

Noble

Caroline Webb

Caroline Webb is a media producer and educator specializing in new cosmology. She has a background in documentary television in the UK as a Producer/Director, working mainly on environment and development topics for British TV. In the US she gained an M.A. in Philosophy, Cosmology and Consciousness in 2003, and in 2008 produced a DVD featuring Thomas Berry in a 2006 interview and a presentation, "Thomas Berry and the Earth Community," that illustrates some of Thomas Berry's words about the human-Earth relationship.

Dear Thomas,
 I am choosing to write to you directly as my way of contributing a tribute to you. It seems to allow me more spontaneity than any other form. In my mind's eye I can see the photograph that, of all the ones I have taken of you, I like the most. If I go to the website I have created – Earth-Community.org (the name chosen by you for my work about your work to go on further into the world)—I can see that photograph and feel the same response I always feel: what great fortune I have had to have met you and have you in my life. You are a joy to know! My thanks to Shirley Pevarnik for having introduced me to you.

When we first met in that hotel in Berkeley, California, where you stayed for the conference held in your honor by the California Institute of Integral Studies in November 2002, I brought a folio of my photographs of nature to show you. Those photographs are a way of relating to the world that brings me joy and allows depth of feeling to find form. I wanted to share that depth and that love with you – immediately! Little did I know then that in time some of those images would become illustrations for your writing, and your thought. They broke the ice and something clicked. You seemed delighted to look at the pictures and you then agreed to do a tape-recorded interview with me. A couple of days later we met again and I embarked on a journey that continues, to this day—a journey about enabling your vision and perspective on our presence in the universe to be read, listened to, and watched by more and more people.

We created an article from that first interview. It was published in Britain and you called it, or the Editor called it—I no longer recall—*The Mystique of the Earth*. What a title! It is this particular insight and particular quality of response by you to the Earth and the universe which I believe makes your work stand out from other writers on nature and the place of the human. Sensing the 'mystique' of the Earth is foundational to all of your work and leads directly to the various detailed proposals you make for how society should think and act. It is the insight and response that draws me to you and draws many others to you.

You articulate in writing something that speaks of the soul and speaks to the soul. We—your readers—recognize a deep commonality with nature that is pregnant with creativity and reverence, calling each of us to do whatever we can to embody and express something that is greater-than-human in our human lives. That 'something' binds us to the Earth in a way nothing else can – not traditional religion, scientific analysis, or political aspiration. It binds us in a way that incorporates all these and goes beyond them. You are the person who, most cogently of all, can see what it means for humans

to be integral with the Earth. Your essays drive at this over and over again, and they succeed. I get it. Or at least, I get onto the road that leads in the direction of becoming integral. I have made a beginning on learning to discern what it means to be integral with the Earth and the universe.

Since doing that article, a whole new endeavor associated with your work has unfolded. It started with my final project in a multimedia class at a community college. It is now a website and a DVD for worldwide distribution. How I have battled to get that computer to do my bidding, Thomas! Oh my...Oh my. But in the end, through persistence, some production has been accomplished and now others will be able to use the work to help with their teaching, seminars, conferences, and discussion groups.

Because your words evoke images in my mind, because they evoke a particular resonance of emotion and intellect, because you are, at heart, a poet, I have been drawn to try and illustrate your work and put it to music. I want to thank you for allowing me to do this as it has been a great pleasure and a form of fulfillment for me. I hope the work will continue to grow.

Indeed, you shine in my life as someone without pretensions or self-aggrandizement or any kind of egoistic behaviors. You are kind and honest and wholly decent. Actually the word I use to describe you is 'noble.' You have inspired so many people but you remain unaffected by the impact you have on them. This is wonderful to behold and I am very glad to have met you and sat with you on several occasions and to have shared a section of the journey with you.

Many blessings to you dear Thomas,
Caroline



Photo of Thomas by Caroline Webb



Caroline Webb and Thomas Berry, April 2007