



# The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age

*Harriet Ritvo*

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## **The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age** Harriet Ritvo

Harriet Ritvo provides a picture of how animals figured in English thinking during the 19th century and, by extension, how they served as metaphors for human psychological needs and sociopolitical aspirations. Victorian England has been seen as a period of burgeoning scientific cattle breeding and newly fashionable dog shows; the age of Empire and big game hunting; and an era of reform and reformers that saw the birth of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. This volume examines Victorian thinking about animals in the context of other lines of thought: evolution, class structure, popular science and natural history, and imperial domination. The papers and publications of people and organizations concerned with agricultural breeding, veterinary medicine, the world of pets, vivisection and other humane causes, zoos, hunting at home and abroad, all reveal underlying assumptions and deeply held convictions - for example, about Britain's imperial enterprise, social discipline, and the hierarchy of orders, in nature and in human society. The text seeks to contribute a further topic of inquiry into Victorian studies; its combination of rhetorical analysis with more conventional methods of historical research seeks to offer the reader a new perspective on Victorian culture.

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