

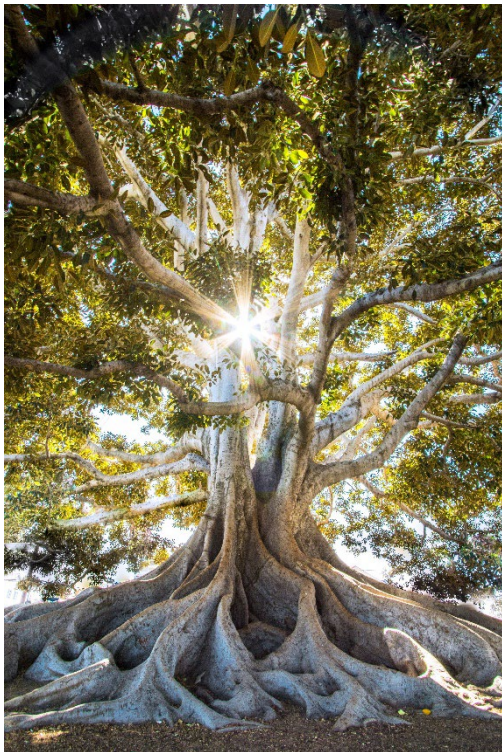


Call for contributions:

Ethics and Ecology Seminar – The Gaia hypothesis and its ethical implications: Does nature have rights?

Current biodiversity is the culmination of a process made up of chance and necessity within the modalities of innovation and adaptation. However, the details of this slow procedure are forever unknown, having disappeared. The archives of time do not allow us to reconstruct the richness of these events shrouded in an impenetrable opacity which is due to the erasure that marked the journey of life on planet earth since the earliest times. If there is erasure, the situation of the biosphere today is a trace, in itself, of all past experiences, successful or failed attempts in the past. It is the witness to all these accumulated experiences, and as such, gives nature a “knowledge” that scientists are unable to know in its entirety.

Why talk about “knowledge” of nature? What we designate as knowledge of nature relates to its capacity to find answers to the problems it poses itself. The reaction to disturbances and its ability to adapt to evolutionary changes are the result of an experience that escapes us. Nature, on the other hand, retains a memory of its evolution, for example that which is part of the immune system of living beings, which gain knowledge from each contagious exposure. It is above all the “coevolution” of different beings which is the basis of this procedure leading to the knowledge of nature, witness to this common knowledge. This can be illustrated by a network of links involving a multitude of other living beings and a non-living environment or habitat.



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We want, in a first workshop organized at the University of Aix-en-Provence, to question the Gaia hypothesis of Lovelock Margulis, not so much in its scientific relevance which is strongly debated elsewhere, but rather as a global framework for thinking about new costs, renewed ethics in ecology. By the self-regulatory character that it introduces, a source of controversy in its positivist dimension, and the “power of action” of living organisms on their environment which refers to the idea of co-evolution, and therefore of relationships between organisms, this Gaia hypothesis, as Latour writes, “*represents the effort to recognize that the Earth is a subject that acts and intervenes forcefully in our history*” or, according to Lovelock: “*If humans modify their environment so radically in such a short time, then other living things may have done it, too, over hundreds of millions of years.*”

In this context, the questions we would like to discuss revolve around (but are not limited to) the following topics:

- *First of all, and perhaps this questioning leads to rejecting its very premises, by personifying Gaia in the eponymous hypothesis or theory, it is about giving nature rights and making Gaia the subject of law par excellence, reducing to simple “derived products” the co-existents, plants, animals, and humans who occupy it? Questions related to the rights of nature refer to different environmental ethics, a description of the normative orientations of the different currents can serve as a compass for the questions addressed.*



- *With the loss of biodiversity and climate change, ecology has become a factor determining responsible behavior. How can we associate the question of ethics in this context with a renewed ecology that is active in the world of tomorrow?*
- *If nature is knowledgeable, how can there be an exchange of knowledge between it and humans?*
- *Can the idea that nature holds knowledge be applied or extended to the Gaia hypothesis?*
- *What are the ethical implications of such an assumption? What are the advantages/disadvantages compared to other ethics?*
- *...?*

We look forward to receiving contributions from a multiplicity of scientific fields and having an interdisciplinary exchange.

This Workshop is part of the Enjeux d'une Nouvelle Éthique en Écologie (ENEE) project, organized by Thierry Rolland (AMU) and Vanessa Weighgold (IZEW, UT) and financed by iUT, CGGG and IZEW.

Date and place: 11/30 and 12/01/2023 at Aix-Marseille-Université, Aix-en-Provence Campus

Travel and accommodation costs can be reimbursed under the usual conditions.

For more information, please contact vanessa.weighgold@izew.uni-tuebingen.de

Please send abstracts of a maximum of 1500 characters, and a brief CV to vanessa.weighgold@izew.uni-tuebingen.de by October 20, 2023