



The Social Creation of Nature

By Neil Evernden

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One reason for our failure to "save the earth," argues Neil Evernden, is our disagreement about what "nature" really is?how it works, what constitutes a risk to it, and even whether we ourselves are part of it. Nature is as much a social entity as a physical one. In addition to the physical resources to be harnessed and transformed, it consists of a domain of norms that may be called upon in defense of certain social ideals. In exploring the consequences of conventional understandings of nature, *The Social Creation of Nature* also seeks a way around the limitations of a socially created nature in order to defend what is actually imperiled?"wildness," in which, Thoreau wrote, lies hope for "the preservation of the world."

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Editorial Review

Review

Sociobiologists talk about human life as if it were no more than an element of Nature, bound by its iron laws. Neil Evernden makes an end run around them by showing that once upon a time 'Nature' did not exist. Rather, he says, it is a human invention and it has a history.

(Environmental History Review)

A thoughtful and illuminating book... For Evernden, 'wildness' is what should be defended and preserved.

(New Scientist)

I think *The Social Creation of Nature* stands Evernden in relation to the present generation roughly as Thoreau stood in relation to New England Transcendentalism.

*(Max Oelschlaeger, author of *The Idea of Wilderness*.)*

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