

# James Lovelock



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In 1972 when James Lovelock first proposed the Gaia hypothesis - the idea that the Earth is a living organism that maintains conditions suitable for life - he was ridiculed by the scientific establishment. Today Lovelock's revolutionary insight, though still extremely controversial, is recognized as one of the most creative, provocative, and captivating scientific ideas of our time. "James Lovelock" tells for the first time the whole story of this maverick scientist's life and how it served as a unique preparation for the idea of Gaia. Drawing on in-depth interviews with Lovelock himself and unprecedented access to his private papers, John and Mary Gribbin paint an intimate and fascinating portrait of a restless, uniquely gifted freethinker. In a lifetime spanning almost a century, Lovelock has followed a career path that led him from chemistry, to medicine, to engineering, to space science. He worked for the British secret service and contributed to the success of the D-Day landings in World War II. He was a medical experimenter and an accomplished inventor. And he was working with NASA on methods for finding possible life on Mars when he struck upon the idea of Gaia, conceiving of the Earth as a vast, living, self-regulating system. Deftly framed within the context of today's mounting global-warming crisis, "James Lovelock" traces the intertwining trajectories of Lovelock's life and the famous idea it brought forth, which continues to provoke passionate debate about the nature and future of life on our planet.

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