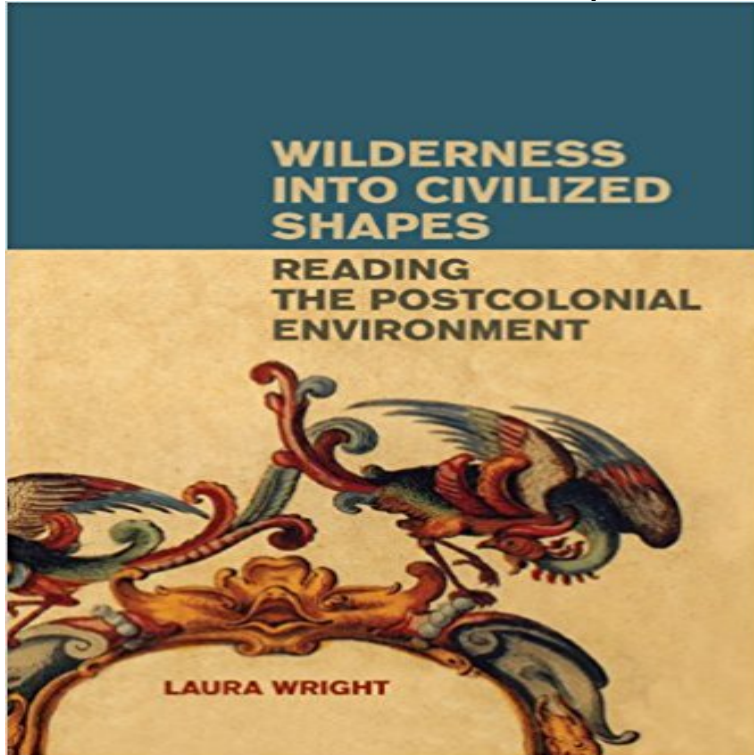


Wilderness into Civilized Shapes: Reading the Postcolonial Environment



This study examines how postcolonial landscapes and environmental issues are represented in fiction. Wright creates a provocative discourse in which the fields of postcolonial theory and ecocriticism are brought together. Laura Wright explores the changes brought by colonialism and globalization as depicted in an array of international works of fiction in four thematically arranged chapters. She looks first at two traditional oral histories retold in modern novels, Zakes Mda's *The Heart of Redness* (South Africa) and Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood* (Kenya), that deal with the potentially devastating effects of development, particularly through deforestation and the replacement of native flora with European varieties. Wright then uses J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* (South Africa), Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* (India and Canada), and Joy Williams's *The Quick and the Dead* (United States) to explore the use of animals as metaphors for subjugated groups of individuals. The third chapter deals with India's water crisis via Arundhati Roy's activism and her novel, *The God of Small Things*. Finally, Wright looks at three novels: Flora Nwapa's *Efuru* (Nigeria), Keri Hulme's *The Bone People* (New Zealand), and Sindiwe Magona's *Mother to Mother* (South Africa) that depict women's relationships to the land from which they have been dispossessed. Throughout *Wilderness into Civilized Shapes*, Wright rearticulates questions about the role of the writer of fiction as environmental activist and spokesperson, the connections between animal ethics and environmental responsibility, and the potential perpetuation of a neocolonial framework founded on western commodification and resource-based imperialism.

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