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New Earth Philosophy: Being-Together in A Post-Apocalyptic Era

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Sources: 1st layer: Geocentric model (Wikipedia), Blue Marble (NASA), First Earth Day (Wikipedia), Biosphere (Britannica), Gaia (Google); Second layer: Vladamir Verdansky, Rachel Carsen, James Lovelock, Vandana Shiva, Greta Grunberg (Google)

‘The biosphere is the sum of all planet Earth’s ecosystems.’ (ipbes)

ABSTRACT. This paper provides an introduction to New Earth Philosophy grounded in current scientific and philosophical understanding that seeks practical solutions to real world problems. The paper first introduces the concept ‘after the apocalypse’ linking it to the theme of ‘Being-together’ and the birth of planetary consciousness. Second, it develops the concept in relation to the philosophical characteristics of New Earth literature and, third, it uses it as a warrant for New Earth Ecopedagogies.

Keywords: New Earth Philosophy; post-apocalyptic survival; societal renewal; ecopedagogies

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1. Introducing New Earth Philosophy¹

In this paper I make the case for what I call ‘New Earth Philosophy’, a concept that emphasizes the positive societal renewal that is often mentioned in relation to new beginnings associated with the time after apocalypse, after the judgement, described in the Bible as ‘a new heaven and a new earth’ and by the Islamic belief in renewal of the world after judgement day. Other religions and cultures have similar notion of renewal at the end of a long calendar cycle. Here I am interested in scientific and philosophical interpretations of post-apocalyptic scenarios most often associated with an imminent societal collapse and rebirth in the context of ecological disasters.

‘New Earth Philosophy’ in the context of ecological and societal discourse is a philosophical and theoretical framework must be seen as entirely different from the speculative ‘New Earth Theory’ based on mythology and religious readings of the prophetic nature of certain Biblical passages. New Earth Philosophy is generally grounded in current scientific understanding and seeks practical solutions to real-world problems, differing significantly from the speculative and alternative history-focused New Earth Theory that is a religious strand of thinking that proposes an alternative chronology based on Biblical sources that frequently advances the notion of lost civilizations (like Atlantis), and posits major cataclysmic events such as floods at the end of the world, often interpreting mythology as history, and providing an alternative archaeology and sometimes speculates that extraterrestrial have visited the Earth.

‘New Earth’ is an expression used in the *Isaiah* (65:17 ; 66:22), *Peter* (3:13), and *Revelation* (21:1) in the Bible to describe the final state of redeemed humanity and as such it constitutes one of central doctrines of Christian eschatology referred to as the ‘world to come’ where all things will be made new and death will be replaced with life in a recreation of the garden of Eden as our forever home – a final destination after Jesus’s second coming and final judgement. This literalist Biblical interpretation is often the source for creationism but there are other derivatives such as Eckhart Tolle’s (2009) *A New Earth* that draws on the biblical interpretation and Eastern spirituality where a ‘new heaven’ is an awakened human consciousness, and a ‘new earth’ is the physical embodiment of a broad spiritual framework that understands consciousness and ego as inextricably linked to life on this planet. Tolle’s vision, a book that sold millions with the support of Oprah Winfrey, is fundamentally a spiritual reawakening and transformation to find inner peace in the present moment.

By contrast, New Earth Philosophy focuses on a holistic and integrated understanding of ecology, society, and spirituality, emphasizing the interconnectedness of all life and the need for sustainable living practices. New Earth Philosophy recognizes the *complexity* of ecological and social systems and emphasizes the interconnectedness of various components of the Earth’s eco-

systems and human societies, understanding that changes in one part can have far-reaching impacts in other parts of the system. New Earth Philosophy places a priority on restorative practices and advocates for sustainable living and regenerative practices that contribute to rejuvenation of the environment including the promotion of renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and other practices that aim to minimize human impact on the Earth.

New Earth Philosophy offers a comprehensive critical view of modern industrial civilization, particularly its consumerism, and how consumer practices contribute to environmental degradation and social inequality, indicating how *system-change* must take place. It also looks to the replacement of industrial society with principles of an ecological civilization. It acknowledges the potential for ecological and societal collapse due to unsustainable practices, climate change, and resource depletion. It encourages proactive measures to prevent or mitigate these risks. New Earth Philosophy seeks to bridge the gap between science and spirituality, viewing them as complementary rather than contradictory. It promotes a worldview that respects and learns from both scientific knowledge and spiritual wisdom. Thus, although it may take inspiration from New Earth readings in the Bible as *one* source, it does not provide a literal interpretation or base itself in scripture and it considers similar sources of inspiration to be found in indigenous knowledge systems that have been operated for thousands of years.

By contrast with its religious rival, New Earth Philosophy emphasizes the importance of community, both at local and global levels, and the sense of connectedness to each other and the natural world. It fosters cooperative and collaborative approaches to addressing global challenges. In terms of adaptation and resilience it focuses on building resilience in the face of environmental and social challenges that involves adapting our lifestyles, economies, and governance structures to be more flexible and responsive to change, and it holds open the possibility of transformational change, that springs from deep, systemic change in how humans interact with the environment and each other. This transformative change is part of the birth of planetary consciousness that encompasses shifts in values, beliefs, and lifestyles towards more harmonious and sustainable ways of living. New Earth Philosophy incorporates or is inspired by indigenous wisdom and practices, recognizing their sustainable living methods and deep connection to the land and balances global concerns with local actions, understanding that global sustainability starts with individual and community-level changes. New Earth Philosophy adopts 'Being-together' as a philosophical imperative. It is seen as a natural extension of interconnection of life that is fundamental to ecological philosophy with an accent on the community, biological and social.

2. 'Being-together' as Philosophical Imperative

In a recent keynote entitled “Refuge and Resilience: Being-together in a post-apocalyptic era: The Apocalyptic Problematic in Western Philosophy” given at the Philosophy of Education 2023 Annual Conference and forthcoming in *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, I addressed the conference theme of ‘Being-together’ in respect of a place and my response to the invitation was to experiment with the possibilities of a pre-conference text that provided different variations on the theme. My intention was to link the keynote to a couple of papers published in *PESA Agora* that laid out some groundwork and connections to be explored further in the talk. This is to create a triptych as a set of three texts intended to be appreciated together: a conference pre-text, a keynote PowerPoint slide set, and a journal article. Too often complex themes are so condensed it is difficult grasp the whole. In ‘Being-Together Here Now at the End of the World’ (Peters, 2023a) I introduced the concept of ‘being-together’ to explore the idea that humans are inherently social beings, with their survival historically dependent on social interactions that foster interconnectedness, interdependence and a sense of community. The paper was written in a series of epigrammatic and aphoristic statements to raise a network of related views and arguments delving into the various dimensions of ‘being-together’ and its implications for our understanding of self, ethics, knowledge and its educative role in addressing the challenges posed by global crises in a world dominated by the system rivalry between US and China.

In the pre-conference essay, I experimented with the attempt to elucidate the notion of ‘Being-together’ as an existential thread weaving through the fabric of human experience, underscoring the shared memories, experiences, and social interplays that define our self-perception and understanding of the world. I argued it is a foundational element of communication and knowledge, fostering ethical and ecological perspectives that respect diversity and inclusivity as a moral base for social and environmental justice. This notion of collective existence intersects with the dual themes of shared approaches to knowledge and looming global crises – such as pandemics and climate change – that are represented in various apocalyptic and cultural narratives. These crises, amplified by geopolitical shifts, find a unifying response in ‘being-together,’ which champions shared emotional and psychological ties.

The Western perspective presents a dichotomy between individualism, with its focus on personal autonomy, and collectivism, which emphasizes community and shared welfare. While Western thought has historically leaned towards individualism, sometimes leading to social fragmentation and inequitable resource distribution, I wanted to acknowledge that there also exists a Western collectivist tradition. This tradition, seen in socialism and communitarianism, emerged as a critique of and response to social injustices, advocating for shared ownership and societal accountability.

In my reading the scars of colonialism have disrupted ‘being-together’ as tribal and community ontologies by imposing imperialist economical values on colonized lands that fractured indigenous social practices especially those tying social identity to the land of ancestors. Yet, many cultures have resisted and revived their traditions, emphasizing the role of cultural identity in shaping communal bonds. Cultural approaches to ‘being-together’ are diverse. Collectivist societies, including Indigenous, Mediterranean, and African communities, prioritize group harmony and social responsibilities, shaping their social norms and values. In collectivist cultures like China, the group’s needs, encapsulated by the concept of ‘guanxi,’ often surpass individual desires, although individual attitudes within these societies can vary. The Māori culture of Aotearoa New Zealand presents a unique perspective on ‘being-together,’ valuing kinship, communal experiences, and mutual support, with social gatherings and ceremonies strengthening community bonds.

Recognizing and appreciating these cultural variations are crucial for fostering cross-cultural understanding. However, it is also essential to balance cultural diversity with universal ethical principles, such as justice and environmental stewardship, which transcend cultural boundaries.

Education is pivotal in promoting this understanding, encouraging empathy, and exploring shared human values. ‘Being-together’ is presented as a neutral ontological category, inclusive of various human experiences, from extreme nationalism to nomadic tribes. It does not dictate specific content but emphasizes the concept of communal unity. The term ‘political ontologies’ describes collective organization for security and governance, highlighting ‘being-together’ as a political concept. This is particularly pertinent in the Asia-Pacific context, where identity, territory, and security are central to our location as Aotearoa in the South Pacific.

As humanity faces critical global challenges, the imperative of ‘being-together’ becomes more apparent, necessitating collective responses that transcend cultural and ideological divides. It is a philosophical mandate that underscores our interdependence and the need to cultivate relationships with others and the environment. In the philosophical realm, the concept of ‘being-together’ calls for dialogue across cultural traditions, enriching our understanding of togetherness. *Peer philosophy* exemplifies this approach within the academy, advocating for knowledge democratization and recognizing the power of diversity and inclusivity in knowledge creation. It fosters a form of knowledge socialism and innovation by enabling collaborative and peer-to-peer engagement (Peters et al, 2020).

Finally, I argued ‘being-together’ encapsulates our ecological relationship with the planet, urging us to act as stewards of the Earth. It revisits the concept of the ‘commons’ and the need for collective management of shared resources. As our understanding evolves, from the early flat-Earth model to the Copernican heliocentric model, so does our grasp of ‘being-together,’

which now includes the interconnectedness of life, the multidisciplinary significance of ecology, and the integration of biodigital advancements. This philosophy of education calls for justice, unity, and cooperation in a world rife with crises. As a philosophical imperative, ‘being-together’ is a guiding principle for a more equitable and sustainable existence. It represents the resilience and adaptability of humanity, offering hope and inspiring collective action for the betterment of future generations and the planet, ‘after the apocalypse’ that can be regarded as a narrative device ‘without kingdom’ that forecasts a vision or new cycle of renewal and rebirth.

3. Apocalyptic Narratives and the Western Concept of History

In the second essay ‘Being-Together Here Now at the End of the World: A Philosophical Imperative’ (Peters, 2023b) I argued that apocalyptic narratives structure a Western concept of history and historicity as strictly linear when tied to a conclusive end of human history and imminent catastrophe. Even modern astrophysics predicts as a possible asteroid impact with the Earth or the end of the sun five billion years hence. As I remarked there is no universal history, but there is a history of the planet and an acceptance that apocalyptic thinking may also signal a new age or possible rebirth – resilience, restoration, rehabilitation — of the planet. Post-apocalyptic survival requires a new awareness of community and the new philosophy of interconnectivity points to the critical eco-regionalism that protects fresh water, the integrity of the food web, the fight against biodiversity loss, and the democratisation of sustainability goals and practices that harness the marriage between modern ecological science, Indigenous knowledge systems and eschatological narratives.

In an era marked by unprecedented challenges and uncertainties, the relevance of ‘being-together’ couldn’t be more poignant. It stands as a testament to the resilience and adaptability of the human spirit, a gentle yet powerful reminder of our capacity to evolve, learn, and grow together. ‘Being-together’ embodies the hope that we can transcend our limitations and work in unison to forge a future that’s not only better for us but for the generations to come and for the very planet we call home. ‘Being-together’ is not merely about physical proximity or a superficial connection. It is about recognizing the deep interdependence that characterizes our existence. It’s about understanding that our actions reverberate through the lives of others, just as theirs echo through ours. It’s about seeing that our fates are intertwined with the web of life that envelops this planet. In this interconnected dance, every step matters. Every gesture, every word, every act of kindness is a thread that strengthens the weave of our collective being. ‘Being-together’ is not just a state of coexistence but a dynamic process of creating, nurturing, and sustaining relationships that honor the dignity of each individual while celebrating the collective whole.

It is a lived reality, a practice to be embodied in our daily lives. It calls for an openness to learn from each other, to listen deeply, and to engage with empathy, compassion and humility. It is about building bridges, not just between cultures and countries, but between hearts and minds.

In the quiet moments of reflection, we may find that ‘being-together’ is the philosophical North Star that guides us. It is the principle that can lead us through the darkness of division and the challenges we face as a global community. It invites us to a collective awakening, to recognize that our shared journey on this planet is precious and that our time here is an opportunity to celebrate the beauty of our diversity and the strength of our unity. On the threshold of a new dawn, the imperative of ‘being-together’ can be the compass that guides our actions, the lens through which we view the world, and the light that illuminates our path. In doing so, we may discover that ‘being-together’ is not just the key to surviving the trials of our times but to thriving as a collective human family, nestled in the embrace of a conscious and caring universe.

A Romantic vision in an apocalyptic time when the list of ongoing armed conflicts and associated death tolls continues to increase with Israel–Hammas, Russia–Ukraine major wars, wars in Myanmar, Sudan, insurgencies in Sahel, Maghreb and Niger. We can understand that peace is a fundamental element of New Earth Philosophy, including peace philosophy, peace studies and peace education as ‘tasks for the new humanities’ (Derrida, 2005; Peters & Trifonas, 2005).

4. After the Apocalypse: The Concept of New Earth

The term of ‘New Earth’, as indicated above, finds its deepest roots in the biblical prophecies of the Old and New Testaments, specifically in the visions of ‘a new heaven and a new earth’ as described in *Revelation* 21:1 and *Isaiah* 65:17. These ancient texts foretell the collapse of the existing world order and the emergence of a rejuvenated creation, offering a framework that resonates profoundly with contemporary imaginings of a world reborn from catastrophe. In Judeo-Christian eschatology, particularly within Christian theology, the concept of a ‘New Earth’ arises from interpretations of *Revelation* and other scriptural texts. The ‘New Earth’ is part of the broader eschatological belief in a new, divinely renewed creation that follows the final judgment and the end of the current world order. Theologically, the concept of a ‘New Earth’ represents the ultimate redemption and restoration of the created world, which is believed to be marred by sin and its consequences. As suggested earlier it signifies a return to a state that mirrors the perfection of the Garden of Eden before the fall of humanity.

Christian scriptures suggest that God will dwell with humanity on the New Earth, indicating an intimate and unmediated relationship between God and

people. This presence is seen as the fulfillment of divine promises and a restoration of the relationship that existed before the fall. The 'New Earth' is often associated with the concept of eternal life, where death and suffering are abolished, and life is lived in its fullness in the presence of God. The establishment of a 'New Earth' is also seen as the establishment of a new moral order, where righteousness and justice prevail. This reflects the hope for a world where moral and ethical dilemmas are resolved in alignment with divine will. There is a theological tension between the continuity of the current earth and the transformative aspect of the 'New Earth.' Some traditions emphasize that the current Earth will be purified and transformed, while others suggest a completely new creation.

The hope of a 'New Earth' provides motivation for believers to live in a way that reflects the values of this future kingdom. This includes ethical living, care for creation, and working toward justice and peace. In the context of the New Earth, the resurrection is not only of souls but of bodies, indicating a physical as well as a spiritual renewal. The 'New Earth' is not limited to humanity but includes the whole cosmos, reflecting a vision of cosmic redemption and the belief that all of creation is groaning for redemption (as expressed in the New Testament's *Letter to the Romans*). These theological implications are foundational to many Christian denominations and influence their liturgy, doctrine, and practices. The belief in a 'New Earth' provides a hopeful eschatological vision that guides believers' lives and actions in the present world.

In the wake of an imminent apocalypse, the concept of a 'New Earth' emerges not just as a possibility but as a necessity for the survival and evolution of humanity. At the core of New Earth Philosophy lies the recognition of past failures and the embrace of a renewed moral compass. The apocalypse, be it environmental, nuclear, or pandemic, serves as a stark reminder of the frailty of human civilization and the imperative for change. The philosophical shift of New Earth advocates for a holistic approach to living, one that respects the balance of nature and acknowledges our interconnectedness with the Earth. The reconstruction of society in the New Earth paradigm is guided by principles of equality, sustainability, and community. Post-apocalypse, the remnants of humanity are compelled to rebuild not just physical structures, but also the social fabric that involves rethinking governance, economy, and culture. The model of decentralized, community-focused governance model could replace hierarchical systems, prioritizing local needs and direct democracy. Economically, a shift towards sustainability and circular economies becomes crucial, moving away from the unsustainable practices that may have contributed to the ecological collapse.

5. New Earth Philosophy: Exploring the Scientific and Philosophical Basis

New Earth Philosophy emerges as a concept that captures a diverse set of interpretations and research areas, from sources in geophysical studies, environmental politics, philosophy, and the integration of ecological thought into contemporary discourse. The patchwork begins with the foundational geophysical studies of Earth's composition and evolution as presented in D. L. Anderson's (2007) *New Theory of the Earth*, that updates and expands upon his earlier work to incorporate cutting-edge topics such as tomography and plate tectonics. Anderson provides a description of the origin and structure of the Earth, in terms of the condensation of the nebula existing in a system of solar composition. He indicates how 'The planets originated in a slowly rotating disk-shaped "solar nebula" of gas and dust with solar composition' (p. 6). He details how the formation of the mass of Earth took place in the first tens of millions of years, some 4.55 billion years ago with a freezing of the magma core and surface leading to the evolution of the planet.

The scientific basis provided by Anderson dovetails into the realm of global environmental politics, especially within the Anthropocene, where scholars like Simon Nicholson and Sikina Jinnah (2016) contribute essays exploring the intersection of ecology and politics, underscoring the pressing challenges and the role of scholarship in shaping policy in *New Earth Politics* that maintains hope in global environmental governance in an age of environmental decline (Silburt, 2016). With chapter themes such as 'The Emergence of Planetary Civilization', 'The Co-Production of Knowledge about International Governance', 'Towards Sharing Our Ecospace', and 'Politics for a New Earth: Governing in the Anthropocene', this collection considers the role of global environmental politics in the face of increasing environmental stress and the attempt to invent a new planet Earth 3.0 that goes beyond the Anthropocene. Complementing this perspective, *The New Earth Reader* (Rothenberg & Ulvaeus, 2000) offers a path-breaking cultural and ecological reflection through essays and interviews that ponder our relationship with the natural world taken from the journal *Terra Nova* (Gros, 2000). David Rothenberg in the inaugural issue writes 'Everything that connects humanity to the world that surrounds us brings the mind closer to nature, and he and his collages seek to heal the split between culture and nature.'

Technological advancements pertinent to the New Earth concept are also significant, with research like the NEW EARTH Laboratory's developments in high-contrast imaging illuminating the path forward for Earth imaging technologies (Lardière et al., 2020) and the new NOAA-21 imaging satellite with its first full Earth view.² Meanwhile, the MIROC-ES2L Earth system model represents a methodological advance in evaluating biogeochemical processes and feedbacks, essential for understanding climate-biogeochemical interactions (Hajima et al., 2020).

The philosophical domain known as New Earth Philosophy represents a convergence of ecological thought and philosophical inquiry, particularly within the realms of ecological philosophy and Earth jurisprudence. This burgeoning field scrutinizes the relationship between human thought, societal structures, and our planetary ecosystem, aspiring to reconcile human activities with the intricate dynamics of the Earth.

The intellectual underpinnings of this philosophy can be traced back to the seminal work of Arne Naess (1973, 1987, 1989), who, in the 1970s, laid the groundwork for what would become known as deep ecology. His profound reflection on environmental issues led him to articulate a philosophy that espoused an intrinsic relationship between human well-being and the health of our planet, encapsulated in his concept of 'Ecosophy T.' This personal philosophy championed a form of self-realization that was inextricably linked to environmental harmony, advocating for a life lived in ecological balance. Following in Naess' footsteps, there have been several notable philosophical endeavors that have expanded on and reacted to his pioneering vision. Félix Guattari's (2000) *Three Ecologies* is one such influential work, presenting an ecosophical system that blends the ecological with the mental and the social. His vision underscores the profound connection between environmental degradation and societal issues, suggesting that the two cannot be considered in isolation. Guattari's thought has led to a growing recognition of the interconnectedness of human and non-human systems, and the adoption of holistic systems that explore the interdependence of environmental, social, and psychological factors in understanding ecological issues with an accent of the Anthropocene and posthumanist thought. There has also been a growing emphasis on environmental justice and the growing use of science and technology in understanding natural systems. I have been strongly influenced by Gregory Bateson (1972) and Félix Guattari whose works intertwine ecology, philosophy, and a transformed relationship with the Earth, further enriching the concept of New Earth Philosophy (Peters, 2003, 2013, 2017).

Similarly, Bernard Stiegler's (2017) concept of the 'Neganthropocene' offers a critical response to the Anthropocene – the current geological epoch marked by significant human impact on Earth's geology and ecosystems. Stiegler challenges us to consider a future where human action works towards reducing entropy rather than exacerbating it. Bruno Latour (2017) has also contributed significantly to this discourse with his recent writings on the Gaia hypothesis, reinforcing the idea that the Earth functions as a single, self-regulating complex system, a living entity that is deeply affected by human activity. This perspective aligns with the holistic approach of New Earth Philosophy, which seeks to understand the planet as a web of interconnected systems, both living and non-living.

A vital aspect of New Earth Philosophy is its inheritance of ideas from the work of Gregory Bateson (1973), an intellectual who wove together

strands of ecological thought with philosophical and anthropological insights. His ideas, particularly those around the cybernetic interconnectedness of all life, have enriched the theoretical tapestry of this field, emphasizing the need for a transformed relationship with the Earth. His influence is evident in the work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1987), particularly in their collaborative efforts such as *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, where Bateson's concepts find new expression and application. The incorporation of Bateson's ideas into the work of Deleuze and Guattari has been explored by scholars like Robert Shaw (2016), who examines the migration of concepts like 'plateau of intensity' and 'rhizome' from Bateson's writings into Deleuze and Guattari's. Shaw's analysis illuminates how these ideas serve as a foundation for imagining non-schismogenic (non-division-causing) forms of social relation, offering a grounding for Deleuze and Guattari's philosophical explorations. The ethical and political dimensions of this integration are crucial, suggesting that Bateson's thought offers valuable insights for addressing the challenges of the Anthropocene – an era defined by the pervasive influence of human activity on the Earth's systems.

The pertinence of these philosophical ideas in the context of the Anthropocene has been further discussed by Arun Saldanha and H. Stark (2017), who delve into the significance of such thought in an era characterized by significant ecological and geological change precipitated by human actions. Deleuze's own work, with its sustained critique of humanism, anthropocentrism, and capitalism, presaged many of the concepts central to the Anthropocene discourse. His interest in geology and the philosophy of time, as well as Guattari's ecosophical and cartographical dimensions, contribute to a body of thought that seeks to envision a 'new earth' alongside 'new peoples.'

Lundy's (2021) investigates Deleuze and Guattari's call for a new earth and new people explores the developmental trajectory of this concept and its broader implications for future action and thought. This exploration is not without its challenges; the call for a new earth and people carries with it a complexity that provokes both admiration and critique. It is a call that is problematic in its aristocratic overtones and in its practical ambiguity – raising questions about what form it might take, how it could be voiced, and what its outcomes might be. New Earth Philosophy represents a critical and evolving engagement with ecological and philosophical thought, aiming to foster a deeper understanding of our place within the Earth's ecosystems and to promote a more sustainable and equitable future.

In 'Contra Ecosophy' Nicholas Pisanelli (2021) reviewing François Laruelle's (2020) *The Last Humanity: The New Ecological Science* challenges the traditional propagation of philosophy in light of ecological considerations, to argue: 'What is needed, in other words, is more philosophy, this time better attuned to the fragile complexity of life on earth.'

Ecological Civilization

In ‘Ecological Turning of Contemporary Philosophy under Viewpoint of Ecological Civilization’ Su Zu-rong (2012) illuminates the ecological turning of contemporary philosophy arguing that ecological philosophy based on the ecological system provides a new theoretical perspective to the innovation of contemporary philosophy. In so doing he anticipated the debate in China over the concept of ecological civilization based on the principles that sustain living systems coexisting in natural ecologies. As Arran Gare (2021:8) writes:

In 2007 the Chinese government embraced ‘ecological civilization’ as a central policy objective of the government. In 2012, the goal of achieving ecological civilization was incorporated into its constitution as a framework for China’s environmental policies, laws and education, and was included as a goal in its five-year plans. In 2017, the 19th Congress of the Communist Party called for acceleration in achieving this goal. Expenditure on technology to ameliorate environmental damage, reduce pollution and reduce greenhouse gas emissions has been massively increased.

The concept of ‘Ecological Civilization’ strongly supported by UNESCO offers both a vision and a set of policies that are required for reengineering industrial society and the transition to a sustainable environment with human are respectful of all forms of life.

Earth Jurisprudence

The legal dimension is expanded by Jamie Murray’s exploration of Earth Jurisprudence and its connections with philosophical ideas, necessitating a new framework for legality and governance (Murray, 2014, 2015). Murray’s work in exploring Earth Jurisprudence represents an effort to integrate philosophical concepts into legal frameworks, thereby creating a new paradigm for understanding and governing the relationship between humans and the natural world. Earth Jurisprudence is a legal philosophy that posits the Earth itself as a subject of rights, recognizing the intrinsic value of the natural world beyond its utility to human needs. Murray explores into how laws can be reshaped to reflect a more respectful and reciprocal interaction with the Earth that can include the recognition of the rights of ecosystems to exist, thrive, and evolve, which fundamentally challenges the traditional anthropocentric legal systems that prioritize human interests over ecological health. In this legal philosophy, humans are considered an integral part of a wider community that includes non-human life forms and abiotic elements of the Earth. The legal implications of this approach are profound, proposing a shift from property-based ownership of natural elements to a model that emphasizes stewardship and caretaking. Murray may also discuss the precedents and movements around the world where Earth

Jurisprudence principles are being implemented. This includes the granting of legal personhood to natural entities such as rivers, forests, and landscapes, allowing for legal actions to be brought on their behalf to protect and maintain their well-being. By engaging with philosophical ideas within the context of law, Murray contributes to a growing discourse on environmental justice, sustainability, and the legal mechanisms needed to address the ecological crises of the Anthropocene. His work would be situated within a broader movement that seeks to redefine humanity's role on the planet, encouraging a shift from exploitation to coexistence.

Collectively, these studies and publications reveal the multifaceted nature of the New Earth concept, encompassing themes from the geosciences and environmental politics to technology and sustainability, while also permeating the realms of philosophical discourse and legal frameworks. They underscore the evolving significance of ecological considerations in a world where interdisciplinary insights are crucial for addressing the complex challenges of our time.

Maria Antonio Tigre (2022:223) puts the case in unambiguous terms for embedding the right to a healthy environment as a matter of law. She clearly shows how the restating of 'environmental legal principles is essential as human laws have proven to be manifestly at variance with the natural systems of Earth's biosphere' (p. 309).

This article calls for a reassessment of our core beliefs on how we relate to the environment through a deep dive into the philosophical foundations of environmental protection. With this purpose, it shows how Earth-centered discourses have existed in human societies and civilizations for millennia. Different religious and philosophical underpinnings all share a view of humanity as an integral part of an organic whole, revering all living things. While recent developments in jurisprudence may appear novel, they are somewhat latent and emergent. Theories of land ethics, rights of nature, Earth-centered environmental ethics, wild law, and Earth jurisprudence all build on these philosophical crescendos and have proved influential at the international level. It is time to find new approaches to the law that rely on the value of nature. This article tells us the why and the how.

The New Earth demands a radical reimagining of our relationship with the environment. Post-apocalyptic survival hinges on the ability to live in harmony with nature, rather than in dominance over it. This includes embracing renewable energy sources, restoring ecosystems, and adopting sustainable agricultural practices. The environmental rebirth is not just a necessity but an opportunity to rectify the ecological missteps of the past. Technology and science play pivotal roles in the New Earth. However, unlike the pre-apocalyptic era, where technological advancement often came at the expense

of environmental health and social equity, New Earth technology is developed with sustainability and ethics at its core. Advancements in fields like renewable energy, biotechnology, and sustainable materials are key to rebuilding a world that is resilient and in balance with nature.

The New Earth also witnesses a cultural and spiritual renaissance. The apocalyptic event, having exposed the fragility of human existence, fosters a deeper appreciation for life, community, and the planet. Art, literature, and spirituality experience a resurgence, reflecting the new values and hopes of this reborn civilization. Despite the optimistic vision, the path to New Earth is fraught with challenges. Scarce resources, environmental damage, and societal fractures present significant hurdles. However, these challenges also provide opportunities for innovation, collaboration, and resilience. 'The New Earth' is not merely a speculative exercise but a call to action urging humanity to learn from its past mistakes and to envision a future that is sustainable, equitable, and in harmony with the natural world. The New Earth is a symbol of hope, a testament to the indomitable spirit of humanity, and a roadmap for a better, more resilient future.

6. An Ecological Reading of New Earth and Its Philosophical Characteristics

An ecological or cosmological reading of the New Earth concept, when approached through a more scientific and less theologically traditional lens, presents a fascinating fusion of spirituality and cosmic principles. This perspective reinterprets the New Earth as an extension and evolution of planetary consciousness, intricately linked with the broader dynamics of the universe. Traditional religious ideas are either reimagined or supplemented with a focus on the processes and phenomena of the cosmos.

This view encompasses a heightened awareness of the Earth as a living, dynamic system, recognizing the planet's deep connection to the larger cosmos and understanding humanity's role as an integral part of this system. It aligns the concept of New Earth with the scientific understanding of cosmic evolution – the formation of stars, planets, and galaxies over billions of years. This grand narrative of the universe's history emphasizes the continuous process of creation and transformation, echoing the idea of a constantly evolving and renewing creation.

The formation of planets from swirling gases, dust, and cosmic material is seen as a metaphor for the birth of the New Earth, signifying a process of coming into being from chaos and disorder, much like the biblical narratives of creation, but grounded in astrophysical realities. The life cycles of stars, including their birth, evolution, and eventual death, reflect the broader themes of renewal and transformation inherent in the New Earth concept. This

cosmic perspective acknowledges the ongoing cycle of destruction and rebirth that characterizes the universe.

Understanding how Earth's atmosphere and biosphere developed over time underscores the idea of a living, evolving planet. This knowledge inspires a vision of the New Earth where these systems are in balance and harmony, possibly at a new level of complexity and consciousness. The appearance of water and life on Earth, pivotal moments in planetary history, symbolize the emergence of new possibilities and the potential for growth and evolution on the New Earth.

This perspective does not necessarily reject spirituality but integrates it with a cosmic view. It finds spiritual significance in the laws of physics and the grandeur of the universe, seeing the cosmos itself as a source of awe, wonder, and possibly even divine presence. The ecological and cosmological view of the New Earth carries with it ethical and moral imperatives, such as the responsibility to protect and nurture the planet and all life forms, recognizing their intrinsic value and interconnectedness.

The ultimate goal in this perspective is the achievement of harmony, both on a planetary scale and within the larger cosmic context, where human actions are aligned with the principles governing the universe. In summary, an ecological or cosmological interpretation of the New Earth concept reimagines traditional religious narratives within the framework of contemporary scientific understanding, offering a vision that is both spiritually resonant and deeply rooted in the realities of our universe, emphasizing a holistic and interconnected view of existence.

In this philosophical spider's web it is possible to review and revitalize the received view of the birth of planetary consciousness, of Planet Earth and Earth as the biosphere. 'New Earth Model' represents an emerging paradigm in literature and philosophy that seeks to reshape our understanding of our place within the universe based on the birth of planetary consciousness. This paradigm is characterized by a holistic, interconnected view of life on Earth, emphasizing the symbiotic relationship between humanity, nature, and the cosmos. This shift represents a significant departure from traditional anthropocentric views, advocating for a more inclusive and ecologically aware perspective. The New Earth Philosophy that I have begun to disentangle has several aspects to it: theology, epistemology, ethics, wisdom, ecology and ecopedagogy briefly touched on here.

New Earth Theologies explore the spiritual dimensions of our relationship with the Earth. It seeks to integrate religious and spiritual insights with environmental consciousness, fostering a sense of reverence and sacredness towards the planet. This new theology promotes the idea of the Earth as a living entity, deserving of respect and care. It challenges traditional religious narratives that place humans at the center of creation, instead advocating for a more humble and interconnected understanding of our place in the universe.

New Earth Epistemologies is concerned with how we come to know and understand our world. New Earth Epistemologies challenge the dominance of scientific rationalism and materialism, advocating for a more diverse set of ways of knowing, including indigenous knowledge systems, intuitive understanding, and experiential learning. This approach values the wisdom found in our interactions with nature and emphasizes the importance of subjective experience and emotional connection in shaping our understanding of the world. *New Earth Ethics* focuses on redefining our moral responsibilities towards the planet and each other. It promotes a shift from individualism and competition towards cooperation and collective well-being. New Earth Ethics call for a reevaluation of our values and behaviors, encouraging practices that support sustainability, social justice, and the well-being of all life forms. This ethical stance is rooted in the recognition of the interdependence of all life and the need for a more compassionate and empathetic approach to living. *New Earth Wisdoms* encompass the collective insights and understandings that emerge from this new way of thinking. New Earth Wisdoms blend ancient and modern knowledge, bridging the gap between science and spirituality. They offer guidance on living in harmony with nature and each other, emphasizing balance, resilience, and adaptability. This wisdom is seen as key to navigating the challenges of the 21st century, from climate change to social inequality. *New Earth Ecologies* pertains to a deeper understanding of ecological systems and our role within them. New Earth Ecologies advocate for a more integrated approach to environmental stewardship, recognizing the complex interconnections between all living and non-living elements of the Earth. This perspective encourages sustainable living practices and seeks to restore and preserve the health of the planet for future generations.

The New Earth Philosophy also represents a transformative approach to understanding and interacting with our world. It calls for a profound shift in our thinking, values, and actions, urging us to embrace a more holistic, interconnected, and compassionate view of our place in the universe. This paradigm shift is not just philosophical but practical, offering tangible pathways for creating a more sustainable, just, and thriving world. It marks a transformative era in the realm of literature and human thought, representing an evolution in our understanding and relationship with the Earth. At its core, this movement is characterized by a shift from anthropocentric narratives to a more holistic, interconnected worldview, acknowledging the profound bond between humanity, nature, and the cosmos. This literary and philosophical paradigm is a response to the growing environmental, social, and spiritual crises facing our planet, offering a hopeful and inclusive vision for the future.

The Birth of Planetary Consciousness

Central to New Earth Model is the birth of Planetary Consciousness, a recognition of the Earth as a singular, living entity. This perspective challenges

the traditional, fragmented view of the world, where human interests are often seen as separate and superior to the natural world. Instead, Planetary Consciousness advocates for a sense of unity and interdependence, where the wellbeing of the planet and all its inhabitants is considered integral to our own survival and prosperity. This movement is not just a literary or academic exercise; it is deeply rooted in real-world concerns such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and social inequality. Writers and thinkers within this paradigm are not only reimagining our relationship with the Earth in their works but are also actively participating in the discourse around environmental policy, conservation, and sustainability. Their narratives often blend scientific understanding with spiritual and emotional insights, offering a more comprehensive and empathetic approach to dealing with the challenges we face.

New Earth Literature

The New Earth Literature also incorporates and values diverse perspectives, particularly those from indigenous and marginalized communities. These voices, often sidelined in mainstream discourse, bring a wealth of knowledge and experience in living harmoniously with nature. The literature emphasizes the importance of learning from these cultures and integrating their wisdom into our collective understanding of the planet. Furthermore, this literature promotes a reevaluation of our values and lifestyles. It calls for a shift from consumption-driven, individualistic societies to more sustainable, community-oriented ways of living. This involves rethinking our economic systems, governance structures, and personal choices to align with principles of ecological balance, fairness, and respect for all forms of life.

Another key element of New Earth Literature is its emphasis on inner transformation. It recognizes that external change begins with a shift in individual consciousness – a move from ego-centric to eco-centric perspectives. This involves cultivating qualities such as empathy, mindfulness, and a deep sense of connectedness to the natural world. New Earth Literature and the Birth of Planetary Consciousness represent a vital and timely shift in human thought and expression. It challenges us to rethink our place in the world, not as separate and dominant entities, but as integral parts of a complex and beautiful planetary system. This literature doesn't just envision a sustainable and equitable future; it actively contributes to creating it by inspiring change in the hearts and minds of its readers. It is a call to action, urging us to embrace a more compassionate, interconnected, and sustainable way of living on this planet we call home.

It is a burgeoning movement in contemporary literature and thought, is characterized by several key principles and characteristics that distinguish it from traditional literary genres. This movement is not only a response to the environmental and social challenges of our times but also a blueprint for

a more interconnected, sustainable, and conscious way of living and thinking. Here I itemize the fundamental principles and characteristics of New Earth Literature that can operate as a fully-fledged ecopedagogy.

(i) *Holistic Worldview*: At the heart of New Earth Literature is a holistic approach that sees the Earth as a single, interconnected organism. This worldview challenges the traditional anthropocentric perspective, placing humans as a part of, not apart from, the natural world. It emphasizes the interconnectedness of all life forms and the interdependence of humans, nature, and the cosmos.

(ii) *Environmental Consciousness*: A profound awareness of and concern for the environment is central to this genre. It often explores themes like climate change, biodiversity, sustainability, and the human impact on nature. This literature not only highlights environmental issues but also promotes ecological stewardship and sustainable living practices.

(iii) *Integration of Science and Spirituality*: New Earth Literature bridges the gap between scientific understanding and spiritual wisdom. It values both rational knowledge and intuitive, experiential learning, acknowledging that a comprehensive understanding of the Earth and our place in it requires a synthesis of both.

(iv) *Diverse Perspectives and Inclusivity*: Recognizing the limitations of a singular cultural or national perspective, New Earth Literature incorporates and values diverse voices, especially those of indigenous and marginalized communities. It respects and learns from various cultural narratives and wisdom traditions, understanding that they offer invaluable insights into living in harmony with nature.

(v) *Emphasis on Inner Transformation*: A key characteristic of this genre is the focus on personal and collective transformation. It suggests that external environmental and social changes are deeply linked to inner changes in human consciousness, attitudes, and values. The literature often encourages self-reflection, mindfulness, and a shift from ego-centric to eco-centric living.

(vi) *Promotion of Ethical and Moral Responsibility*: New Earth Literature often carries a strong ethical dimension, urging readers to consider their moral responsibilities towards the planet and its inhabitants. It advocates for values like compassion, empathy, justice, and respect for all forms of life.

(vii) *Narrative and Artistic Innovation*: In terms of literary style, New Earth Literature is often innovative and experimental. It may blend genres, use non-linear narratives, and employ unique linguistic styles to better convey its message. The use of vivid imagery, metaphor, and symbolism is common, aiming to evoke a deep emotional and intellectual response in the reader.

(viii) *Visionary and Hopeful Outlook*: Despite often dealing with serious and sometimes bleak environmental and social realities, New Earth Literature typically maintains a hopeful, visionary outlook. It aims to inspire positive

change and present solutions, imagining future possibilities where humans live in balance and harmony with nature.

The New Earth Literature is a dynamic and evolving genre that reflects a growing global consciousness about our relationship with the Earth. It challenges readers to think differently about their place in the world and inspires a more compassionate, sustainable, and interconnected way of living.

7. New Earth Ecopedagogies

New Earth Ecopedagogies represent a transformative approach to education, one that interweaves ecological wisdom with teaching methods to cultivate a deep, symbiotic relationship with our planet. This concept is more than an academic trend; it's a philosophical commitment to redefining how we perceive and interact with our environment. It's rooted in the history of environmental education but goes further, influenced by global environmental movements and a growing awareness of our planet's fragility.

At the heart of New Earth Ecopedagogies is the principle of interconnectedness. This perspective views all elements of our ecosystem – human, animal, plant, and mineral – as parts of a complex, interdependent web of life. It challenges the traditional human-centric worldview and places a strong emphasis on sustainability as a core value. In this paradigm, respect for indigenous knowledge is paramount, bringing forth centuries of wisdom and practices that have long embraced a harmonious relationship with nature.

The methodologies employed in New Earth Ecopedagogies are as diverse as they are innovative. Experiential learning takes precedence, encouraging hands-on, outdoor experiences that bring learners into direct contact with the natural world. This approach fosters a visceral understanding of ecological principles, going beyond theoretical knowledge. The interdisciplinary nature of this pedagogy is another key aspect, blending science, arts, and humanities to provide a holistic understanding of environmental issues. Community-based learning further enriches this approach, emphasizing local context and involvement as essential components of effective ecological education.

Examining case studies from around the world, one can see New Earth Ecopedagogies in action. From school-based initiatives that integrate sustainable practices into the curriculum to community projects addressing local environmental concerns, these examples showcase the practical application of ecopedagogical principles. Even in higher education, there is a growing shift towards integrating these concepts, reflecting a broader societal recognition of their importance.

However, the path forward is not without challenges. Ensuring that these educational practices are accessible and inclusive remains a significant hurdle. There is also a need to balance theoretical knowledge with practical appli-

cation, ensuring that learners are equipped to apply what they learn in real-world settings. A notable critique is the dominance of Western-centric approaches in environmental education, which can overlook the rich diversity of perspectives offered by different cultures and societies.

Looking ahead, the integration of technology in New Earth Ecopedagogies presents exciting possibilities. From virtual reality experiences that simulate environmental scenarios to online platforms that facilitate global collaboration, technology has the potential to greatly enhance ecological education. Policy implications are also significant, with a need for education systems to evolve and support these new approaches. As global trends continue to shift towards greater environmental awareness, it is likely that New Earth Ecopedagogies will play an increasingly central role in shaping our collective future.

New Earth Ecopedagogies are not just educational strategies; they are a philosophical reimagining of our relationship with the Earth. They call for a paradigm shift from exploitation to stewardship, from alienation to empathy. By embracing these principles and methodologies, educators, policymakers, and communities have the opportunity to foster a more sustainable, equitable, and ecologically aware society. This approach is not just about learning to live in harmony with nature; it's about redefining what it means to be a part of this planet.

NOTES

1. This text is a development of my keynote address at Philosophy of Education of Australasia (PESA) Annual Conference, University of Auckland, NZ, 6–9 December, 2023, as the Inaugural Michael A. Peters Forward Looking Lecture where I focused on two main themes: The Apocalyptic Problematic in Modern Western Philosophy (a paper forthcoming in *Educational Philosophy and Theory*) and an ontological reading of the concept of 'Being-together', devoted to the ecology of complexity and collapse, and ecopedagogies for living the post-apocalypse. New Earth Philosophy is a development of the second theme.

2. <https://www.space.com/first-full-earth-image-noaa-21-instrument>

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