

# A Final Warning for Humanity—or James Lovelock

by Gregory Murphy

## The Vanishing Face of Gaia: A Final Warning

by James Lovelock

New York: Basic Books, 2009

Hardcover, 278 pp., \$25.00

This latest book by the well-known environmentalist James Lovelock, leaves the reader with an unanswered question: For whom is this final warning meant, for humanity as a whole, or for the almost 90-year-old James Lovelock?

Much of the book seems to be written as an appeal to the heavens to seek amends for past wrongs. For example: his chapters on the benefits of nuclear power and the wrongheadedness of banning DDT. This is the first time, to my knowledge, that Lovelock has commented on the banning of DDT, saying that it was a wrong policy.

The rest of the book is the usual neo-Malthusian genocidalist rant that one is used to seeing in a Lovelock book. It is “too late” to stop global warming, he says, and the human population will be reduced from 6 billion down to 1 billion by the end of the century. In his totally wrong view, global warming will cull the population by 5 billion, because people will not be able to find enough food as agriculture shrinks in the heat.

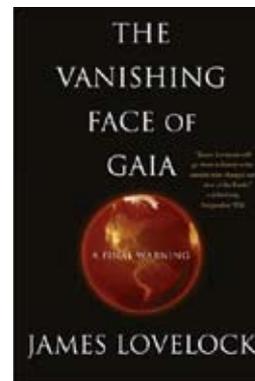
Why does he believe this nonsense? In a January 2009 interview with the British magazine *New Scientist*, Lovelock stated: “I don’t think humans react fast enough or are clever enough to handle what’s coming up. Kyoto was 11 years ago. Virtually nothing’s been done except endless talk and meetings.”

Lovelock views humanity only as an animal and not as a creature distinct from the beasts, with the power of creativity. This limited view of humanity is a main point in his book, in fact, and in the widely quoted *New Scientist* interview, Lovelock illustrated his pessimistic view by saying: “I don’t think 9 billion is better

than 1 billion. I see humans as rather like the first photosynthesizers, which when they first appeared on the planet caused enormous damage by releasing oxygen—a nasty, poisonous gas. It took a long time, but it turned out in the end to be of enormous benefit. I look on humans in much the same light. For the first time in its 3.5 billion years of existence, the planet has an intelligent, communicating species that can consider the whole system and even do things about it. They are not yet bright enough, they have still to evolve quite a way, but they could become a very positive contributor to planetary welfare.”

### Lovelock: A ‘Gigantic’ Carbon Scam

With this in mind, let’s look at what Lovelock has to say about the proposed greenie fixes for global warming—cap and trade, emissions taxes, and so on. When asked by *New Scientist* whether carbon emissions could be dealt with like the global ban on CFCs, Lovelock answered: “Not a hope in hell. Most of the ‘green’ stuff is verging on a gigantic scam. Carbon trading, with its huge government subsidies, is just what finance and industry wanted. It’s not going to do a damn thing about climate change, but



it’ll make a lot of money for a lot of people and postpone the moment of reckoning. I am not against renewable energy, but to spoil all the decent countryside in the UK with wind farms is driving me mad. It’s absolutely unnecessary, and it takes 2,500 square kilometres to produce a gigawatt—that’s an awful lot of countryside.”

Lovelock’s tragically flawed view of humanity is based on the famous Gaia theory that he developed in the late 1960s, which states that the Earth and all of the forms of life that live on the Earth form a self-regulating organism. Simply put, with this theory, mankind is no different than all of the other forms of life. His theory is in direct opposition to the work of the Russian scientist Vladimir Vernadsky, whose theories embraced the idea of creativity and the power of the mind to determine the relationship of living processes.

The environmental movement has tried to show that Lovelock’s theory has a lot in common with Vernadsky, but that is simply just not so. Vernadsky’s ideas are dynamic in nature, while Lovelock’s ideas as demonstrated in this book, are rooted in reductionism of the worst kind.

### Nuclear Power a High Point

The book’s most redeeming chapter is that on nuclear power. Here Lovelock dispels all of the usual myths about nuclear



Environmentalists for Nuclear Energy

James Lovelock (right) with Bruno Comby, president of Environmentalists for Nuclear Energy. Lovelock is an honorary member of the group.

power and shows that the commonly held basis to attack nuclear power is nothing more than a concatenation of lies and falsehoods, mindlessly repeated by the media until belief in the essential evil of all things nuclear has become part of an instinctive green response.

Lovelock spends a lot of time attacking the notion that nuclear power is dangerous. As a reader and as someone who often talks to public about nuclear power, I was especially glad to see how Lovelock developed the argument against the myth that surrounds the 1986 accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in the Ukraine. He counters the usual scare story that hundreds of people died in that accident, saying that only 75 people died, and that they were mainly fireman and rescue workers who were the first responders.

Lovelock also puts the Chernobyl accident into context, saying that the accident was caused by a steam explosion that happened in an unstable reactor that was undergoing an unwise and improperly planned experiment. He concludes his argument on the safety of nuclear power issue by saying: "In the fifty

years in whole worldwide nuclear industry no more than one hundred have died. Compare this with the tens of thousands who have died in the coal and oil industries and the hundreds of thousands who have died in making renewable energy or from the consequences of using it."

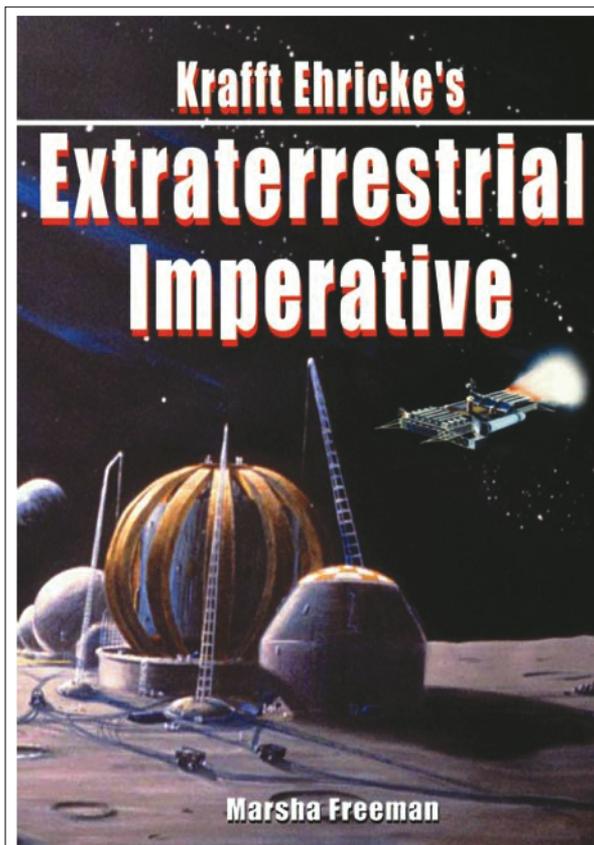
There is one statement that he makes in his section on the accident at Chernobyl that is not totally true, however. He says that scientists who could have challenged the nonsense about Chernobyl chose to keep quiet. But there is one scientist who did not keep quiet on Chernobyl: Polish scientist Zbigniew Jaworowski, a member of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atmospheric Radiation (a group he once chaired) who studied Chernobyl and wrote several technical and popular articles telling the truth about the effects of Chernobyl. (Some of these can be found in *21st Century*.) Jaworowski, a multidisciplinary scientist, has been attacked for debunking the lies about Chernobyl and for dissecting the fraud of global warming. It is surprising that Lovelock was not

aware of his work.

As you can see from this brief report, Lovelock's book is very confused. He is a committed Malthusian, but he wants nuclear power, DDT, and new cities for the people who remain once the population is culled. But he thinks little of today's greens, whom one might suppose were his co-thinkers. In the final chapters, Lovelock describes the current environmentalists as "cultist," and even worse, like the colonial imperialists that built the British Empire.

His assessment of the current religion of environmentalism is right on the mark. Just look at people like Britain's Prince Philip and his son Prince Charles, who state that they want to depopulate the world, and who are promoting the fraud of global warming as a way of controlling the world's energy, so that energy rationing can ensure that 4 billion or more people are eliminated.

Despite its problems, *The Vanishing Face of Gaia* is a useful reference book because of Lovelock's arguments for nuclear power and his assessment of the current green religion as fascist and imperialist.



**Krafft Ehricke's  
Extraterrestrial Imperative  
by Marsha Freeman**

**ISBN 978-1-894959-91-9, Apogee Books, 2009, 302pp, \$27.95**

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