



Straw Dogs: Thoughts on Humans and Other Animals

By John Gray

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The British bestseller *Straw Dogs* is an exciting, radical work of philosophy, which sets out to challenge our most cherished assumptions about what it means to be human. From Plato to Christianity, from the Enlightenment to Nietzsche and Marx, the Western tradition has been based on arrogant and erroneous beliefs about human beings and their place in the world. Philosophies such as liberalism and Marxism think of humankind as a species whose destiny is to transcend natural limits and conquer the Earth. John Gray argues that this belief in human difference is a dangerous illusion and explores how the world and human life look once humanism has been finally abandoned. The result is an exhilarating, sometimes disturbing book that leads the reader to question our deepest-held beliefs. Will Self, in the *New Statesman*, called *Straw Dogs* his book of the year: "I read it once, I read it twice and took notes . . . I thought it that good." "Nothing will get you thinking as much as this brilliant book" (*Sunday Telegraph*).

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Humans think they are free, conscious beings, when in truth they are deluded animals, writes London University economics professor Gray (*Black Mass*) in a series of brief and intriguing mini-essays. His themes include the similarities between hypnotism and financial markets and uncomfortable truths behind drug use and its prohibition. In a chapter called Deception, Gray traces Humanism from Plato through Postmodernism. He critiques both science and religion: Science can advance human knowledge, it cannot make humanity cherish truth. Like the Christians of former times, scientists are caught up in the web of power; they struggle for survival and success; their view of the world is a patchwork of conventional beliefs. At a certain point, it can be difficult to see where Gray's allegiances lie. He tears down institutions, especially consciousness, self, free will and morality, and questions our ability to solve the problems of overpopulation and overconsumption: Only a breed of ex-humans can thrive in the world that unchecked human expansion has created. So what's left? Gray recommends a devaluation of progress, mastery, and immortality, and a return to contemplation and acceptance: Other animals do not need a purpose in life. Can we not think of the aim of life as being simply to see? This comforting question punctuates an otherwise profoundly disturbing meditation on humankind's real place in the world. (*Oct.*)

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From [Booklist](#)

In a work of thoroughgoing iconoclasm, British philosopher Gray attacks the belief that humans are different from and superior to animals. Invoking pure Darwinism, he savages every perspective from which humans appear as anything more than a genetic accident that has produced a highly destructive species (*homo sapiens*)--a species that exterminates other species at a phenomenal rate as our swelling numbers despoil the global environment. Gray explains the human refusal to confront the darker realities of our nature largely as the result of how we have consoled ourselves with the myths of Christianity and its secular offspring, humanism and utopianism. Human vanity, he complains, has even converted science (which should teach us of our insignificant place in nature) into an ideology of progress. But neither hope for progress nor confidence in human morality passes muster with Gray, who envisions a future in which the human population finally contracts as a world politics that grows ever more predatory and brutal shatters all such illusions. As a work of ruthless rigor, this provocative book will force readers to reexamine their own convictions. *Bryce Christensen*

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Review

"Nothing will get you thinking as much as this brilliant book." ?George Walden, *The Sunday Telegraph*

"There is unlikely to be a more provocative or more compelling book published this year than *Straw Dogs* . . . Gray is one of the most consistently interesting and unpredictable thinkers in Britain." ?Jason Cowley, *The Observer (London)*

"One of the most important books published this year, and will probably prove to be one of the most important this century. An attempt to suggest new ways of thinking and feeling . . . nobody can hope to understand the times in which we live unless they have read *Straw Dogs*." ?Sue Corrigan, *Mail on Sunday*

"At once daunting and enthralling, Gray's remarkable new book shows us what it would be like to live

without the distraction of consolations.” ?*Adam Phillips*

“This powerful and brilliant book is an essential guide to the new Millennium. Straw Dogs challenges all our assumptions about what it is to be human, and convincingly shows that most of them are delusions.” ?*J.G. Ballard*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Leigh Brown:

As people who live in the actual modest era should be change about what going on or facts even knowledge to make all of them keep up with the era which is always change and move forward. Some of you maybe may update themselves by studying books. It is a good choice for you but the problems coming to an individual is you don't know what one you should start with. This Straw Dogs: Thoughts on Humans and Other Animals is our recommendation to make you keep up with the world. Why, as this book serves what you want and wish in this era.

Nicholas Gober:

The experience that you get from Straw Dogs: Thoughts on Humans and Other Animals is a more deep you searching the information that hide inside the words the more you get enthusiastic about reading it. It doesn't mean that this book is hard to understand but Straw Dogs: Thoughts on Humans and Other Animals giving you buzz feeling of reading. The writer conveys their point in selected way that can be understood through anyone who read this because the author of this e-book is well-known enough. This book also makes your current vocabulary increase well. It is therefore easy to understand then can go to you, both in printed or e-book style are available. We suggest you for having this specific Straw Dogs: Thoughts on Humans and Other Animals instantly.

Joseph Cosgrove:

The reason why? Because this Straw Dogs: Thoughts on Humans and Other Animals is an unordinary book that the inside of the publication waiting for you to snap this but latter it will zap you with the secret that inside. Reading this book beside it was fantastic author who also write the book in such amazing way makes the content on the inside easier to understand, entertaining way but still convey the meaning completely. So , it is good for you because of not hesitating having this nowadays or you going to regret it. This unique book will give you a lot of benefits than the other book get such as help improving your proficiency and your critical thinking technique. So , still want to hold off having that book? If I have been you I will go to the book store hurriedly.

Randy Mosley:

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