



Gaia: Then and Now

The Mythopoetics of Climate Change

Full Program Descriptions and Presenter Bios for Gaia: Then and Now

Jules Cashford

Gaia

Saturday, January 8th, 2022. 12pm EST/9am PST

Return of Gaia

Sunday, January 9th, 2022. 12pm EST/9am PST

Introduction to two films on 'Gaia'

A new scientific hypothesis, suggesting that our Earth - as a self-regulating system - is a Living Being – was proposed by James Lovelock in the late 1970s. Significantly, this was not long after the Earth was visible as a whole from the Moon. One day, James Lovelock, the scientist, asked his friend, William Golding, the novelist, to join him in a walk, and on the way wondered aloud what he should call his new hypothesis.

Golding, also a classicist, said 'Gaia,' and 'the Gaia Hypothesis' was born. Such a coincidence is evocative of Jung's idea of 'synchronicity:' for 'Gaia' was not only the name of the Mother Goddess Earth of Ancient Greece, but also the last time in the west that Earth was formally experienced as sacred - more than 2000 years ago.

Both films draw on this double meaning of Gaia: 'Gaia Then and Gaia Now': Gaia as the Goddess She once was, and Gaia as the symbol She has become, both drawing on those unknown depths of the psyche which create the invisible worlds in which we also live.

This vast period of time, apparently with a memory of its own, suggests that we may perhaps conceive of Gaia as an archetype, one which comes back into human consciousness in our hour of need – however many hundreds of years of forgetfulness have passed between us?

The first film follows *Gaia in Ancient Greece*.

The name 'Gaia' came originally from the Indo-European language which the Mycenaean tribes brought with them when they came to Crete around 2,000 BCE, and later came to Greece. Although Gaia was for them the Mother of All, their chief divinity was Zeus.

As nomadic tribes they found themselves entering a long-established tradition of the culture of the goddess, resulting in a fascinating fusion of the two cultural traditions – the immigrant Indo-European and the native European – which allowed an entirely new narrative voice to appear.

Now the timeless images of the ancient goddess cultures could be explored through the linear narrative of story, inspired by characters belonging to a particular time and place. Hesiod's *Theology, the Genealogy of the Gods*, written in the 7th or 8th century BCE, begins:

'Chaos is first, and then comes Gaia, who gives birth to all the forms that are to come.'

The film follows, through the images, the stages of creation: the birth of the daughters and sons of Gaia, who give birth to their daughters and sons etc. At every stage when there is a hiatus in creation Gaia assists the on-going process until, finally, Zeus separates out from Gaia to become King of the Gods in Mount Olympos. Yet Gaia was never left behind as a legend at the beginning of things. Through her daughter Demeter, and Demeter's daughter Persephone, Gaia initiates the death and rebirth of the plants, and the food of the harvest. She was the first to give the Oracles from Delphi.

In 1952 classical studies were invigorated with the discovery that early Mycenaean Linear B tablets, found mostly in Crete, were an early form of Greek. So many of the goddesses and gods could now be seen to have come from Crete - Athena, who was offered a jar of honey, Dionysos, and Hermes, the ram as a fertility god - validating a further link between the earlier cultures of Crete and Greece. The 'heroic' tales of Perseus, Theseus, Jason and others, where the hero is saved by the goddess Athena, took on a further meaning.

The Ancient Greeks' understanding of the sacredness of *Gaia*, Earth, was most eloquently expressed in the Tragedies, and particularly Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*: Oedipus, as we all know, slew his father and married his mother, and became the new King of Thebes. But, 'Suddenly, the land of Thebes begins to die. A blight is on the land...' When it is revealed that Oedipus is the unwitting '*pollution*' of the land

(*miasma* - the polar opposite to the sacred), he leaves, and Earth recovers: the 'blight' is lifted.

So here what happens to Earth happens to humans and what happens to humans happens to Earth: the Soul of the one is the Soul of the other. Or, to put it another way, the human story and the Universe Story are one and the same.

The second film explores *The Return of Gaia* in our time:

The challenge of a new vision of Earth - which is also a moral vision – cannot be underestimated. Even to talk of the sacredness of Earth is to press against the weight of two thousand years of religious and cultural history, as well as conscious and unconscious assumptions about the nature of reality. Or could it be that myths never die: they seek new forms through which to renew themselves, age after age?

The philosopher Owen Barfield was one of a group of Oxford undergraduates, along with Tolkien and C.S. Lewis, who called themselves the 'Inklings.' He suggests that one way out of this impasse is to become aware of the different modes of human consciousness over the millennia, so that we do not interpret the past only through the lens of the present, or the present only through the lens of the past.

In his *History in English Words, Poetic Diction, and Saving the Appearances*, Barfield understands the evolution of consciousness as falling into three distinct stages of different kinds of what he calls 'Participation' with the world: *Original Participation; Withdrawal of Participation; and Final Participation.*

The first stage, existing from the beginning – *Original Participation* – he describes as a time when the human soul and the Soul of the World are experienced as one whole. These were originally hunter-gatherer, lunar goddess cultures – as shown, for instance, in the Goddess of Laussel (c. 20,000 BCE) and the Lascaux Cave, (c. 15,000 BCE) in France - discovering agriculture around 9000 BCE.

The second stage Barfield defines as a *Withdrawal of Participation* from our Earth, beginning in the Near East and Europe around 4,000 BCE, increasing in 2,000 BCE, when the Babylonians conquered the Sumerians, continuing through the Iron Age, 1,250 BCE, and lasting in various forms even to our present day.

This began when nomadic non-agricultural peoples, coming from the East, with gods of sky, sun, wind, and the vast invisible heaven, arrived in the Near East and Europe, so the peaceful values of an agricultural life gave way to animal husbandry and competition for land. The anthropologist Marija Gimbutas documents this in *Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe.*

Earth then loses her numinosity – She is no longer sacred - and is now set in opposition to humanity. As the new vision of life is perpetuated down the generations, people become more and more separated from the World-Soul, losing the vitality and instruction of their earthly lives. This, then, gradually and imperceptibly, becomes ‘the way things are’ and ‘always have been’ – assumed as being ‘inherent in the nature of things.’

Consciousness, for instance, which once belonged to Earth Herself as well as all living beings - as we saw with the Ancient Greek *Gaia* - was redefined by John Locke in 1642, as ‘what passes in a man’s own mind.’ Over the centuries, the lost numinosity of Earth was transferred more and more to the inner life of human beings, reaching a crescendo in the 18th century in the Industrial Revolution of the west, initiating what Thomas Berry calls ‘the technological trance.’

The third stage Barfield calls *Final Participation*, which he defines as a new kind of participation with Earth – not in the old original way, consciousness inevitably moving on – but at a new level through the Imagination. This involves a dual relation to the world: it acknowledges our present experience of Earth as in some way – at least since the last 2000 years – separated from us; but it also strives for a new poetic union by *ourselves participating* with the natural world, both consciously and imaginatively – whatever that comes to mean for each one of us.

The aim is to foster a new kind of relationship with our Earth, recognizing our essential identity while exploring the specific role of consciousness within Earth. And he sees this as the supreme moral challenge of our time.

So, this kind of differentiation offers us a unique opportunity to consider whether this present state of withdrawal should be seen only as a *phase* in the evolution of consciousness. It would not be understood as the only and ultimate way to relate to the world. We have to now find that for ourselves. With this perspective on our banished love for ‘Nature,’ we may become free to imagine the kind of relationship which is due to our Earth, who gave us, who gave everyone – animals, plants, and all living beings, Life.

The film follows the stages of this evolution of human consciousness, with the aim of reaching towards the wisdom of Thomas Berry’s ‘Earth Jurisprudence,’ where ‘Every Being has Rights;’ and also towards William Blake’s cleansing of ‘the doors of perception.’ As he also said: ‘To a Man of Imagination, Nature is Imagination itself. As a man is, so he sees.’

This would be one way in which ‘Gaia Returns.’

Jules Cashford studied Philosophy at St. Andrews University, and received a Carnegie Fellowship for postgraduate research in Literature at Cambridge, where she was a tutor in Tragedy for Trinity College for some years. She then trained in Jungian Analysis with the Association of Jungian Analysts in London, and taught Mythology. Her books include *The Myth of the Goddess: Evolution of an Image* (co-authored with Anne Baring) (Penguin, 1993); *The Moon: Symbol of Transformation* (Cassell, 2003); a translation of *The Homeric Hymns* for Penguin Classics (2003); *The Mysteries of Osiris* (Atalanta, 2010), a retelling of Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival* for Young Adults, and a novel *The Crane Dance*. She was co-editor, with Thomas Singer and Craig San Roque, of *Ancient Greece, Modern Psyche* (Routledge, 2018). With Kingfisher Art Productions, she has made two films on the Early Netherlandish Painter Jan van Eyck, and three films on 'Gaia': *Gaia, Mother Goddess Earth of Ancient Greece*, *The Return of Gaia*, and *The Eleusinian Mysteries*. Jules serves as a trustee for the Gaia Foundation, an environmental non-profit.

Brooke Singer

Site Profile Flags and Unison, the book Thursday, February 10th 2022. 8pm EST/5pm PST

Brooke Singer will discuss her recent art works that forge connections with ecological systems and more-than-human worlds to challenge human-centric and extractive perspectives. She will also present works by other artists who work across media to bridge divides between art/science, reason/intuition, human/non-human, proposing alternative ways of knowing and being.

Brooke Singer engages technoscience as an artist, educator, nonspecialist and collaborator. Her work lives "on" and "off" line in the form of websites, workshops, photographs, maps, installations, public art and performances that often involves participation in pursuit of social change.

She is Associate Professor of New Media at Purchase College, State University of New York, a former fellow at (2010-11), co-founder of the art, technology and activist group (2002-2008) and co-founder of (2013-). From 2018-2020 she was a research affiliate with the Groffman Research Group, Environmental Sciences Initiative, Advanced Scientific Research Center at The Graduate Center, CUNY.

She has exhibited nationally and internationally at institutions such as MoMA/PS1,

Warhol Museum of Art, The Banff Centre, Neuberger Museum of Art, Diverseworks and Matadero Madrid. She has been in residence at New York Hall of Science, Marble House Project, Headlands Center for the Arts, Helsinki International Artist Programme, among others. Her writing has been published in Big Data and Society, Radical History Review and Brooklyn Rail. She is in the collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, Microsoft and Melva Bucksbaum and Raymond Leary.

Shoshana Fershtman

Goddesses in Pre-Patriarchal Culture Thursday, March 10th 2022. 8pm EST/5pm PST

For over 40,000 years, the Great Mother Goddess has been central in the development of culture. The archeological discoveries of the past thirty years are clarifying how veneration of the Earth Goddess guided cultures which were collaborative and egalitarian. In this program, we explore the various manifestations of the archetype of the Earth Goddess in early civilizations of old Europe, the ancient near east, Africa, into the Americas and Asia. We will also see how Her continuing presence endured in more veiled ways as patriarchy developed over the past five thousand years. The program will draw on Jungian theory as well as emerging archeological research, and images from Eleusis and other sacred sites in Greece, Minoan sites in Crete and Santorini, and from ancient Mesopotamia. We will explore how engaging with Goddesses and other archetypes of feminine wisdom invite us to explore our own internalized concepts of gender and to reimagine new possibilities in our own lives and for succeeding generations.

Shoshana Fershtman, JD, PhD is a Jungian analyst and clinical psychologist, and teaches at the CG Jung Institute of San Francisco. She has served as core faculty at Sonoma State University's Masters' Program in Depth Psychology and at Meridian University Graduate Psychology program. Her book, *The Mystical Exodus in Jungian Perspective: Transforming Trauma and the Wellsprings of Renewal* was published in 2021. For more info, see www.shoshanafershtman.com

Craig San Roque and Miriam Pickard

Persephone's Heart
The Wake

Saturday, April 16th, 2022. 8pm EST/5pm PST
Sunday April 17th, 2022. 8pm EST/5pm PST

Two episodes of the Persephone Trilogy.

The first episode in this trilogy - Persephone's Dog - was composed for the Santorini, Ancient Greece/ Modern Psyche conference, 2011, then developed into community theatre events on a mountainside quarry in Alice Springs, Central Australia 2015. We offered a radically different interpretation of the Persephone/Hades saga, influenced by Australian Indigenous creation stories and emerging truths of environmental imbalance.

Persephone's Heart and The Wake continue the story for the ARAS Gaia series.

Persephone's Heart, performed at the 2017 Santorini conference, is the story of the incarnation of Persephone, as told to her son. Her intimate adventures take us to the beginnings of her relationship with Hades/Aidos, and how and why she, as a force of nature, takes on a human body. In Babylon, during their travels of sites of destruction, she asks Hades, "Do you think I could fall in love as humans do?" He replies, "You would have to become human - could you do that?" She consents, recognizing that doing so will allow her to comprehend human nature and feeling, now that she accepts the role of caring for souls in death and for cycles of regeneration.

In Australian creation myth, human/animal bodies and landforms interchange in metamorphosis. Land becomes human, human body/mind integrates with country. As Australians, we are influenced by this.

The Heart tells how Persephone acquires a humanized organic body, with all the necessary elements of bone, blood, skin, vital organs, brain, biochemistry and procreative erotic system. This is not an easy transformation for her, as you will hear. The story is informed, in counterpoint, by events of war interwoven with fragments of the ancient Sumerian myth of Inanna.

The Wake continues with echoes of Syria/Iraq and our human neglect of earth's regenerative systems - aka Gaia. The Wake tells how and why Persephone reluctantly gives up her body and role - hence Persephone's Suicide. A tragedy of our time.

During the Wake, Persephone's spirit appears to her family. She gives her last goodbye. Her son and daughter retrace Persephone's steps, making their own descent through the gates of the underworld. You follow and behold the vision of their father, Hades' grievous extinction despair. You witness Persephone's children

make tentative steps to restore balance. These imagined events of the Wake are influenced by the Mysteries of Eleusis.

Our stories are brought to you in the style of (old fashioned) radio plays with pictures.

We thank you for joining us over the airwaves all the way from Australia, now inhabited by refugees from many ravaged places and a country with a debt to indigenous story forms and culture, from which we draw inspiration.

Craig San Roque has practiced Jungian Analytic Psychology for 40 years in the UK and Australia. A former president and co-director of training for the Australian NZ Society of Jungian Analysts, he writes and speaks from an interweave of anthropology, social ecology, Jungian practice, cultural psychology and community performance. He has many publications, including in the series exploring Cultural Complexes edited by Tom Singer, and *Depth Psychology and Climate Change*, both published by Routledge. He also authored a graphic story, *A Long Weekend in Alice Springs*, first published in 'The Cultural Complex: Contemporary Jungian Perspectives on Psyche and Society' 2004.

Miriam Pickard is a performance artist, storyteller, teacher and theatre director, known for her work with the innovative, prophetic, Canberra Chorus of Women music and performances on Climate Change, international peace, and generative feminine mythologies. Miriam also performs with ArtsACT events - notably her (wryly comic) solo pieces on Isis and Inanna. She developed the role of Persephone for the 2015 – 2017 Alice Springs and Santorini events, and recently directed Persephone's Dog for the Canberra College Drama Student graduation performances, 2020. See her website: <https://www.miriamjane.com>

Elisa Venezia/Dark Sky Aerial

OMEN

Thursday, May 12th, 2022. 8pm EST/5pm PST

About DSA:

In 2014, 501(c)3 Dark Sky Aerial (DSA) was co-founded in Flagstaff, Arizona by five women, Abby Chan, Elisa Venezia, Carrie Reynolds, Isabelle Dove Robinson, and Joanie Garcia. As directors, we share a deep passion for dance, aerial arts, and storytelling through movement. Elisa Venezia is the head creative director. She inspires a sense of curiosity and has set in motion our groundbreaking work. Dark Sky Aerial's unique style of performance art is rooted in a rich tradition of modern dance,

theatre and inspired by the human experience. Dark Sky Aerial produces all original work. We do not use a script and there are no established rules for site-specific aerial theatre.

About OMEN :

This film has been created in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and witnessing the difficulties we have all been faced with in our individual lives. The pandemic has been the stark reminder of our interdependence and connection to one another.

Collectively being faced with something that is out of our control reveals our common humanity. OMEN showcases an archetypal human story about vulnerability, strength and connection. The story asks for the willingness of the viewer to adjust their eyes, take a step back and realize the concert that is taking place, as we all make our own unique sound while being a part of the collective story. The storyline explores the little acts of love in the spaces between moments.

Elisa Venezia, Creative Director and Dancer

Elisa Venezia is currently 46 years old. She grew up in Cancun Mexico and moved to the U.S. as a teenager. She spent her years in Mexico submerged in both dance and music and has lived with the need for artistic expression all her life. The first love of her life was her horse 'Palomo'. They spent every day together exploring local jungle neighborhoods and interacting with the local Mayan women. Home life was like being an extra in the Narcos series, always watching and observing the pull and push of human nature. Elisa always felt drawn to dance and movement when it came to expressing herself. Her first choreography was created at age 9 for a school gathering which included 4 other dancers. She enjoyed exploring multiple traditions such as Middle Eastern traditions, African dance, Hawaiian dance all the way to the American world of Ballet and gymnastics. Later she found expression through fire dance and aerial arts. She has always had an interest in finding creative ways to voice and integrate aspects of our collective experience that feel fragmented. She currently works as a Nurse and has submerged herself in the arts of healing. Dark Sky Aerial has become a strong vessel, for community collaboration, giving voice to aspects of our humanity that want to be reintegrated.

Jeffrey Kiehl

Mandala as an Archetypal Portal to Engage Climate Chaos

Thursday, June 9th 2022. 8pm EST/5pm PST

“Mandala symbols appear very frequently in moments of psychic disorientation as compensatory ordering factors.” C.G. Jung (CW 3, par. 582)

We are in the midst of tremendous ecological destruction due to the burning of fossil fuels. The rate and magnitude of global heating has led to the greatest threat civilization has ever faced. It is imperative we act now to minimize further catastrophic consequences from occurring in the future. How can we more creatively engage people with this issue and act? Perhaps a more effective, subtle, and creative way is through mythopoeic language. In this presentation I describe the ecological challenges we currently face and how through the mythopoetic images we can open new pathways for people to act on climate chaos. Here, I discuss how mandalas activate archetypal processes within psyche and through this activation lead people to action. Mandalas, in various forms, allow one to experience the sacredness of the natural world. I discuss historical examples of such culturally transformative images and provide examples of what we can do now to employ mandala images to address climate chaos. As Jung discovered in his work, mandalas are a powerful way to connect individuals to the collective unconscious. Mandalas provide an effective bridge to healing our split with Nature, a split that lies at the core of the problem of climate chaos. I conclude my presentation with an audiovisual slide show that provides an experience of mandalas as portals to the numinous nature of the sacred world.

Jeffrey Kiehl, PhD, is a Diplomate Jungian Analyst and senior training analyst for the C.G. Jung Institute of Colorado and the Inter-Regional Society of Jungian Analysts. He is the author of *Facing Climate Change: An Integrated Path to the Future*, which provides a Jungian perspective on climate change. He has published articles on Archetypes and Art; US Cultural Complexes; the Mandala; and the archetype of the Green Man. Jeffrey's particular interest is in alchemy as it relates to personal and collective transformation.