



Facing Gaia: Eight Lectures on the New Climatic Regime

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Organized into roughly contiguous “lectures,” *Facing Gaia* is an unusual and academic examination of climate change and humanity’s place in nature. In contrast to many other emotional, urgent, and even panicky examples of literature on the subject, this piece is detached and intellectual, coolly humorous, and very thoroughly footnoted.

The book primarily covers religious, philosophical, and linguistic analyses of human reactions to nature and climate changes. It is heavily influenced by the Gaia theory, originally put forward by inventor James Lovelock, which states that the Earth can be seen as a single organism. While acknowledging the scientific bases of the theory, the book often examines its subject through a philosophical and linguistic lens. The idea that the language around a phenomenon is what makes it real—and manageable—to human society functions as a major theme.

In an era when climate conversations quickly collapse and skeptics are able to dominate the discourse both rhetorically and politically, this book is timely. It focuses less on the ecological disaster itself and more on how humans feel and think about it. The author has enough conviction and clarity of thought around these complicated topics that the book is comprehensible, though difficult. This is a book that assumes a certain amount of knowledge on the part of its reader, and even graduate students may find it challenging at times.

Despite this, *Facing Gaia* is a rewarding read that explores deep new layers to the climate crisis that is not only happening in our environment, but unfolding in understanding within our own minds. A background in Western philosophy is helpful for full appreciation of this book, but academics and interested armchair scholars should be able to enjoy it.

ANNA CALL (July/August 2017)

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