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Books - The Nature of Being Human From Environmentalism to Consciousness, Harold Fromm

ISBN 9780801891298 (2009)

Although the physical relationship between the natural world and individuals is quantifiable, the psychosocial effect of the former on the latter is often less tangible. What, for instance, is the connection between the environment in which we live and our creativity? How is our consciousness bounded and delimited by our materiality? And from whence does our idea of self and our belief in free will derive and when do our surroundings challenge these basic assumptions?

Harold Fromm's challenging exploration of these and related questions twines his own physical experiences and observations with insights gathered from both the humanities and the sciences. Writing broadly and personally, Fromm explores our views of nature and how we write about it. He ties together ecology, evolutionary psychology, and consciousness studies to show that our perceived separation from our surroundings is an illusory construct. He argues for a naturalistic vision of creativity, free will, and the literary arts unimpeded by common academic and professional restraints. At each point of this intellectual journey, Fromm is honest, engaging, and unsparing.

Philosophical, critical, often personal, Fromm's sweeping, interdisciplinary, and sometimes combative essays will change the way you think about your place in the environment.

“How rare it is that a work of philosophical inquiry is written with the passion of a *cri de coeur*, but Harold Fromm's brilliantly conceived *The Nature of Being Human* resonates with such uncanny depths. Here is an utterly engrossing first—person account of a harrowing pilgrimage into the 21st century and its disturbing revelations about humankind's truest nature, in contrast to the comforting solitudes of a 'humanist' past. If the role of the philosopher is to force us to think, Harold Fromm is a born philosopher.” -- Joyce Carol Oates

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"Harold Fromm writes about 'awakening to the environment,' but his book is much more. A desperately needed, beautifully crafted manifesto, it is nothing less than a great humanist awakening to the reality of also being a material, fully biological creature." -- David P. Barash, coauthor of *How Women Got Their Curves and Other Just—So Stories*

"Fromm delineates three main movements in the naturalistic thinking of the past several decades -- ecology, Darwinism, and consciousness studies. He brings a fine and subtle literary intelligence to bear on these subjects, brilliantly illuminating their imaginative implications. His prose is vibrant, vigorous, pithy, and often humorous." -- Joseph Carroll, author of *Literary Darwinism: Evolution, Human Nature, and Literature*

Harold Fromm is a visiting scholar at the University of Arizona whose writings on the self, the environment, and academia have been widely read and debated. He is the coeditor of *The Ecocriticism Reader*.

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