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"Nature is Already Sacred"

Milton, Kay

Milton, Kay. "Nature is Already Sacred." *Environmental Values* 8, no. 4 (1999): 437–49. doi:10.3197/096327199129341905 .

Environmentalists often argue that, in order to address fundamentally the harmful impact of their activities on the environment, western industrial societies need to change their attitude to nature. Specifically, they need to see nature as sacred, and to acknowledge that humanity is a part of nature rather than separate from it. In this paper, I seek to show that these two ideas are incompatible in the context of western culture. Drawing particularly on ideas expressed by western conservationists, I argue that nature is already seen as sacred, and that its sacredness depends on it being seen as separate from humanity, an idea which effectively contradicts the scientific knowledge on which many conservationists base their actions. Goodin's green theory of value is used as a source of ideas about why non-human nature is experienced as sacred, and can be extended to suggest that other values, such as "development" and "progress," are also seen as sacred.
— Text from The White Horse Press website

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