

Fernando Pessoa

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Consider the extraordinary dualism which man presents of *natural* and of *moral* sentiment. Nature is «red in tooth and claw»; the law of nature is selfishness. Man, indeed, acts most often — most often, in truth — according to this law of nature. Man, deny it not, is a selfish being however natural he be in so being. But man when postulating his own moral rules never sincerely builds them upon egotism but upon altruism, and thus, in our advanced ethics, we are unnatural, we are in opposition to nature.

Whence do we draw this idea of altruism which is not in nature?

What has this to do with the «idea of Free-will» of M. Fouillée ?

1906?

Textos Filosóficos . Vol. I. Fernando Pessoa. (Estabelecidos e prefaciados por António de Pina Coelho.) Lisboa: Ática, 1968 (imp. 1993): 205.