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Maria Luisa De Rinaldis

‘Landscape for its own sake’: Walter Pater’s Ecology in “Sebastian van Storck”

Abstract I: Questo saggio si propone di analizzare la rappresentazione in Walter Pater delle modalità di percepire la natura, il paesaggio e la loro interrelazione con l’umano, alla luce della teoria eco-critica e dell’estetica materialista. Il suo ritratto immaginario “Sebastian van Storck” offre lo spunto per indagare come in Pater il testuale sia in continuità con la vita, mettendo in discussione nozioni di dualità e differenza tra sistemi in conflitto. Più di altri protagonisti pateriani, Sebastian sperimenta una simbiosi con il suo ambiente. Il presente saggio si concentrerà in particolare sul suo rapporto con la terra nell’Olanda del XVII secolo, al fine di mettere in luce la radicale poetica ecologica iscritta nel ritratto di Pater.

Abstract II: This paper aims at analysing Walter Pater’s representation of modes of perceiving nature, landscape and their interrelation with the human, from the point of view of ecocritical theory and materialist aesthetics. His imaginary portrait “Sebastian van Storck” offers scope for investigating how in Pater textuality is in continuity with life, questioning notions of duality and difference between conflicting systems. More than other Paterian protagonists, Sebastian experiences symbiosis with his environment. This paper will specifically focus on his relation with the land in seventeenth-century Holland in order to unearth the radical poetics of ecology that Pater’s portrait embeds.

Keywords: Walter Pater, imaginary portrait, Holland, landscape, ecology.

1. Introduction

The traditional critical approach to Walter Pater’s imaginary portrait, “Sebastian van Storck”, has analysed it in terms of a dichotomy between form and dissolution, art and the matter of life. The intention of this essay is to probe the interspace between these assumed binaries and unearth the radical poetics of ecology that it embeds. In this work Pater reflects on the golden age of Dutch art, the period in which the narrative is set. The Dutch, according to Pater, were beginning to realise the pictorial beauty of their country aided by their painters, ‘the first true masters of landscape for its own sake’¹. They valued their landscape as much

¹ “Sebastian van Storck”. 1910 [1886]. *Imaginary Portraits*. London: MacMillan and Co., 81-115, 87. All quotations are from this edition. The present essay originates in a discussion at the University of Roma Tre on

through aesthetic as through direct experience. This landscape, we are reminded, has been created by feats of engineering, by a fight with the sea no less heroic than the fight against the Spanish for Dutch independence. Holland's fragile water ecology frames the story and sets in relief the alienation of the protagonist as he distances himself from its environment, led by a desire for self-effacement and annihilation. He believes in Spinoza's doctrine of the one absolute being, sharing the "infectious mania" that Pater discusses in *Plato and Platonism*, and is unable to live the finiteness of the phenomenal world². In his devotion to permanence, Sebastian feels the deadly appeal of the primeval, of a time when Holland's inhabitants were living "a humble existence" with no desire to change, surrounded by "great breadths of calm light above and around" just "influenced by, and in a sense, living upon them" (Pater 1910: 94-95).

2. Primeval Landscape

In the 16th chapter of his *Natural History*, Pliny, quoted twice in Pater's text, had described the two primitive tribes of the Chauci, situated in north-west Germany, justifying his digression from an ongoing discussion of fruitful trees with the urgency to reveal the surprise "felt on finding by actual experience what is the life of mortals when they inhabit a country that is without either tree or shrub"³. Obviously there is no mention of the Low Countries but the geography Pliny describes is that typical of the area:

I have already stated that in the East many nations that dwell on the shores of the ocean are placed in this necessitous state; and I myself have personally witnessed the condition of the Chauci, both the Greater and the Lesser, situate [sic] in the regions of the far North. In those climates a vast tract of land, invaded twice each day and night by the overflowing waves of the ocean, opens a question that is eternally proposed to us by Nature, whether these regions are to be looked upon as belonging to the land, or whether as forming a portion of the sea?

Here a wretched race is found, inhabiting either the more elevated spots of land, or else eminences artificially constructed, and of a height to which they know by experience that the highest tides will never reach. Here they pitch their cabins; and when the waves cover the surrounding country far and wide, like so many mariners on board ship are they: when, again, the tide recedes, their condition is that of so many shipwrecked men, and around their cottages they pursue the fishes as they make their escape with the receding tide. It is not their lot, like the adjoining nations, to

Maria Del Sapio's seminal essay "Pater, Sebastian e l'assoluto", re-edited by Maddalena Pennacchia, Simona Corso and Maria Paola Guarducci in *Eretiche ed Esteti* (2021). Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 137-162 (10 May 2024). Paola Colaiacomo's comments on Pater have been invaluable. I am building on the important scholarship of Lene Østermark-Johansen, bringing together a wider body of material and a longer history to chart a trajectory of ideas hitherto perhaps not fully addressed. Perhaps the most significant discussion of the theme developed in this article is to be found in Denis Denisoff's volume *Decadent Ecology in British Literature and Art, 1860-1910: Decay, Desire, and the Pagan Revival* (2021). See also Giovanni Bassi (2017).

² Pater 2004 [1893]: 24. Pater's revision of metaphysics and his materialist aesthetic are discussed in Morgan (2017).

³ Pliny the Elder 1855 [AD 77-79]: Book XVI, 1.

keep any flocks for sustenance by their milk, nor even to maintain a warfare with wild beasts, every shrub, even, being banished afar. With the sedge and the rushes of the marsh they make cords, and with these they weave the nets employed in the capture of the fish; they fashion the mud, too, with their hands, and drying it by the help of the winds more than of the sun, cook their food by its aid, and so warm their entrails, frozen as they are by the northern blasts; their only drink, too, is rainwater, which they collect in holes dug at the entrance of their abodes: and yet these nations, if this very day they were vanquished by the Roman people, would exclaim against being reduced to slavery! Be it so, then – Fortune is most kind to many, just when she means to punish them (Pliny 1855: Book XVI.I).

In an informed geography, where borders between land and water remain unstable, unfixed, it is the chaos of the ocean that predominates. Pliny defines these primitive inhabitants as a “wretched race”, compelled to inhabit elevated spots of land, although when they suffer flooding they become mariners exposed to the dangers of sea water, or shipwrecked men who have lost all their possessions. Unlike other nations they cannot settle anywhere, nor become farmers, nor raise their own cattle, but feed only on fish and drink rainwater.

In other classical historiographic sources, the Chauci mainly appear as the “most noble nation among the Germans”, as Tacitus writes, but also bellicose and resisting Roman dominion⁴ (Murphy 2004: 170). Pliny’s version, however, emphasises not their value but their inferiority with respect to Rome. Given their wretchedness, it would be a blessing for them to be enslaved and spared a miserable condition. Trevor Murphy (2004) has thoroughly commented on how Pliny channels the anxieties of the empire, providing an image of periphery that reminds one of the risk of reverting to primeval confusion. The Romans would have given the Chauci fixed territories and would have made their country less vulnerable with a network of dykes and roads, exporting a model of acquisition, since in Pliny’s Rome, “‘living’ means ‘having’, if not ‘getting’” (Murphy 2004: 173). Guided by the ocean, far away from that balance between sea and land that for the Latin writer is peculiar to Italy, the life of the Chauci testifies to the instability of possessing and of possessions, since they are not colonists but castaways and exiles (Murphy 2004: 171-174). If they can be seen as constituting a kind of anti-Rome, Pliny’s myth of Roman dominion changing the Cauci’s fortune is overtly destabilised in Pater. Sebastian van Storck, the bird-like protagonist of Pater’s portrait, looks in fact at the living conditions of primeval forefathers “but without Pliny’s contempt for them” (Pater 1910: 94):

A cloyed Roman might despise their humble existence, fixed by necessity from age to age, and with no desire to change, as “the ocean poured in its flood twice a day, making it uncertain whether the country was a part of the continent or of the sea”. But for his part Sebastian found something of poetry in all that, as he conceived what thoughts the old Hollander might have had at his fishing, with nets themselves woven of seaweed, waiting carefully for his drink on the heavy rains, and taking refuge,

⁴ Tacitus (*Germania*) is quoted in Trevor Murphy (2004). For a discussion of Pliny and the margins of the empire see Murphy (2004: 165-193).

as the flood rose, on the sand-hills, in a little hut constructed but airily on tall stakes, conformable to the elevation of the highest tides, like a navigator, thought the learned writer, when the sea was risen, like a shipwrecked mariner when it was retired. For the fancy of Sebastian he lived with great breadths of calm light above and around him, influenced by, and, in a sense, living upon them, and surely might well complain, though to Pliny's so infinite surprise, on being made a Roman citizen (Pater 1910: 94-95).

We could ask whether Sebastian is providing a predictably romanticised version of primitive life or whether he shows greater awareness of how many tales of shipwreck and disaster are implied in colonial ventures, how many stories of erasure of indigenous life, thus undermining an "action-hero version of history" (Park 2025: 1). The poetical look of Sebastian here seems to coincide with that of the author and reduce the tension between the viewpoints of the character and of the author.

3.1. A Politics of the Environment

Pater uses the genre of imaginary portraiture to present a historical and cultural climate, a set of ideas rather than a story. In sending his first portrait to the editor of *Macmillan's Magazine*, he writes:

I send you [...] a M.S. entitled *The House and the Child*. It is not, as you may perhaps fancy, the first part of a work of fiction, but is meant to be complete in itself [...]. I call the M.S. a portrait, and mean readers, as they might do on seeing a portrait, to begin speculating – what came of him? (Park 2025: 1).

In "Sebastian van Storck" Pater uses character to elaborate a politics of the environment, while questioning the boundaries of subjectivity: "The Paterian body as a viewing body, a travelling body, perceptive of space and landscape, needs further addressing, and the geographies of his imaginary portraits invite us to do just that" (Østermark-Johansen 2022: 6). Not only does the text decentre the foundation of European culture from the established settings of France and Italy by refocusing on the North (Østermark-Johansen 2022: 137), but also, to borrow the words that Amitav Ghosh (2016) uses in another context, it looks "first, and most urgently, for traces and portents of [an] altered world" (Bassi & Mason 2021: 8)⁵.

The acquisitive code of Rome interferes with the way the Dutch are represented although the latter embody a different conception of land dominion, one that is not political but ecological. Pater remarks that "[s]o genially attempered, so warm, was life become, in

⁵ On ecocritical imagination and discourse see also Bate (1991), Matheus (1991), Buell (1995), Mentz (2009, 2021). As theorised by Kerridge & Sammels "Never before has so much scientific argument been assembled to support the perception of a global ecosystem [...]; the contemporary movement, from Rachel Carson onwards, expresses a new perception of the relationship between human practices and the material world. An ecological perspective strives to see how all things are inter-dependent, even those apparently most separate" (1998: 7).

the land of which Pliny had spoken as scarcely dry land at all' (Pater 1910: 92). By the seventeenth century the Dutch had managed to greatly improve their strategies to reclaim land from the sea. Polders (reclaimed land protected by dykes) and hydrological innovations were crucial in enhancing the country's wellbeing and expansion. Dykes, windmills and military engineering as well were reshaping and permanently altering Holland's unique geography. Wet and dry ditches were designed to create complex, layered defences suited to the environment. Flooding was controlled in specific areas to impede enemy movement. Dykes controlled water levels, since people lived in fear of them being fragile, eventually leading to disaster and sinking. Water shaped national identity, producing a strong emphasis on planning and cooperation while the fight against water was assimilated "to the fight against human enemies" (Mostert 2020: 313).

Sebastian rejects both human and artistic reshaping of the watery landscape. In his search for the effective equivalence between his "line of being" and his "line of thought" (Pater 1910: 83), he would erase any perturbation of the essence, of the absolute being, and escape to a pre-modern landscape of unreclaimed land. A first sign of his tension with the environment is his alignment with winter immobility:

Sebastian van Storck, confessedly the most graceful performer in all that skating multitude, moving in endless maze over the vast surface of the frozen water-meadow, liked best this season of the year for its expression of perfect impassivity, or at least of a perfect repose. The earth was, or seemed to be, at rest, with a breathlessness of slumber which suited the young man's peculiar temper (Pater 1910: 81).

The immobility of nature is a topos which implies the idea that there is no fight going on; the stillness of the Arctic Sea, in particular, has provided an image of the paralysis of Nature, its failure to maintain control of the tides' regular rhythms (Murphy 2004: 179-181). Inseparable from his environment, the phlegmatic Sebastian, for whom the "one abstract being was as the pallid Arctic sun, disclosing itself over the dead level of a glacial, a barren and absolutely lonely sea" (Pater 1910: 108), experiences the "freezing influence" (109) of his philosophy of emptiness, of *tabula rasa*. However, he is also led sometimes to assert his own self and mar the "calm" of "that one, unruffled consciousness" (109). Sea-related metaphors are used to describe abstract entities, again opening up conceptual bridges between the author's implied stances and those of the character. If, as Pater writes, Sebastian can always tolerate the sea both in art and in life, the sea he loves is unconstrained, an invading, pervasive power, breaking all boundaries:

Invading all places, stealing under one's feet, insinuating itself everywhere along an endless network of canals (by no means such formal channels as we understand by the name, but picturesque rivers, with sedgy banks and haunted by innumerable birds) its incidents present themselves oddly even in one's park or woodland walks; the ship in full sail appearing suddenly among the great trees or above the garden wall, where we had no suspicion of the presence of water (Pater 1910: 92-93).

3.2. “Forced and Artificial Production”

Similarly Sebastian does not appreciate the artistic rendering of the Dutch landscape framed or commodified by the artists attending his family house. Thanks to the “tribe” of such “creatures of leisure” (Pater 1910: 84, 87), “The Dutch had just begun to see what a picture their country was – its canals, and *boompjes*, and endless, broadly-lighted meadows, and thousands of miles of quaint water-side [...]” (87). On the one hand they appreciate art through the landscape, while art in turn encourages them to see pristine, original, beauty: “in the achievement of a type of beauty so national and vernacular, the votaries of purely Dutch art might well feel that the Italianisers [...] went so far afield in vain” (88). Artefacts, to use a notion discussed by Terence Cave, “participate ‘enactively’ in the human environment” and “belong to an ecological continuum, without priority of cognition” (Cave 2022: 34). Dutch artists validate the qualities of the environment revealing all the “wealth of colour” of a land that was supposed to be sad (87) and bringing consciousness of the values the Dutch had fought for both politically and geographically, perceiving the drama of a nation always “ready at any moment to fight anew, against man or the sea” (84). Indifferent to the “thriving genius”⁶ of the Dutch, “making and maintaining dry land where nature had willed the sea” (95), Sebastian repudiates the vitality and sensuous warmth of domestic comforts, of life and seasonal change. He refuses to become the prisoner of “this picturesque and sensuous world of Dutch art, its genial warmth, its struggle for life, its selfish and crafty love” (106). His dislike for “the warm sandbanks of Wynants” or the “eerie relics of the ancient Dutch woodland which survive in Hobben and Ruysdael” (88) can be understood in terms of the way they prevent flooding, annihilation: “Why add, by a forced and artificial production, to the monotonous tide of competing, fleeting existence?” (88). The text forges continuity between art and life, and Sebastian has got his own artistic ideal. He privileges views from a distance, “map-like” (Østermark-Johansen 2022: 147), the kind of view he can enjoy from a room at the top of his house, a refuge for sea-birds – the only birds that can be seen from his windows, whose mention provokes an allusion to the ‘ingenious contrivances’ to attract birds in the windows of cottages represented in the scenery of Jan Steen among others (90):

His preference in the matter of art was, therefore, for those prospects *à vol d’oiseau* – of the caged bird on the wing at last – of which Rubens had the secret, and still more Philip de Koninck, four of whose choicest works occupied the four walls of his chamber; visionary escapes, north, south, east, and west, into a wide-open though, it must be confessed, a somewhat sullen land (89).

Sebastian’s rejection of art starts from his rejection of the comfort of the house and its many ornaments, worlds and dimensions. In fact, this life is in complete contrast “to all

⁶ Pater quotes twice Thomas Browne, although without any attribution to him – “The success of that petty Province of Holland (of which the Grand Seignour proudly said, if they should trouble him as they did the Spaniard, he would send his men with shovels and pick-axes, and throw it into the Sea,) I cannot altogether ascribe to the ingenuity and industry of the people, but the mercy of GOD, that hath disposed them to such a thriving Genius” (*Thomas Browne’s Religio Medici* with an Introduction by Prof. C. H. Herford, 1906, 1-89, 20). His essay “Sir Thomas Browne” was first published in May 1886 (*Macmillan’s Magazine* 54).

that is abstract or cold in art" (86). Surrounded by art as if by a natural element, he needs to adapt: "finding so much art actually about him, he was compelled [...] to adjust himself to it; to ascertain and accept that in it which should least collide with [...] his own characteristic tendencies" (88). A Darwinian process of adaptation is necessary to avoid potential collision between opposing forces and preserve individuality. Pater's response to Darwin was in fact "complex and inconsistent" (Hext 2013: 20). Sebastian's drive is towards emptiness, towards the simplicity of the equation "zero equals zero", sharing Spinoza's philosophy of the existence of one absolute being. He retires to a personal space progressively removed from the heart of the building, alienated from what is contained and constructed there, from what is there achieved, away from "the busy and busy-looking house, crowded with the furniture and the pretty little toys of many generations" (89). The geography of his personal house is not linear, but labyrinthine, since he has to go through a long passage "up a winding staircase, and (again at the end of a long passage) he found himself as if shut off from the whole talkative Dutch world, and in the embrace of that wonderful quiet which is also possible in Holland at its height all around it" (89).

What is interesting is that the land is a similarly layered place, where relics emerge revealing a subterranean world. In particular those of a man's waggon, caught in an inundation perhaps while returning with merchandise from the shore, become intermittently visible. The waggon is artistically wrought and the "throne, set upon it, seemed to distinguish it as a chariot of state". Yet Sebastian with his morbid cast of mind thinks of it as sepulchral, a "grand burial [...] of a king or hero, whose very tomb was wasted away" (94), annulling any sense of political hierarchy. The earth itself is imagined as transformed and transforming: "cooling down for ever from its old cosmic heat", taking colours out of things, with the sea washing away "the long sand-bank [...], which had been the rampart of a town" (98-99).

4. "Scarcely dry land at all"

"Heroic industry", the progressive effort to modify the land, is a "feverish, unworthy agitation" (95): the Dutch's fight against the sea is not part of Sebastian's consciousness. Indeed, his strange indifference to artistic and natural landscape, his flight from the finiteness of his surroundings, is seen literally as a threat to the security of the land. If his intellectual commitment is for some people precious, for others he could be "a plotter" against the Dutch Republic: "A single traitor might cut the dykes in an hour, in the interest of the English or the French" (100). In fact he does not value the dykes, and praises times when the land was at the mercy of floods:

In his passion for *Schwindsucht* – we haven't the word – he found it pleasant to think of the resistless element which left one hardly a foot-space amidst the yielding sand; of the old beds of lost rivers, surviving now only as deeper channels in the sea; of the remains of a certain ancient town, which within men's memory had lost its few remaining inhabitants and, with its already empty tombs, dissolved and disappeared in the flood (93).

If Sebastian's "intellectual consumption" (112) is tied to a search for the absolute that, as for Marcus Aurelius in Marius the Epicurean, is a dystopian ideal leading to self-destruction and "disaster" (Del Sapio 2021: 137), his historical imagination fuels awareness of progressive improvements and problematises the idea of ecological disaster. Going back imaginatively, he helps reconstruct an archeology of the land, perhaps hinting at human responsibility. Sebastian therefore defies heroism. He admires practical action when it is associated with personal affection, as in the reported episode of Hugo Grotius's wife, sacrificing herself to save her husband. Grotius was able to escape from political captivity by hiding in the box regularly sent him full of books.

As the narrative develops, Sebastian's desire for self-erasure is reflected in his journey to a desolate sea-scape that is at one with his state of mind. Repelled by social expectations and by the innocent physical attentions of Mademoiselle van Westrheene, whose ruddy beauty has the heaviness of his ruddy house (101), he takes flight. Sebastian's wish for annihilation is reflected in the appeal for him of the un-reclaimed landscape. He surrenders to the sea. His death by drowning is consonant with his nihilism. Sea imagery encapsulates Sebastian's sense of non-being, it is the epitome of his longing to erase himself from life and re-establish "the calm surface of the absolute, untroubled mind" (106):

Detachment. To hasten hence: to fold up one's whole self, as a vesture put aside: to anticipate, by such individual force as he could find in him, the slow disintegration by which nature herself is levelling the eternal hills: here would be the secret of peace, of such dignity and truth as there could be in a world which after all was essentially an illusion (110).

To discard the artificial vesture of subjectivity and be levelled by nature like a hill is his final goal. The last part of the portrait presents a darker vision of Sebastian's nihilism, associated with ideas of man as a mere reduction of the absolute being. His black melancholy, "unkindly" (112) to individuals and society, is perhaps produced both by physical disease and culture. Sebastian's consumption, which would have caused anyway an early death, reflects *fin de siècle* spleen, in deriving from over-delicateness due to modern luxury, a disease, moreover, 'begotten by the fogs of that country – waters, he observed, not in their place, "above the firmament" (115)⁷.

Sebastian is constituted as a palimpsest, layered by different historical, material conditions. His melancholy is connected with modern capitalistic ways of life and environmental disorder and crisis. In the abandoned house full of family memories, surrounded by water and seen as the perfect garden of Holland, the inundation is presented as man-made: "[...] people might have fancied that an enemy had indeed cut the dykes somewhere – a pin-hole enough to wreck the ship of Holland" (114). Sebastian's annihilation and sacrifice is anticipated in the reference to the story of Grotius's escape from captivity. This episode of 'real life' appeals greatly to Sebastian and is at one with his saving of a child as the sea breaks its

⁷ Pater conveys a critique of solipsism and intimist writing, possibly inspired by the publication, in 1882 and 1884, of Henri-Frédéric Amiels's *Journal*. For a discussion, also in relation to "consumptives" like Spinoza and other sensitive Paterian heroes, see Østermark-Johansen (2022: 152-157).

man-made barriers. The aqueous language is richly allusive, the landscape looks natural but is not, since industry has created it. Living by his own theorems, he is bound fatalistically to his journey towards death. In the end Sebastian is claimed by the sea, a sea that the Dutch have fought to produce a new landscape.

5. Conclusion

Pater's imaginary portrait of Sebastian van Storck has been read against the Dutch landscape as imagined and created by seventeenth-century artists and engineers. The landscape is as germane to the narrative as its morbid protagonist. The hardly won warmth and vitality of Holland militate against the sensibility of a person intent on dying to self. The ecology of a landscape shaped out of water by heroic exertion puts into relief the threat to life of a fanatical devotion to a life lived in the renunciation of materiality and the human enterprise. Pater produces a network of images linking the vegetal, the animal, the human with space, time and architecture, exemplifying that trans-species intimacy Denis Denisoff has shown to be characteristic of the decadent ecologies of Pater as well as of Simeon Solomon and Michael Field, among others (2021). Landscape and art are intertwined and seen in sympathy with national character, yet hostile to the unique sensibility of the protagonist and the ecology of lands. At the same time, the images constitute a barrier to the evolving sensibility of the character. While the narrative offers no crude binary, there remains a sense that detachment from all human achievement is destructive not only to the self but also to the land. A longing to recover a primeval landscape indifferent to ecological change is realised only through denial of the forces of life. At the same time this primeval image projects future scenarios Pater had already envisaged in *Plato and Platonism*:

Increasing indeed for a while in radius and depth, under the force of mechanic law, the world of motion and life is however destined, by force of its own friction, to be restored sooner or later to equilibrium; nay, is already gone back some noticeable degrees (how desirably!) to the primeval indifference, as may be understood by those who can reckon the time it will take for our worn-out planet, surviving all the fret of the humanity it housed for a while, to be drawn into the sun (Pater 2002: 25).

The world of motion and life Pater conceives, presented in its strongest form in the conclusion to *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873), transcends, throughout his work, the idea of isolated subjectivities through what Denisoff describes as the sentiment of an "ecological, panpsychic history" (Denisoff 2021: 49).

Ideas of cosmic disaster abound in current literature and criticism, focusing often on representations of ecological doom. Pater's text provides a surprising ecological perspective in that it does not subscribe to such common ecological topoi. Representing human intervention in the world of nature as "a contribution to a protean design" (ibid: 44), it recalibrates our view and makes us think of the validity or the possibility of ecological reparation. Its macro-ecological and cultural scales help articulate, as in *Marius the Epicurean* and in general in Paterian textuality⁸, a process of transformation and renewal, while asserting nevertheless

⁸ See Denisoff's discussion of the influence of paganism on the decadent ecology of Pater, also explored in relation to Victorian science (2021).

the powerful autonomy of nature. We can keep asking whether it offers only a fantasy of land improvement, or whether it uses the resources of a specific minor genre to create a character that works as a dynamic interface for a radical poetics of symbiosis with a larger environment, creating seeds for bridging opposites and challenging our received critical parameters.

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