

ESSAYS FOR GAIA



Who is Gaia?

In Greek mythology, Gaia was the goddess of earth, corresponding to the goddess Terra in the Roman pantheon. This name was first applied to our planet in 1979 by James Lovelock, in *Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth*. The Gaia concept considers Earth to be an organism with self-regulating mechanisms, similar to biological organisms. From this perspective, our planet may be considered to be alive and conscious. *More on page 44.*

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Dom Roberti



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To Carole,
my soulmate and support
through the years

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Preface

These sixty-four essays are grouped into nine categories, showing an organization and even a kind of logical progression. They were written over a twelve-year period, from 2001 to 2012, and if they were to be arranged in chronological order, they would appear quite eclectic. Nonetheless, they would constitute a set of mileposts in my intellectual and spiritual development since my retirement from teaching.

I read Teilhard's *Phenomenon of Man* in the 1960s and was fascinated by his understanding of evolution as a sacred process of developing higher consciousness and his description of the Omega Point toward which evolution is progressing. I understood the Omega Point as a state of society when all would have achieved higher consciousness and when love, cooperation and nurturing would rule. I thought of it as analogous to individual cells coming together to form an organism. In retrospect, I believe I read more into it than he intended, but it made a deep impression.

Around the same time I became interested in UFOs, convinced that there was something real there which was being covered up by *Project Bluebook*, the official U.S. Air Force investigation. I did not maintain that interest, knowing (as I thought) that nothing could go faster than the speed of light, so that civilizations from other star systems could take thousands to millions of years to reach us. I thought this an insurmountable barrier.

While teaching in the chemistry department at St. Joseph's University I developed a series of courses for non-majors on the environment, energy alternatives, and food chemistry, as well as an honors course in the history and philosophy of science. I became deeply aware of the environmental crisis looming ahead.

Sometime in the 1990s, Tom O'Rourke, of the Catholic Peace Fellowship in Philadelphia, a chapter of Pax Romana USA, invited me to participate in a study group discussing a video series, *Canticle to the Cosmos*, with astrophysicist Brian Swimme. I learned that Swimme and Rev. Thomas Berry, among others, were applying Teilhardian thought to environmental issues. These discussions opened a whole new way of thinking for me. As it happened, I was the only participant with a science background, and Tom encouraged me to give talks and do adult education courses on these topics. I began doing so.

The Catholic Peace Fellowship had been focused on anti-war and anti-nuclear issues as well as capital punishment. Tom brought to CPF what came to be called ecospirituality, convinced that environmental concerns were an important part of peacemaking. Tragically, Tom died of lung cancer in January of 2001, leaving an enormous gap in the organization. Various members picked up parts of what Tom had been doing, and it fell to me to be devoted to the ecospirituality concerns. At that time I began writing short articles for the CPF newsletter, and most of the essays in this book are edited versions of those articles.

In 2008, I was given a DVD of the two-hour press conference at the Press Club in Washington, DC, sponsored by the *Disclosure Project*. I watched with fascination as twenty highly credible witnesses testified to the reality of ET contacts, the advanced ET technology which can solve our energy and environmental problems, and the cover-up of ET information. I became convinced. In October 2009 my wife Carole and I experienced an ET contact (see page 210) and later a number of other experiences of high strangeness. We attended a training program of the Center for the Study of Extraterrestrial Intelligence and I began a website devoted to ET concerns and an e-newsletter, from which the essays in the *Extraterrestrials* section of this book are taken.

It has come full circle. My early understanding of Teilhard's thought left me filled with hope, although I must admit that it was not clear what the Omega Point would look like. I was not troubled, because I understood that, however it may appear logical in retrospect, looking toward the future evolution always presents us with a surprise. I often pondered what that surprise would be. Now I believe the surprise is the appearance of benevolent extraterrestrials and their advanced technology. To me the future looks hopeful again.



Introduction

The history of our culture has seen us move through a number of paradigm shifts. In *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Thomas Kuhn introduced the term *paradigm* to indicate the underlying and interconnected concepts through which we interpret what we experience. It is a kind of lens through which we see and come to understand what we think of as our reality. He points out that, contrary to the common understanding of “the scientific method,” when data arises which contradicts a reigning theory, the theory is not scrapped. Rather, the theory is patched up again and again until finally it collapses from sheer weight and makes room for another. He uses the example of the shift from the Ptolemaic to the Copernican paradigm. The geocentric view seemed to make common sense and agreed with an exalted view of the human role. Galileo’s observations seem to us to have been absolutely convincing—and yet the academic and ecclesiastic establishments were resistant. The shift took years to become complete. Now we are comfortable with the new paradigm.

Our Western culture is now moving through another paradigm shift, from a static universe to a dynamic one. Our heritage from medieval scholastic philosophy, itself rooted in Aristotelian thought, thinks of all beings as having an essential and unchanging nature. In such a system, it was necessary for God to create everything once and for all, from the waters and the sky to each animal to our human ancestors. For this reason it was necessary for Noah to be sure to get a pair of each species into the ark; any he overlooked would be gone forever.

Of course, it is obvious that change occurs all the time—how can that fit into a static model? The difficulty was handled by considering that the principal form of change is cyclic. The sun rises, it sets, and it rises again—it’s still the sun. The phases of the moon, the seasons of the year, the plant to the seed to the plant again, death and resurrection—all are

examples of cyclic change in a static universe. So in this view there is only the appearance of change—the underlying essence remains the same.

By the nineteenth century it became clear that everything is evolving—that the universe is in fact dynamic, needing to be understood through a new paradigm. Fossils were being found everywhere and the depth at which they were found was related to the age of the fossil. Fossils of a certain species would be found at deeper and deeper levels, and then reach a depth below which they would not appear at all. The only reasonable conclusion is that that particular species came into existence at that time. Other evidence pointed in the same direction, that species were evolving through the ages. Single-cell organisms evolved into multicellular ones, simple forms evolved into more complex ones, fish became reptiles, some of which became birds and others mammals, and primates ultimately became *homo sapiens*.

The mechanism by which biological evolution is carried out was elucidated independently by Charles Darwin and Alfred Wallace—the operation of natural selection. In any population of a given species, there will be a range of genetic characteristics, some of which will be more adapted for survival than others. Those individuals having the most favorable characteristics will tend to produce more offspring than the others, particularly in the face of environmental changes. Over many generations these survivors will become a new species. It will take a long time, but over the billions of years of life on this planet (about three billion years since the first simple life forms appeared) there is ample opportunity for evolution to play itself out.

Where is evolution headed? Nowhere in particular, say most biologists. It's a random process which runs on its own, not needing any deeper directing force. Onto this scene comes the Jesuit priest paleontologist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, convinced from overwhelming scientific evidence that evolution is real, and at the same time adhering to the teachings of the Church, which were still couched in scholastic language from the static universe paradigm. It is unacceptable, he felt, to hold that evolution is not going anywhere, is without any kind of deeper guidance. In such circumstances, life would not be worth living. No, deep within the evolutionary process there is the presence of a divine influence, gently guiding it to a meaningful end. The immanent

creator is working continuously, deep within the seemingly random process of natural selection.

In the view of Teilhard, it is not merely complexity toward which evolution is moving, but rather toward ever-higher levels of consciousness. All of life shows at least some primitive form of consciousness, from the heliotropism by which flowers follow the sun to the mating rituals of animals to the self-reflecting awareness of human beings. We human beings have arrived at the highest form of consciousness, having developed a culture with language, rationality, and technology. But we are not yet complete. Our species will go on to develop even higher levels of consciousness, becoming more cooperative and nurturing—the more feminine qualities coming to predominate over the more masculine ones. This phase of evolution has now reached the stage where it is no longer necessary to wait for the slow process of natural selection, with its dependence on genetic mutations and a changing environment. Rather, evolution has moved from genetics to culture, to beliefs, customs, learning, art, science, and the like. Who makes culture? We do. In other words, the future of evolution is in our hands.

During Teilhard's lifetime there was little awareness of the environmental problems which would grow into a crisis in our own time, threatening collapse of our planet's life support system. Some of his followers, notably Thomas Berry, CP, and Brian Swimme, developed the Teilhardian view and applied it to our ecological concerns. They emphasized that our progression toward universal higher consciousness is precisely what is needed to respond to our planetary crisis. We must develop a whole new way of thinking (a new paradigm), since problems cannot be solved from the same perspective that created them. We must see ourselves as intimately related to and part of the web of life, looking not merely to our own survival, but to the health of the ecosystems we live in. Berry has said that the universe is not a collection of objects but a communion of subjects—objects may be used, subjects cannot be used, only related to.

Swimme is an astrophysicist who was influenced by Berry to turn his attention to spreading the word about the environmental crisis from a Teilhardian perspective. Together they published *The Universe Story*, in which they trace out the process of evolution from the big bang to the development of human culture. To these thinkers the progression

of evolution embeds within it the divine creator, so that humanity and all of nature participate in the drama.

Several scholars have recognized in the evolution of the universe an “Anthropic Principle,” the process proceeding as if it knew that we human beings, and other intelligent life forms, would be coming along later, preparing the way for us. For example, the magnitude of the gravitational constant, the strength of the gravitational attraction, was set a fraction of a second after the initial big bang. If it had been just a trifle smaller, the particles of the universe would never have been able to condense into stars and galaxies and would have expanded into a formless and largely homogeneous expanse. Life, of course, would have been impossible under these conditions. On the other hand, if the strength of gravity had been a bit larger, the universe would have expanded to a certain point and then collapsed back on itself. No possibility of life here either. So the effect of gravity had to be not too big and not too small, but just right. And so it was. There are a number of similar parameters for which the universe developed exactly as needed. Did that happen just by chance? Or is there a guiding principle at work?

Along with the developing understanding of scientific cosmology, there arose two new and revolutionary perspectives of modern physics—relativity and quantum mechanics. Einstein’s special relativity abolished the notion of simultaneity and, among other conclusions, forbade movement of particles faster than the speed of light. His general theory of relativity reduced gravity to a local curvature in space-time. Both notions seem to go against common sense, but both are confirmed by much experimental evidence. An interesting result coming from Einstein’s work is the Bell Theorem, confirmed by experiment, which states that under certain conditions particles can be non-local and non-temporal, seeming to open the possibility of traveling back and forth in time and even to move instantaneously from one spot to another no matter how great the distance between them. Quantum mechanics also introduced a view of reality which clashes with common sense, a world of probabilities rather than certainties, where the observer can get tangled up with the observed object, and where space itself contains an enormous amount of energy. After decades of intense study, these two views of reality, relativity and quantum mechanics, have not been successfully reconciled into a single theory encompass-

ing both. Some scholars have suggested that the missing ingredient is consciousness. Of course, physics as currently understood cannot accommodate such an abstract concept, but an appropriate shift in paradigm would not be greater than has been accomplished in the past.

Is there reason for hope? Definitely yes! It appears that the evolution of the universe is proceeding in a definite way, moving toward higher consciousness. Looking back through history, we see that humanity has become, in spite of current exceptions, less barbaric. Pockets of higher consciousness are present everywhere, in the form of people caring for the poor, seeking spiritual growth, working for peace, building community, and so many other ways. With time these pockets will grow and finally transform the culture. We will enter, as Thomas Berry puts it, the ecozoic age. The universe has been building up to this point for over 13 billion years—it will not abandon us now.

It has been said that the environmental crisis is primarily a spiritual crisis, that the technology to bring us into a way of life with abundant pollution-free resources is conceivable and mostly, at least in principle, solved. Without spiritual maturity, however, these powerful future technologies could be redirected into weaponry and violence. At the very least, spiritual maturity would mean peaceful coexistence on a global scale, with some mechanism in place to discourage potential aggressors. So the work of peacemakers, at all levels, will be most important. It is hopeful that more and more people are taking up spiritual practices like meditation and yoga, and the number of idealistic and compassionate groups is growing. As deep serenity, compassion and joy become widespread, our taste for war and violence will decline.

There still remain, however, some troubling thoughts. Suppose this high-consciousness utopia comes about in the near future. Would that be in a decade or two? Or maybe more? Might it not then be too late? Probably our planet would long since have passed the point of no return. And suppose there is a nuclear exchange? Is there any technology that could revive and restore Gaia to her healthy condition? If not, higher consciousness would come too little and too late. It is some comfort to reflect that evolutionary development always comes as a surprise, almost impossible to anticipate in advance. What healing surprise might the universe have in store for us?

We can restore our hope in the future by realizing that our extraterrestrial visitors have benevolent intentions, want to prevent the destruction of this beautiful planet, and have the advanced technology and spirituality to save and restore us. But are they real? And if so, why haven't we heard about them?

The Disclosure Project, headed by Steven Greer, MD, held a conference in 2001 at the Press Club in Washington, DC, in which twenty credible witnesses, including military and airline pilots, air traffic controllers, senior government officials, former participants in clandestine projects and others, testified about their experience. Representatives of the print and electronic media crowded the room, seemingly enthusiastic to break the story. Although hundreds of thousands viewed the webcast, the media dropped it and the event fell into silence and obscurity.

On several well documented occasions during the Cold War, US ICBM missiles were taken offline and rendered inoperable when ET vehicles were present in the vicinity of the siloes. Similar incidents occurred in the USSR. In another incident, a US nuclear-tipped missile intended to explode on the moon "as a scientific experiment" was intercepted by an ET vehicle. The missile was travelling at about 14,000 mph when the ET vehicle caught up to it, fired particle beams from six different directions, and knocked it out of the sky. While the military tend to interpret these incidents as a sign of ET hostility, they are more reasonably understood as an indication of the ETs' desire to prevent us from destroying ourselves. It is comforting to know that our ET visitors are able to prevent a nuclear exchange.

Advanced ET technology is based on drawing energy from space itself, the zero-point energy or quantum void, which is so abundant it may be considered unlimited. Solid state units based on this energy would solve our energy and pollution problems and in effect eliminate worldwide poverty. It would indeed be a utopia, the surprise the universe has in store for us. All we need is the higher consciousness to use it peacefully. What a great foundation for hope!