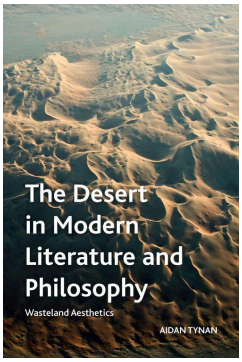
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The Desert in Modern Literature and Philosophy: Wasteland Aesthetics

Tynan, Aidan



The Desert in Modern Literature and Philosophy. Book cover.

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Aidan Tynan provocatively rethinks some of the core assumptions of ecocriticism and the environmental humanities. Showing the significance of deserts and wastelands in literature since the Romantics, he argues that the desert has served to articulate anxieties over the cultural significance of space in the Anthropocene. From imperial travel writing to postmodernism, from the Old Testament to salvagepunk, the desert has been a terrain of desire over which the Western imagination of space and place has ranged. As our planetary ecological crisis heads in increasingly catastrophic directions, this critique of the figure of the desert in literature, philosophy and wider culture can help us map an environmental affect that finds itself both attracted to and repelled by arid, depopulated and barren landscapes of various kinds. Philosophers crucial to understanding our contemporary environmental condition make extensive use of the desert as a conceptual

topography, a place of thought. Nietzsche's warning that 'the desert grows' has been taken up by Heidegger, Derrida and Deleuze in their critiques of modernity. Tynan engages this philosophical work through a range of 20th and 21st century art and literature, and provides new interpretations of the most significant literary deserts from T. S. Eliot to Don DeLillo. (Text adapted from Edinburgh University Press)

Aidan Tynan Senior Lecturer in English literature at Cardiff University. He has also written *Deleuze's Literary Clinic: Criticism and the Politics of Symptoms* and co-edited *Credo Credit Crisis: Speculations on Faith and Money* and *Deleuze and the Schizoanalysis of Literature*.

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