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Mulligan, Martin, "Re-enchanting Conservation Work: Reflections on the Australian Experience"

Mulligan, Martin. “Re-enchanting Conservation Work: Reflections on the Australian Experience.” *Environmental Values* 10, no. 1 (2001): 19–33. doi: 10.3197/096327101129340723 .

The Australian nature conservation movement is effectively entering its second century of existence and this transition has prompted a degree of reflection about the strategies used hitherto. After going through boom years—as part of a broader environmental movement—from the 1970s until the early 1990s, a more difficult political environment in the second half of the 1990s has sparked a semi-public discussion about priorities and future strategies. This article argues that the debate about future conservation strategies needs to tackle two important legacies that have become increasingly problematic: a lingering “frontier mentality” that fosters a separation between people and “pristine nature”; and a heavy reliance on scientific expertise and rational arguments for conservation. This dual legacy has blinded the movement to the aesthetic appeal of the romantic philosophical tradition in ecology and the importance of sensuous, embodied experiences of the “more than human” world. In rethinking the legacy of the romantic philosopher Henry David Thoreau, the article argues for a shift of emphasis from wilderness to wildness in order to bring conservation home to more people. It suggests that we can learn from the ability of Australian Aborigines to listen to the land in order to “sing up” the stories that are embedded in landscapes. Learning to read and create landscape stories provides creative ways of building more affective bonds between people and the land. Non-rational approaches to nature conservation can help to re-enchant conservation “work.” (Source: The White Horse Press)

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Download:
PDF: https://www.environmentandsociety.org/sites/default/files/key_docs/ev_10no.1_mulligan_martin.pdf

Further readings:

- Robin, Libby. *Defending the Little Desert: The Rise of Ecological Consciousness in Australia*. Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1998.

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Related links:

- Article on the official website
  http://www.erica.demon.co.uk/EV/EV1002.html
- The White Horse Press
  http://www.erica.demon.co.uk/

Websites linked in this text:

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