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"'Forsaken Spot' to 'Classic Ground': Geological Heritage in Australia and the Recuperative Power of the Deep Past"

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Douglas, Kirsty. "'Forsaken Spot' to 'Classic Ground:' Geological Heritage in Australia and the Recuperative Power of the Deep Past." *Environment and History* 12, no. 3 (Aug., 2006): 269–96. doi:10.3197/096734006778226346 . The scarcity of navigable rivers and elevated mountain ranges in Australia encourages an aesthetic fashioned by the monumental scale represented by deep-time landscapes and objects instead of geography. This study seeks to construct a theory of geological heritage and the redemptive or recuperative power of material remains of the deep past, concentrating on three landscapes. The South Australian Division of the Geological Society of Australia has played a central role in the preservation of geological heritage in that state since 1966 when the glacial pavements of Adelaide's Hallett Cove became the movement's flagship. The 44,800 hectare Lake Callabonna Fossil Reserve, a dry lake in the state's arid far east, has been celebrated by vertebrate palaeontologists as a significant landscape since the 1890s. The dry Willandra Lakes of western New South Wales were inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1981 for their cultural, archaeological and geological significance. These three celebrated areas have been variously described as wasteland, desert, forsaken, degraded, unproductive and isolated. Geological perspectives provide a new lexicon for the appreciation of Australian landscapes as the deep past is mobilised to turn them into regions of 'world renown,' or 'classic ground.' All rights reserved. © 2006 The White Horse Press

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