



Traces of an Omnivore

Paul Shepard

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Paul Shepard is one of the most profound and original thinkers of our time. He has helped define the field of human ecology, and has played a vital role in the development of what have come to be known as environmental philosophy, ecophilosophy, and deep ecology -- new ways of thinking about human-environment interactions that ultimately hold great promise for healing the bonds between humans and the natural world. *Traces of an Omnivore* presents a readable and accessible introduction to this seminal thinker and writer.

Throughout his long and distinguished career, Paul Shepard has addressed the most fundamental question of life: Who are we? An oft-repeated theme of his writing is what he sees as the central fact of our existence: that our genetic heritage, formed by three million years of hunting and gathering remains essentially unchanged. Shepard argues that this, "our wild Pleistocene genome," influences everything from human neurology and ontogeny to our pathologies, social structure, myths, and cosmology.

While Shepard's writings travel widely across the intellectual landscape, exploring topics as diverse as aesthetics, the bear, hunting, perception, agriculture, human ontogeny, history, animal rights, domestication, post-modern deconstruction, tourism, vegetarianism, the iconography of animals, the Hudson River school of painters, human ecology, theoretical psychology, and metaphysics, the fundamental importance of our genetic makeup is the predominant theme of this collection.

As Jack Turner states in an eloquent and enlightening introduction, the essays gathered here "address controversy with an intellectual courage uncommon in an age that exults the relativist, the skeptic, and the cynic. Perused with care they will reward the reader with a deepened appreciation of what we so casually denigrate as primitive life -- the only life we have in the only world we will ever know."

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