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"Aquaphobia, Tulipmania, Biophilia: A Moral Geography of the Dutch Landscape"

Zwart, Hub

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In Genesis (1:9–10) we are told that God gathered the waters into one place, in order to let the dry land appear, which He called earth, while the waters were called seas. In the Netherlands, this process took more than a single day, and it was the work of man. Gradually, a cultivated landscape emerged out of diffuse nature. In the course of centuries, the Dutch determined the conditions that allowed different aspects of nature to present themselves. This process is described as a moral geography in the sense that different types of landscape are read as manifestations (or materialisations) of different moral attitudes towards nature, whereas concrete landscape interventions are interpreted as instances of moral criticism directed towards the activities and values of previous generations. At present, this process (the genesis of the Dutch landscape) is being reversed, as diffuse, wetland nature is experiencing a come-back.

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