



The Human Eros: Eco-ontology and the Aesthetics of Existence (American Philosophy (FUP))

Thomas M. Alexander

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The Human Eros: Eco-ontology and the Aesthetics of Existence explores themes in classical American philosophy, primarily that of John Dewey, but also in the thought of Ralph Waldo Emerson, George Santayana, and Native American traditions. The primary claim is that human beings exist with a need for the experience of meaning and value, a "Human Eros." Our various cultures are symbolic environments or "spiritual ecologies" within which the Human Eros can thrive. This is how we inhabit the earth. Encircling and sustaining our cultural existence is nature. Western philosophy has not generally provided adequate conceptual models for thinking ecologically. Thus the idea of "eco-ontology" undertakes to explore ways in which this might be done beginning with the primacy of Nature over Being, but also including the recognition of possibility and potentiality as inherent aspects of existence. I argue for the centrality of Dewey for an effective ecological philosophy. Both "pragmatism" and "naturalism" need to be contextualized within an emergentist, relational, non-reductive view of nature and an aesthetic, imaginative, non-reductive view of intelligence.

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