



Wasteland: A History

Vittoria Di Palma

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In *Wasteland*, Vittoria Di Palma takes on the “anti-picturesque,” offering an account of landscapes that have traditionally drawn fear and contempt. Di Palma argues that a convergence of beliefs, technologies, institutions, and individuals in 18th-century England resulted in the formulation of cultural attitudes that continue to shape the ways we evaluate landscape today. Staking claims on the aesthetics of disgust, she addresses how emotional response has been central to the development of ideas about nature, beauty, and sublimity. With striking illustrations reaching back to the 1600s—husbandry manuals, radical pamphlets, gardening treatises, maps, and landscape paintings— *Wasteland* spans the fields of landscape studies, art and architectural history, geography, history, and the history of science and technology. In stirring prose, Di Palma tackles our conceptions of such hostile territories as swamps, mountains, and forests, arguing that they are united not by any essential physical characteristics but by the aversive reactions they inspire.

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