

Loving Humans, other Animals, and the Rest of Nature

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The philosopher/novelist Iris Murdoch said it best: “[L]ove (properly understood) does make the world go round.” But what exactly do these words mean, especially in a world of skepticism and irony? In this lecture I offer the rudiments of a proper understanding of love, and sympathetically engage with the skeptics and ironists. Here is a spoiler about where we will come out:

“We can be ethical only in relation to something we can see, feel, understand, love, or otherwise have faith in.”

These words by the American environmentalist, Aldo Leopold, are profoundly important for the environmental movement, the animal protection movement, and for other social movements as well. Love is not all we need, but it is hard to see how we can go on without it.

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