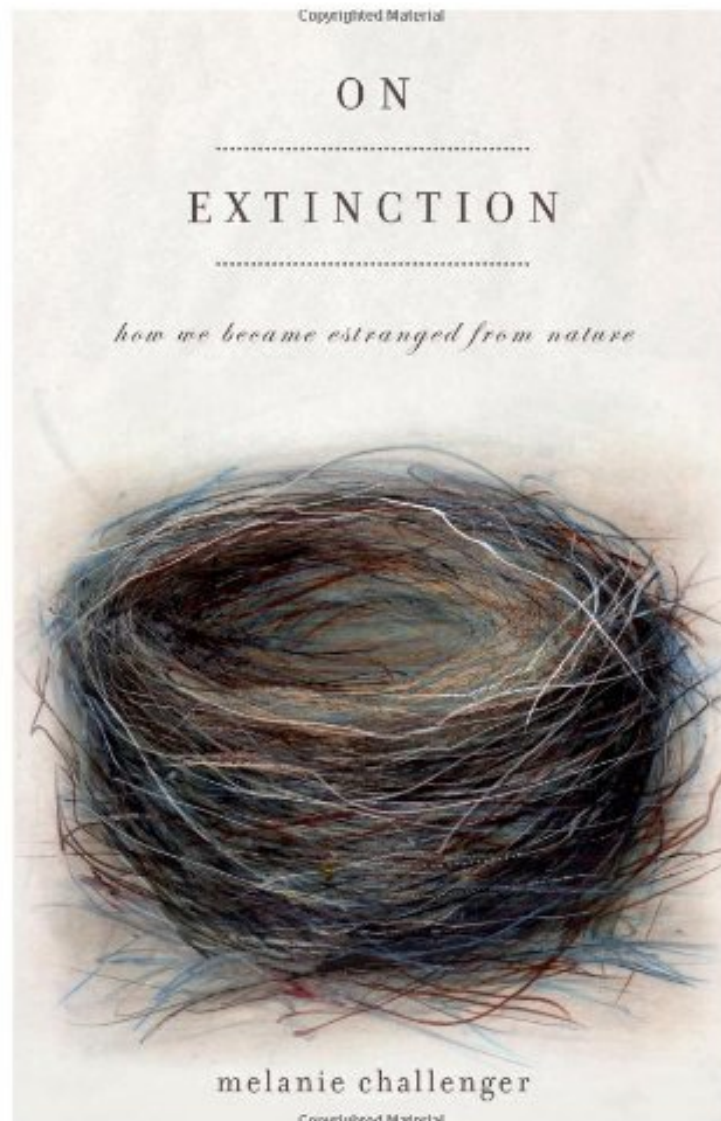


[PDF] On Extinction: How We Became Estranged from Nature

On Extinction: How We Became Estranged from Nature

Melanie Challenger

audiobook / *ebooks / Download PDF / ePub / DOC



DOWNLOAD



READ ONLINE

#1369360 in Books 2012-12-11 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.00 x 1.30 x 6.20l, 1.30 #File Name: 1619020181352 pages | File size: 56.Mb

Melanie Challenger : On Extinction: How We Became Estranged from Nature before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised On Extinction: How We Became Estranged from Nature:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Extinctions -- hope or despair? By David H. Vonseggen Melanie Challenger's first prose book ("On Extinctions") is a wonderful read. Let me begin by saying what it is not. It is not a

strident siren song beckoning action on the issue of species extinctions, not an objective nor a coherently crafted argument for reevaluation of humans' interaction with nature. In comparison with, say, with Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, it is only a soft brush of reality. The subtitle is not effectively described or argued at all. Yet, the author manages to make the point in a remarkably compelling manner, and the overall effect is soul chilling. She treats not just species extinctions, but extinctions of languages, of cultures, of industries, and of livelihoods. She does this by probing deeply into her own past experiences, beginning with her youthful forays in Cornwall, and continuing to her recent excursions to the polar regions. Along with that, she weaves seamlessly into her discourse the observations and thoughts of innumerable past authors, from the ancient Greeks to the writers of recent decades. Clearly the author is well read, and she easily draws on the contributions of others even though she seems to be able to see things with a thousand pairs of eyes herself. The early chapters are narrative, often in a seemingly florid prose which may not appeal to all -- consider, for example: "Mists moved against the still hedges, slow exhalations of the failing day." But within this, slowly a thesis builds as the author leads us from the fallow pastures of Cornwall through the hulks of the whaling industry in the southern ocean and finally into the native people's lands of far northern Canada. Along the way, we are presented with the parallel between human's extinction of species and of culture and language, even our own in cases. Although our estrangement from nature is not directly argued or treated, it is adequately revealed by example. It is not clear from this book whether that is indeed a good or bad development. It seems that humans left a very poor record on species, and other, extinctions when they were well connected to nature. Perhaps our estrangement from nature will allow us a perspective by which effective action can be deployed and cultural changes made to arrest extinctions. This is a book which should draw the reader to think along with the author. In all the extinction narrative, the author continually points to the nostalgia that humans feel for things lost and destroyed. For this reviewer, a true nostalgia will be simply: the first reading of Challenger's book in the cold, gray days of December. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Living in PlaceBy Stephen W. ArkleTeaching texts that deal with living in the environment over the past years, this one certainly shows what happens when we move too far from nature in the spaces we live. Thoughtful with wonderful analogies and allusions. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. ...what a concise book!By Penny Reilly...I have always loved this kind of writing and the depth Ms Challenger goes to in her descriptive style will appeal to those who are simply, mildly curious to the science -v- spirituality of our fragile planet ...wonderful book!

Realizing the link between her own estrangement from nature and the cultural shifts that led to a dramatic rise in extinctions, award-winning writer Melanie Challenger travels in search of the stories behind these losses. From an exploration of an abandoned mine in England to an Antarctic sea voyage to South Georgia's old whaling stations, from a sojourn in South America to a stay among an Inuit community in Canada, she uncovers species, cultures, and industries touched by extinction. Accompanying her on this journey are the thoughts of anthropologists, biologists, and philosophers who have come before her. Drawing on their words as well as firsthand witness and ancestral memory, Challenger traces the mindset that led to our destructiveness and proposes a path of redemption rooted in our emotional responses. This sobering yet illuminating book looks beyond natural devastation to examine why and what's next.

From Publishers WeeklyStarred . Award-winning poet Challenger (*Galatea*) imbues this ambitious meditation with the courage of an explorer, the scientific curiosity of a botanist and a geologist, the excited digging of an archeologist, the compassion of a cultural anthropologist, the long reach of a historian, and the urgent concern of an environmentalist. She travels from a writer's solitary cabin on the Ding Dong Moor, close by the ruins of a tin mine in Cornwall, England, to a journey to Antarctica with the British Antarctic Survey, back to the North Yorkshire town of Whitby, and on to the tundra of the Arctic where the language and culture of the Inuit barely survive. Eventually Challenger comes to rest in a narrowboat on the River Cam in Cambridgeshire. At every stop in her peregrination, she muses on evolutionary changes marked by extinctions past and present. The chief culprit of our estrangement from nature in the 20th century is, for her, the urge to fuse humans and technology. Throughout this beautifully written, moving, and important book, Challenger yearns to find that feeling of belonging to a particular place. Her connection, one comes to feel, is to the past and present of our whole precarious planet. Agent: Jessica Woollard, the Marsh Agency. (Dec.)From BooklistAn extended essay exploring Challengers thoughts about her and humanitys attitudes toward nature, this work opens with her lament, looking back on growing up near London, over feeling immured, without even a favorite flower to call her own. Reflecting on memories of a grandmothers reaction to the urbanization of the British landscape, Challenger repairs to Cornwall, the first of several journeys that structure her ruminations. Once in placeher subsequent destinations are the British territories of the South Atlantic Ocean and the Canadian Arcticvestiges of Cornwalls millennia of tin mining entwine with Challengers references to philosophers and naturalists by way of coming to grips with economic activitys tendencies, as she sees them, to debilitate the environment. The remnants of the whaling industry, in particular, fascinate her and also, by extension, industrialisms erosion if not extinction of indigenous cultures. With her literary ruminations and search for an endangered flower

continuing through an essay-ending boat trip through Cambridgeshire, Challenger offers no certainties but intimates that reconnection with nature is possible, a hopeful posture that should attract readers. --Gilbert Taylor Praise for *On Extinction*
On Extinction is a strange hybrid of travelogue and natural science, misted over with a wanderer's lonesome observations of a world in the process of disappearing. Amid this solid research, there is fine and truly poetic prose. The big loops of this peregrinating work intersect in interesting ways; a strangeness is evoked, a strangeness that conveys how, in spite of all our erudition, we walk the earth in the 21st century as in a dream." *The New York Times Book Review* "A deep look at the human capacity for extinction twined with roamings to the far ends of the earth, from poet and fledgling natural historian Challenger. She has a rangy curiosity that extends well past ignorance and alienation as the sole agents of the man-made extinction. A formidable inquiry into why the marvels of nature and the distinctiveness of cultures are constantly imperiled." *Kirkus* "Erudite and impassioned, Melanie Challenger's *On Extinction* is a ruminative examination on the way our 21st century world is changing quickly . . . A timely and important book, *On Extinction* will make you think, one of the finest things a book can do. *The Dallas Morning News* [Challenger] has a keen awareness of how the past is layered beneath the present, and how transient both natural and human systems are [On Extinction] lets the reader observe a creative and intelligent mind at work on problems that face all of us. *Columbus Dispatch* "A book which eloquently explores the unhallowedness of species extinctions and which also depicts humanity's resultant bereftness: their loss is ours." Jay Griffiths, author of *Wild: An Elemental Journey*