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"Nature Connoisseurship"

Greenbaum, Allan

Greenbaum, Allan. "Nature Connoisseurship." *Environmental Values* 14, no. 3 (2005): 389–407. doi:10.3197/096327105774434477 .

Environmentalists who seek to protect wild nature, biodiversity and so on for its own sake manifest a disposition to value the interesting at least on par with the useful. This disposition toward the interesting, which provides the affective and cognitive context for the discovery of intrinsic values in nature and the elaboration of ecocentric ethics, does not arise simply from learning about nature but is part of a more general socially inculcated cultural system. Nature connoisseurship exhibits formal parallels with art connoisseurship. The abstraction-oriented cultural system which prizes 'disinterested interest' is characteristic of culturally rich fractions (or subdivisions) of the middle class in modern Western societies. Valuing nature for its own sake (like valuing, for its own sake, the domination of nature) is not a 'natural' response to nature but a disciplined cultural accomplishment.

— Text from The White Horse Press website

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