelling example is found in the exploitation of Earth and human labour to extract the minerals needed for the batteries essential for the electrical devices that are now or soon will be powering building, transportation and communication infrastructure. The overwhelming power of modern technology to execute irreversible change all demand a committed, cooperative and widely accepted global program of geoethics. Given the rise of China such a program is likely impossible without their significant participation and indeed leadership. In this presentation I do not intend to discuss China's inevitable role as an actor on the ground in today's irreversibly global economy, where China has a firm grasp on many essential resources, but rather on China as a source of wisdom that can complement the arguments derived from Western philosophical approaches in the quest to articulate a cross-culturally acceptable ground principle for a genuinely global geoethics. Among the many resources that China can bring to this endeavour are its tradition of political philosophy, especially the Confucian and Legalist schools, the doctrine of harmony with the natural order of the universe (Daoism), and to a lesser extent the metaphysics of the imported religion of Buddhism. In China, despite their sometimes-profound disagreement, these divergent traditions tend to be syncretic, elaborating upon the broad concepts of principle and practicality. But there is another factor to take into consideration when contemplating the impact of Chinese tradition upon contemporary deliberations that fall under the mantle of geoethics. It is the kind of economic society that led Adam Smith (1723-1790) to anticipate the eventual rise of China as the preeminent force influencing world commerce. This, according to Smith, is partly the reaction to the brutality of Western conquests of Asia, but also, particularly in the case of China, to its characteristic modes of social organization based, in the 18th century on a persistent invocation of its classical heritage together with a simultaneous appropriation of Western thinkers such as Voltaire (1694-1778). For these reasons, the fundamental principles of geoethics that illuminate the shared and culturally specific approaches to environmental and societal challenges should be conversant with traditional Chinese perspectives.

Keywords: Geoethics, Chinese philosophical traditions, Cross-cultural ethics, Environmental responsibility

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Humans, Earth, and the *Dao* 道: early German studies of the Chinese *Doctrine of the Mean* (*Zhongyong* 中庸) and their lessons for global ethics

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Abstract
Under German colonial rule in Qingdao, China (1898–1914), the Han Chinese population of the greater region suffered annually from the effects of devastating droughts. At one time, in 1913, when the situation became especially desperate, a "rainmaker" was called, and after retreating into a small hut for three days to get "back in *dao* 道", the rain fell. This anecdote was transmitted to Germany, where it reappeared in a number of publications alongside different interpretations of how the story relates to the interrelation between heaven (*tian* 天), earth (*di* 地), and human beings (*ren* 人). Via new translations of many Chinese classics, Chinese interpretations of the human-earth relation were introduced to German intellectual circles after WWI, provoking a rise of new thoughts and ideas during times of crises. The *Doctrine of the Mean* (*Zhongyong* 中庸) was a crucial text among those translations that fundamentally related questions of human ethics to those of the natural environment and the cosmos. This paper aims at investigating and contextualizing the German debates on geo-ethics inspired by Chinese philosophy, particularly in regard to the *Doctrine of the Mean*, during the interwar-period. Understanding crises (*weiji* 危機) as opportunities (*jihui* 機會) for philosophical innovation, this paper wants to provide a historical perspective on geo-ethics and global philosophical exchanges between China and Europe.

Keywords: Human–Earth Relations, Global Community, Richard Wilhelm (1873–1930), *Zhongyong* 中庸, *Dao* 道

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Toward an aesthetic of the Anthropocene: art, Chinese philosophy, and geoethical perspectives in a time of polycrisis

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Abstract

Despite its rejection as an official geological epoch, the term Anthropocene remains a powerful framework for understanding anthropogenic activities on the Earth system and the ethical challenges arising from environmental degradation, waste pollution, resource exploitation, climate change, and armed conflict.

This presentation explores an aesthetic of geoethics through four decades of environmentally engaged artistic practice. Drawing upon selected works from the *GeoEthics, Deep Ecology, Red Alert, Not In My Backyard, and Anthroposcene* series, it examines how contemporary art can function as a form of geoethical inquiry by making visible the connections between human actions, environmental consequences, and environmental justice.

The presentation further considers how Chinese philosophical traditions offer alternative perspectives on human–Earth relationships. Confucian concepts of benevolence (*ren*, 仁) emphasize ethical responsibility and care extending beyond human society to the broader community of life; Daoist notions of harmony between humanity and nature advocate alignment with the dynamic processes of the natural world; and Buddhist teachings on the interconnectedness of all beings and the consequences of human actions. The Chinese teachings challenge anthropocentric assumptions and encourage a deeper awareness of humanity's responsibility in our ecological systems.

By bringing together artistic practice, geoethics, and Chinese philosophical thought, this presentation argues that art can contribute to a more inclusive and culturally grounded global ethics, fostering reflection, empathy, and a renewed sense of conscience toward an ecologically viable future.

Keywords: Applied geoethics, Ethics education, Professional obligations, Beneficence, Common morality

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The *Topos* of *Mu* and the predicative self

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Abstract

From the perspective of Kyoto-School Buddhism, unravelling the skein of socio-environmental relationships constitutive of oneself, only the *topos* of *mu*—the place of nothingness—remains. Oneself is exhausted by one's predicates. There is no substantive subject. This is the inverse of the long tradition of Western philosophy and religion, in which oneself is identified with one's immortal soul. Some early environmental philosophers dreamed it possible for people steeped in the Western worldview to all become Zen Buddhists, Daoists, Yogis as a solution to the environmental crisis. That was a pipe dream. One value of comparative environmental philosophy is exposing the cultural construction of beliefs so deeply rooted that they appear to be just the way things are. If Westerners are to both conceive and experience themselves as constituted by their socio-environmental relationships that transformation must arise through Western conceptual and experiential dynamics. And the sources of those dynamics lie readily at hand. The theory of evolution embeds us in the complex of life forms produced by processes so exuberant that science cannot estimate their number within an order of magnitude. They are all literally our kin. Ecology embeds us in relationships with other life forms (some so intimate that they reside within us) and in geophysical processes, the functioning of which we utterly depend upon. The upshot: When we begin to viscerally and palpably realize that we ourselves cannot flourish unless the social systems and the ecosystems in which we are embedded and of which we are part also flourish.

Keywords: Buddhism, Self, Evolution, Ecology, Relationships

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Does the Buddha or St. Francis of Assisi have the answer?

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Abstract

For more than a century – and especially since Lynn White's seminal 1967 article "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis" – Asian religions have been lauded as an environmental panacea. Namely, religions like Buddhism and Daoism are believed to be the anti-thesis of the Abrahamic traditions since they have a more holistic view of the human-nature divide and thus as a result they offer a corrective to our own destructive nature. Indeed, as White suggested, Buddhism could save us. Yet, as more than two decades of scholarship has made abundantly clear this view of Asian religions is a romantic orientalist fantasy. Asians of all religions have historically been as rapacious as humans everywhere else. Indeed, I would contend that *Laudato si'*, the second encyclical of Pope Francis, has more theological heft regarding the environment than most declarations of contemporary Asian religious leaders. The aim of this talk is thus to explore the tension between rhetoric and action. Since, while the Buddhist discourse on the environment is admittedly a modern reverse engineering of the classical tradition, the fact of the matter is that many Buddhists have nowadays taken these new ideas to heart. Catholics, on the other hand, have generally ignored the call of Pope Francis. As a result, the fact that Buddhists have so radically transformed their tradition towards environmental stewardship deserves to not only be recognized and understood, but as such it also opens an avenue to think about the possibilities and viabilities of a truly global geoethics.

Keywords: Buddhism, Orientalism, Catholicism, Engaged Ethics

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Relationality before rationality: a relationistic paradigm for climate responsibility in African burdened societies

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Abstract

Contemporary global ethics often begins with a rationalistic image of the person: an autonomous agent whose obligations are derived through abstract reasoning and then extended to others and to nature. This paper instead proposes a relationistic paradigm, according to which relationality - not rationality alone - better describes both what a person is and what a person ought to become. Persons are constituted by relations of dependence, reciprocity, vulnerability, and responsibility that link them to communities, institutions, future generations, and the more-than-human world.

The paper applies this paradigm to climate justice in African "burdened societies." Building on the argument that such societies are burdened but not exempt, it recasts Henry Shue's distinction between subsistence and luxury emissions as a distinction between reasonably unavoidable and reasonably avoidable emissions. A relationistic approach shows that climate injustice cannot be understood solely as an unequal distribution of emissions and burdens between states. It also involves damaged or domination-sustaining relations within societies, as when elite carbon-intensive consumption, routine extractive waste, or avoidable fossil lock-in expose poorer citizens and future generations to preventable harm.

The paper's main outcome is a relational account of differentiated climate responsibility. African societies retain strong claims against affluent historical emitters, yet they also bear duties of public justification, internal justice, anti-waste regulation, avoiding unnecessary fossil lock-in, and protecting vulnerable communities. The relationistic paradigm thus contributes to geoethics by grounding human-Earth responsibility in the quality of the relations through which persons, societies, and ecological systems sustain one another.

Keywords: Relationistic paradigm, Relationality, Geoethics, Climate justice, African ethics

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Ubuntu, Deep Ecology, and Degrowth: toward a comparative geoethics between Global North and Global South

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Abstract

A prominent challenge of the polycrisis is that the ethical frameworks most often invoked to address it (e.g., sustainable development, green growth) remain embedded in the Global North's anthropocentric, growth-oriented paradigm, which originally contributed to the crisis. I contend that comparative geoethics — particularly through structured Global North–South dialogue — is well-positioned to generate more adequate frameworks for human–Earth relations. I argue that sub-Saharan African environmental ethics offers philosophically robust resources that are culturally distinct from dominant Western ecological discourses. I aim to open comparative dialogue by drawing on the African philosophical tradition of Ubuntu (as a normative theory and a way of life), the concept of Ukama (relatedness), and the principle of sufficiency (as *enoughness*) to formulate Ubuntu Degrowth as an ecosophy. To do this, I conduct a systematic comparison of Ubuntu-based ethics, the Degrowth movement, and the Deep Ecology Platform. The analysis reveals convergences in which these frameworks affirm the intrinsic value of non-human life, critique the instrumentalization of nature, and call for human behaviour grounded in communal responsibility and sufficiency rather than individualistic accumulation. However, Ubuntu-based ethics overcomes the anthropocentric–ecocentric dichotomy that constrains Deep Ecology and Degrowth by positing relational rationality — the maxim "a person is a Person through others" — as the basis for a moral orientation that is both human-centred and attentive to non-human life. I propose that Ubuntu Degrowth (as a synthesis) offers a genuinely intercultural contribution to the inclusive ethical frameworks needed for Earth system governance in the 21st century.

Keywords: African environmental ethics, Comparative geoethics, Global North–South dialogue, Relational rationality, Ubuntu, Deep Ecology, Degrowth

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Beyond ecocentrism: cross-cultural values, social norms and human–nature connections for collective environmental action

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Abstract

Addressing today's environmental polycrisis requires ethical frameworks that recognise cultural diversity while identifying common pathways for collective action. Comparative geoethics offers an opportunity to move beyond universal assumptions about environmental values by examining how different societies understand, experience, and act upon their relationships with Nature. Drawing on empirical research, we explore how human values, social norms, and human–nature connection shape environmentally protective attitudes and behaviours across diverse cultural contexts.

Our findings challenge the common assumption that ecocentric values are the primary foundation for environmental stewardship. Individuals holding anthropocentric values may also exhibit a strong connection to nature and actively engage in conservation behaviours, albeit through different motivations. As such, individuals with different value systems can converge on positive environmental outcomes. We also show that family values, social norms, and lived experiences of nature influence different dimensions of human–nature connection. In Singapore, biospheric and altruistic family values, together with social norms encouraging time spent in nature, fostered cognitive, emotional, and experiential connections with nature. Complementary studies in Australia and Germany show that immersive, socially connected experiences in nature strengthen both nature connectedness and wellbeing, suggesting that our commitments to nature emerge from both principles and shared social experiences.

Collectively, we show that ethical responsibility toward nature is culturally situated, it can nevertheless lead to shared conservation positive outcomes. We should embrace ethical pluralism by identifying culturally meaningful pathways through which diverse societies cultivate responsibility, care, and stewardship, towards informing the design of strategies capable of mobilising collective, global action.

Keywords: Pro-environmental behaviours, Environmental values, Nature relatedness, Experiences of nature, Extinction of experience

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Global ethics in practice: interreligious dialogue and democracy education through the impact project

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Abstract

This contribution presents practical experiences from the democracy education project ImpACT, developed by Global Ethic Foundation in Germany. The project works with vocational school students from diverse cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds and seeks to strengthen self-efficacy, participation and democratic engagement. Drawing on the idea of a Global Ethic as a shared ethical foundation across religions and cultures, the presentation explores how interreligious and intercultural dialogue can be translated into educational practice. Instead of focusing primarily on political knowledge, ImpACT creates opportunities for students to engage in dialogue, collaborate across differences and develop their own civic engagement projects. The contribution reflects on the question of how value-oriented and dialogue based educational approaches may support social cohesion in times of polarization and multiple crises.

Particular attention is given to the role of recognition, participation and shared responsibility in culturally diverse school settings. The presentation also discusses the challenges of evaluating the impact of democracy education projects, especially when long-term effects on civic participation and democratic culture are difficult to measure directly. By connecting the educational work of Stiftung Weltethos with the practical example of ImpACT, the contribution aims to offer a practice-based perspective on the relationship between global ethics, interreligious dialogue and democratic participation.

Keywords: Global ethics, Democracy education, Interreligious dialogue, Intercultural dialogue, Participation

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Session III

From ethical reflection to responsible action: knowledge, decisions and professional practices

Contributions from the philosophy of science to geoethics

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Abstract

Geoethics has emerged over the past two decades as a multidisciplinary field concerned with the values that should guide human interactions with the Earth system, with particular attention to the geosciences and geoscientists. Although its practitioners have consistently promoted interdisciplinary collaboration, especially with the humanities and social sciences, engagement from philosophers of science has remained surprisingly limited. In the spirit of fostering such collaboration, this paper examines three ways in which philosophy of science can contribute to geoethics. Drawing particularly on the philosophy of science in practice and the political philosophy of science, I argue that: (i) conceptual distinctions concerning different levels of normative reflection help clarify the scope of geoethics; (ii) geoethics largely exemplifies Elliott's (2022) norm-based approach to the responsible management of values in science, although with room for improvements; and (iii) ethical reflection in geoethics should be complemented by a political account of how its values are legitimized, particularly from deliberative and agonistic perspectives.

Keywords: Geoethics, Philosophy of science, Philosophy of science in practice, Political philosophy of science, Values in science

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From principles and values to decisions: Relational Geoscientific Pragmatism as the operational methodology of geoethics

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Abstract

Artificial intelligence, deep-sea mining, and geoengineering are defining twenty-first-century challenges. Although distinct, each requires decisions with environmental, technological, social, and political consequences across spatial and temporal scales. They expose a limitation of existing ethical frameworks: principles clarify what ought to be valued but offer limited guidance when scientific uncertainty, conflicting interests, and irreversible consequences converge.

This presentation argues that geoethics has reached a new theoretical stage. Beyond articulating principles and values, it needs an operational methodology that translates ethical commitments into responsible decisions. Relational Geoscientific Pragmatism (RGP) is proposed as this methodology.

RGP recognizes geoscientific knowledge as the indispensable epistemological foundation for decisions concerning the Earth system. Local, Indigenous, and traditional knowledge provide invaluable insights into environments, cultures, and long-term human–nature relationships, enriching ethical reflection and contextual understanding. However, planetary processes—including climate dynamics, biogeochemical cycles, resource systems, and Earth-system feedbacks—cannot be understood through local experience alone. They require an integrative, predictive, evidence-based geoscientific perspective in dialogue with other knowledge systems. On this foundation, RGP combines scientific evidence, interdisciplinary collaboration, stakeholder participation, and context-sensitive ethical reasoning. Rather than prescribing universal solutions, it provides a structured method for analysing complex socio-environmental dilemmas, comparing alternative scenarios, and supporting decisions. Its application to artificial intelligence, deep-sea mining, and geoengineering shows how scientific understanding can be integrated with normative reflection and public deliberation. RGP thus positions geoethics as both a framework of principles and a methodology for responsible decision-making, linking geoscientific knowledge, ethical reasoning, and democratic governance within a global ethics for the Anthropocene.

Keywords: Geoethics, Relational Geoscientific Pragmatism, Artificial Intelligence, Deep-sea mining, Geoengineering

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Developing a brief geoethics primer for geoscience professionals and students

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Abstract

My current project in geoethics is to develop a brief, widely used geoethics primer, freely available online, to help fill an ethics education gap for geoscience professionals and students. This is a progress report, and I welcome constructive feedback.

The current version of the applied-geoethics primer includes Gert's "common morality," scientific integrity, a review of the ethics codes of relevant geoscience professional societies and state licensure boards, a description of three paramount obligations of a geoscientist, legal concepts such as conflict of interest, incompetence, negligence, and standards of practice and care, and a glossary of ethics terms.

Some professional geoscientists seem to be motivated primarily by private interest, rejecting the notion that they might be obligated to do (or not do) anything beyond their limited geological duties for the sake of "society," "the community," or "the future." Within this worldview, beneficence is excluded as a professional obligation unless required by contract or statute, and is instead treated as an optional, superfluous, or even discouraged set of personal virtues. This worldview contrasts sharply with that of geoscientists for whom beneficence is a strong motivator, aligning with their benevolent character. Presuming that neither population engages in immoral or unethical professional practice, the challenge for me has been to create a geoethics primer that remains accessible and useful to both groups.

Can geoscience as a profession make positive, long-term contributions to global mineral-resource, energy, and climate-change issues without an ethical imperative to act now in beneficent ways whose benefits will outlast us?

Keywords: Applied geoethics, Ethics education, Professional obligations, Beneficence, Common morality

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On a cross-cultural framework to implement ethics-aware AI in the geosciences: insights from Earth observation

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Abstract

We present a cross-cultural framework for developing ethics-aware machine intelligence that integrates dominant Western and Eastern approaches to moral reasoning: the Intention–Knowledge–Action (IKA) Framework. The IKA Framework advances current discussions on trustworthy Artificial Intelligence (AI) by embedding self-reflective and relational dimensions of ethical awareness within the practical context of AI for Earth Observation research. Drawing from key provisions of the European Union's AI Act, universal human rights, and principles of ethics, the IKA Framework provides a structured yet adaptable method for identifying ethical risks and opportunities in early stages of AI research. IKA also facilitates interdisciplinary and multi-stakeholder collaboration, ranging from technologists to policymakers to ethicists. We demonstrate IKA's utility through four AI for Earth Observation (EO) case studies, namely: archaeology, naturalness mapping, slum identification, and infrastructure damage assessment in conflict zones. Each use case illustrates a scenario where AI potentially replaces human oversight or impacts policy decisions. Through its emphasis on self-reflection, collaboration, and cross-cultural integration, the IKA Framework offers a route towards a globally informed and context-sensitive practice of responsible research and governance in the field of AI for Geosciences

Keywords: Ethics, Earth observation, Artificial intelligence, EU Artificial Intelligence Act, Human rights

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2026: an Anthropocene Odyssey

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Abstract

Some suggest that recent technological innovations such as artificial intelligence can solve the environmental crisis that characterises the Anthropocene. While Large Language Models can quickly synthesize massive amounts of information, they are trained on datasets that are not unbiased, so the answers/ solutions they provide must include ethical considerations to address issues such as social justice and environmental sustainability. Grass roots movements are drawing attention to water, energy and critical mineral demands of AI data centres and the 'green economy' on societies (e.g., Data Centers, Pollution, and the Communities Left Behind - Sustainability Dialogue: https://sustainabilitydialogue.uchicago.edu/news/data-centers-pollution-and-the-communities-left-behind/, accessed 29 July 2026) but too few are heeding the lessons learned from Kubrick's eerily prescient film of nearly 60 years ago, seemingly willing to rely on artificial intelligence to guide our planet back to a habitable world – or to help us terraform another. More than ever, we must look to the social sciences and humanities to communicate the essence of scientific discoveries about the unprecedented rate of environmental change through the span of hominid existence. The Earth System has probably reached a critical tipping point, but the slope of that curve can still be prevented from steepening if collective human action is taken to curb our population and per capita resource demands. Ongoing discussion/ debate about the rejection of the Anthropocene Working Group's proposal to add an epoch to the time scale recognising *Anthropos* as the major driver of Earth System change may focus attention on this critical issue (Zalasiewicz et al. 2024; McCarthy et al. 2025).

Keywords: AI, LLMs, Anthropocene epoch, Habitability, Tipping point

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Redefining sustainability as responsibility: a comparative geoethics of gender and leadership in the energy transition

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Abstract

A geoethical reframing of sustainability, as a relationship of responsibility toward the Earth and future generations, motivated a global assessment of senior sustainability roles in the energy sector. The assessment documented a stable, unexpected pattern: women hold more than sixty percent of Chief Sustainability Officer and equivalent C-suite positions, while representing less than one-third of the sector's global STEM workforce.

This parity coexists with persistent underrepresentation of women in technical and vocational energy roles, tracing to shared career pathways, cross-sector mobility, lateral transitions, and sustained external engagement—geoethical competencies reflecting societal awareness, responsibility toward the Earth systems, and environmental-threshold integration into institutional decisions, aligned with the stakeholder model of recent geoethics publications.

This article offers a two-fold contribution. First, presenting early and deep-dive insights into the unusual parity of women in sustainability leadership, offering thirteen leaders case studies across twelve countries and sectors (government, academia, technology, renewables, and oil and gas), identifying collaboration, systems thinking, and the translation of Earth-system knowledge into strategy as recurring qualities of the career pathways that elevated women into their leading roles.

Second, examining how these insights intersect international governance efforts to strengthen gender equity in resource management, including the new UNECE guidelines integrating gender equity and human rights into UNFC and UNRMS frameworks. Comparative cases across regions confirm this gender-parity pattern in leadership roles as a geoethical phenomenon: evidence that responsibility toward the Earth is already enacted by those historically excluded from technical power, and a model the wider energy transition urgently needs.

Keywords: Women, Geoethics, Gender equity, Sustainability Leadership, C-suite, Energy, Comparative ethics, Resource governance.

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Uncertain grounds: geoethical dimensions of mineral exploration in the Austrian Alps

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Abstract

Amid overlapping ecological, economic, and political crises, mineral exploration for raw materials in Europe is expanding, raising pressing geoethical questions. This presentation examines exploration projects in the Austrian Alps as sites where responsibilities, values and socio-ecological futures are negotiated through assessment frameworks and decision-making practices.

Exploration is a critical phase marked by uncertainty and risk. Rather than treating it as a purely technical activity, the study draws on political geology, geographical political economy and geoethics to understand exploration as a process of reserve-making and a decision-making space in which diverse conditions and interests (such as economic expectations, regulatory frameworks, metal prices, political strategies, investment flows and social acceptance) converge to shape what counts as an exploitable deposit. Particular attention is given to geologists as key actors in these processes. As the first professionals involved in producing and translating knowledge about subsurface formations, they do not simply describe the underground; they actively participate in defining what is considered a resource and a potential reserve. In their everyday practices of observation, measurement, modelling and reporting, geologists mediate between the Earth system, exploration companies, investors, state agencies, and local communities. The ways they frame uncertainties, communicate findings and respond to contestation are guided by values and principles. Through the knowledge they generate and the interactions they maintain with different actors across scales, they shape how potential mineral futures are imagined, evaluated, and pursued.

Based on ethnographic fieldwork, document analysis and expert interviews, the study shows how mineral exploration serves as a key site in the making of extractive futures and argues for integrating geoethical reflection into exploration assessment and decision-making.

Keywords: Raw materials, Mineral exploration, Geoethics, Decision making, Reserve making

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The intersection of geoethics and geoheritage

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Abstract

Geoethics encompasses personal and collective responsibilities to the geoscience profession, the civic community, and for stewardship of the planet. Geoheritage seeks to identify and preserve iconic geologic features with significant scientific, educational, cultural, economic, functional, recreational, aesthetic and/or intrinsic value. These two traditions intersect as geoheritage sites provide a framework to grow the geosciences as a profession and to explore the interactions of humanity and the Earth system. Geoscience education is essential to train next-generation geoscientists, and immersive learning in field settings has traditionally been a central component of geoscience education for recruitment and training. Geoheritage sites provide natural laboratories for geoscience learners at all levels to master the standards of practice needed to explore Earth history, processes, and environments. Geoscientists have a responsibility to the civic community to responsibly translate and interpret this understanding of the Earth system, and this can be facilitated at geoheritage sites through programs with local schools, citizen scientist programs, collaborations with NGOs, and civic administrations responsible for public policy, health and safety. This is particularly important with respect to geohazards and resources and provides linkages to cultural heritage as our lifestyles are closely related to landscape, climate and access to resources. Based on their special knowledge of Earth processes, geoscientists have a special responsibility to promote good stewardship of Earth, and many geoheritage sites are integral to issues such as biodiversity and ecosystem services. All geoscientists are encouraged to participate in geoheritage for the health of the profession, society, and the planet.

Keywords: Geoethics, Geoheritage, Responsibility, Education, Stewardship

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Protection of cultural heritage from earthquakes and other geohazards

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Abstract

Earthquakes are among the most disastrous natural phenomena. They destroy buildings and infrastructures and hit massively human communities. At the same time, the earthquakes cause damage or even destruction to a variety of cultural entities, including archaeological sites, monumental buildings, churches, mosques, museums, libraries, statues and many other cultural goods. Similar impact to cultural heritage is caused by other types of geohazards. This issue is of particular importance for the Mediterranean region, which is characterized by the presence of several civilizations that left a unique wealth of cultural heritage across the region from pre-historical times until today. Therefore, there is need to systematically organize countermeasures against earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis and other geohazards. An important step is the compilation of data relevant to the impact of past geohazards on various cultural entities because knowledge of the past helps in organizing countermeasures for the future. Recently we organized the Greek Earthquake Impact Database (GEIDB) focusing on the impact caused by 253 earthquake events in Greece from 1800 to 2020 (Triantafyllou and Papadopoulos, 2026). GEIDB provides data on attributes such as buildings destroyed or damaged, human deaths and injuries caused by each one of the 253 earthquakes. One of the next steps is the extension of GEIDB to other attributes including the earthquake impact on cultural goods from the Greek antiquity up to modern times.

Keywords: Earthquakes, Damage, Protection, Cultural heritage, Databases

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Calamity and hope: reflections on emergency care and disaster governance in Taiwan

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Abstract

Drawing on professional experience in emergency medicine and disaster management, this contribution reflects on geoethics from the perspective of Taiwan and considers its broader relevance to contemporary global challenges. Like other modern societies, Taiwan increasingly recognizes responsibilities arising from climate change and the pursuit of sustainability, while facing additional pressures associated with geopolitical tensions, economic uncertainty, and other interconnected crises. Experience in emergency and disaster management highlights persistent gaps between public policies, long-term sustainability objectives, and the immediate needs of communities. Short-term livelihood priorities do not always align with long-term environmental and societal goals, creating difficult choices for decision-makers, professionals, and citizens. These tensions raise important geoethical questions concerning responsibility, preparedness, risk reduction, social justice, and the equitable distribution of costs and benefits associated with policies intended to strengthen societal resilience. Lessons from both failures and successes in Taiwan over recent decades demonstrate the urgency of translating ethical principles and scientific knowledge into effective action. Losses of human lives, land, property, and livelihoods underline the need for approaches that balance development, safety, sustainability, justice, and fairness.

The contribution argues that maintaining hope and a constructive vision for the future is essential to building resilient societies. Comparative perspectives, international dialogue, and global sharing of experiences provide valuable opportunities for critical reflection and mutual learning. By connecting practical experience in emergency medicine and disaster management with geoethical thinking, this contribution aims to stimulate discussion on how societies can navigate competing needs and responsibilities while working toward safer, fairer, sustainable, and resilient futures.

Keywords: Emergency management, Disaster preparedness, Climate change, Social justice, Taiwan

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Religion, geosciences and techno-culture: the case of Silene Association (Catalonia, Spain)

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Abstract
Contemporary society faces increasing environmental degradation that has repercussions for social justice. Our relationship with the planet we inhabit is grounded in cultural values, religious beliefs, and scientific evidence—factors that, in turn, shape socioeconomic policies. Moreover, all religions possess worldviews that promote respect for life and the conservation of nature.
Consequently, the current prevailing technological and extractivist development model can be challenged from various perspectives rooted in geoethical thinking, an approach capable of fostering dialogue among religion, the geosciences, and techno-culture.
Silene[2] is a non-profit association based in Catalonia dedicated to studying, disseminating, and promoting the spiritual and intangible cultural heritage of nature and its inherent values. Its work focuses on conservation—particularly within protected natural areas—and associated governance. Although registered in Catalonia, Silene operates internationally and has participated in projects at the European level and in collaboration with the IUCN. Through its work, Silene helps strengthen the fruitful dialogue between religion, culture and nature. Silene operates through the efforts of volunteers specialized in geosciences, ecology, sociological, cultural, and anthropological-philosophical fields. Its funding relies on consultancy services provided by its permanent working group and on member donations. This article presents the specific characteristics of the association as a case study.

Keywords: Geoethics, Social geosciences, Religion culture

[2] https://www.silene.ong/ (accessed 8 September 2026).