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Climbing mountains, hugging trees: A cross-cultural examination of love for nature

Thomas Crowley  

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Abstract

Developing a renewed love for nature is “some argue” a crucial component of addressing the environmental crisis. However, the connection between emotional bonds to nature and effective environmental action is not always straightforward, especially given vastly different notions of “love” and “nature” in different cultures. This article evaluates different models of “loving nature” in terms of their relationship to action and the inclusivity of their scope. In Norway, several philosopher-mountaineers advocate loving nature through *friluftsliv*, or outdoor exploration; while this approach has promoted change in a wealthy, sparsely populated country, its wider applicability and its approach to gender is questioned. In India, the Chipko movement, which aimed to save trees by hugging them, seems to provide a more inclusive form of loving nature. On closer examination, though, some Chipko advocates rely heavily on a vision of nature that is highly feminized and divorced from social realities. Alternatives to *friluftsliv* and

Chipko are then examined, including Sigmund KvalÅ, yâ€™s political ecophilosophy and *varkari* movements in India. Those movements that have a more practical, less idealized, view of nature-love are more likely to effect lasting, positive ecosocial change.



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Keywords

Love; Nature; *Friluftsliv*; Chipko; *Varkari*; Ecophilosophy

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