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Animals and Nature: Cultural Myths, Cultural Realities

Preece

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In this book, Rod Preece takes issue with the popular but simplistic view that the Western cultural tradition has encouraged attitudes of domination and exploitation toward the natural world, particularly animals. he contends that the much-maligned Western tradition has far more to commend it than is customarily recognized, and the much-vaunted “Oriental” and Aboriginal orientations to animals and nature have habitually been described in a misleadingly rosy hue.

According to Preece, the West has often been misread, frequently for ideological reasons. He argues that Western conceptions of objectivity and individuality have in fact resulted in a readier appreciation of the worth of animals than in some other cultures. Moreover, the Western anti-rationalist tradition has often treated animals and nature with a healthy respect. There is a continuing disjunction between theory and practice in the non-Western world, as well as in the West, where all too often only one side of the Aboriginal and Oriental myth and literature is reported. Preece concludes that while the West has much to learn from Oriental and Aboriginal traditions, so also have the Oriental and Aboriginal worlds much to learn from the West.

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