Maori ruins could be as picturesque as any Roman forum, but Maori themselves, obtrusive and in your face, were not so easily part of a scenery package as Wordsworth's sentimentalisable rustics.... In order to provide not only the dramatic or romantic contexts for tourists (to imagine themselves explorers) but also a sense of security, New Zealand's beautiful scenes were emptied of rival human presences and "returned", as the government men who oversaw the task put it, "to their old primæval grandeur".

Colonialism exerts an indelible imprint on New Zealand's busy constructions of an imagery of place. This issue of *ACS* signals both the work that has been done already and that which needs to be done in scrutinising imageries and assumptions formed within a long neglected colonial literature, usually regarded with embarrassment. In doing so, it touches on the most contentious point of intersection in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, as each struggles to redefine itself, overtaken by a global economy in which the old assurances of easy prosperity for efficient commodity producers are rapidly dissipating. We hope this volume aids understanding of the discursive and ideological processes by which that redefinition is pursued.

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Michael Hall, Jenny Lawn, Mark Williams

GEOFF PARK

THEATRE COUNTRY

To persons of refined taste and retentive memory, few enjoyments are greater or more permanent than the sight of grand and beautiful scenery. While present, it creates a feeling of rapturous delight, almost of inspiration. The hills seem to heave with a deeply murmured eloquence, and we understand their tales of times gone by; the rivers roll along their volumed and rapid waters, and we hear in the mighty music, the voices of 'men of olden days', who dwelt, fought or died within its sound. We gaze on the summer heaven, and the eyes of the young and beautiful, whom poets sung, and Princes loved, seem to look upon us, and we live in a Fairyland of thought and fancy.[1]

I squint. Not against the light, for White Moss Common has precious little of that kind, but rather with the difficulty of seeing in the dark circle of reflecting glass snug in its wooden case in Turi's hand, anything other than my face distorted, peering back at me.

No less a difficulty though, than accepting that whatever the mirror might reveal is more worthy of my attention, no matter how curious or correct the image, than what the evolved apparatus of my own eyes had already focused on: a quiet

lake's beautiful meeting with its woods and glades in the valley below. Or in believing that such an optically awkward object was a key-piece in imposing the idiom that seduced so many people, wherever in the world the wake of British imperialism reached, into seeing country as *landscape*. The fashion for the Claude Glass had faded by the time work began on the museum of eighteenth-century British ideas that is New Zealand, but this little mirror bothering my eye-brain synapses had done no small part of the groundwork on one; the pervasive persuasion that led us into seeing country as we might see a framed painting, or the stage of a play — as 'picturesque scene'.

Just as nature as scenery is the domain of the visitor, and thus a long way from nature as homeland, White Moss Common is a long way from the smell of manuka and red seacliffs of pohutukawa.[2] But where Turi and I stand among lichened rocks, late-summer grass and pinkening heather, looking down on England's Grasmere and Rydal Water is about as close as you could get to the corner of the world where nature became an object to be gazed at — the consequences being what we call 'tourism' and 'conservation'.

If, as George Bernard Shaw said we do, New Zealanders have a particular thing about picturesque scenery, it has probably more than a little to with its insistence in our brief history. No matter whether last century's settlers were waiting forlornly on the country's beaches for surveyors to open up its impenetrable forest, ravaging it with fire or fighting Maori in it, it has been constantly 'the most beautiful scenery in the world'.[3] In contrast to Australia perhaps, where the tendency of observation has been that 'nature is prosaic, unpicturesque ... a perpetual flower garden. But not a single scene in it of which a painter could make a landscape.'[4]

Touring New Zealand in the 1930s, assuming, no doubt, he'd catch a glimpse or two of the scenery by which New Zealand seemed defined, Shaw couldn't get away from people determined to show it to him. 'There's one thing I notice about you New Zealanders', he said at one stage. 'Wherever I go people say to me that they must take me to see New Zealand's last bit of original bush. I have been driven through miles and miles of it since I have been here, and each bit seems to be just as much the last and just as original as the one before'. 'I must say, though', he didn't fail to add, 'that it's unlike any bush I have ever seen'.[5]

Most people I know assume that the way we so readily make Nature into scenery has always been the way. Yet the notion is a late one in the modern Western mind, arising as a particular culture's passion, flourishing when it got on its imperialist roll 200 years ago, and spreading with it worldwide. Before that, it simply didn't exist.

For Nature to become scenery, we first of all had to have a process of belief able to detach us spiritually and emotionally from the rest of life — as Christianity did. Then we had to get beyond the conviction thus instilled in us, that the ancient gods of the forests and mountains were evil spirits. Finally, courtesy the order of empire, we had to have relief from fear whenever we encountered a forest, and roads to take us to the remote and primitive places like England's Lake District, where ruins and nature

wild enabled us to imagine prior ways of life. Proof, if it was needed, of the prosperity and greatness of the industrial, European age. And if you had the means to make nature at once more distant and more accessible,[6] to view it no longer from close, reciprocal relationship, but from *outside*, it was almost as though it was in one of your drawing room pictures. To many who did, the sensation had the qualities you went to the theatre for.

Until the mid-eighteenth century, or more or less the same moment the English mind fatefully, physically, entered the Pacific, it had simply not connected scenery and painting. Nor did the English yet visit places for the express purpose of receiving visual pleasure from them. The Picturesque view of nature, of seeing it as scene after scene, each chosen for its capability of being formed into a picture, was not part of British culture until its travellers to Europe encountered the landscapes of Salvator Rosa, Gaspard Poussin and Claude Lorraine. For Poussin, landscape was a way to reiterate his belief in Classical principles; for Salvator Rosa, a chance of evoking the strangeness of nature; and for Claude, a means of escape into a romantic dream world.

One of the initiators of what has become 'tourism' — and the *Lonely Planet* genre of literature that is its fellow traveller — Thomas West's 1778 *Guide to the Lakes* for 'Lovers of Landscape Studies',[7] was deliberately arranged so that 'the changes of scenes is [*sic*] from what is pleasing, to what is surprising, from the delicate and elegant touches of Claude to the noble scenes of Poussin, and from these to the stupendous ideas of Salvator Rosa'. As being one of West's tourists became a fashion, seeing what you stepped up to viewing stations like White Moss Common to see, became an art. The problem for tourists was the same as that for painters: how to organise what was, in reality, an arc curving in front of you — what the period's poets called the 'circling landscape' — onto a flat plane.

In order that such connoisseurs could render this feat of spatial organisation instantly the Claude Glass was invented: a darkly tinted, convex pocket mirror in which, in West's words, 'the tourist could see the prospect condensed and framed, and suffused with the mellow glow of Claude's visions of Elysium' — all for the price of requiring you to turn your back on what you had come to see. Condensed and framed, in the moment of capture, its miniaturized picture was a private possession.

From White Moss Common, where we are attempting the optical feat ourselves, West's tourists were promised 'a view of as sweet a scene as a travelled eye ever beheld'. The object: to behold the same valley of lakes that had so impressed one of the first tourists in the wake of the new turnpike road into Cumbria, the famed poet Thomas Gray. 'Mr Gray's description of this peaceful happy vale', said West's *Guide,* 'will raise a wish in every reader to see so primæval a place'.

Gray, it has been said, made nature into a painting and then valued it as a commodity.[8] What drew the tourists in his wake was his describing what he saw, in the autumn of 1769 — the same week that James Cook first saw New Zealand — when he turned his back on the view from a vicarage garden above Derwentwater, and angled his Claude Glass to ensphere it. 'I saw in my glass', Gray wrote, 'a picture

that if I could transmit it to you, and fix it in all the softness of its living colours, would fairly sell for one thousand pounds. This is the sweetest scene I can yet discover in point of pastoral beauty'. Mr Gray too, I was relieved to find, had Claude Glass problems. Attempting to position a Lake District sunset scene, he 'fell down on [his] back across a dirty lane with [his] glass open in one hand but broke only [his] knuckles; stay'd nevertheless, & saw the sun set in all its glory'.

Gray might well have fallen loading a gun while stalking game. For the tourist with a Claude Glass, scenes were quarry that had to be searched out, hunted and pursued. Apart from gain, said Christopher Hussey, perhaps the greatest authority on The Picturesque, the impulse of the traveller for pleasure, 'is, in every variety of degree, to satisfy his craving for the ideal, or to drug his craving by the belief that it is being satisfied... It is the *expectation* of new scenes, perhaps the ideal scene, that sets him off and keeps him going'.

* * *

The gentleman naturalist Joseph Banks called the natural arches along the New Zealand coast 'picturesque' because the Englishman of educated taste in 1769 found the emulation of 'ruins' aesthetic, as well as interesting intellectually. But if Banks and his *Endeavour* companion, James Cook, ever talked about land as 'picturesque scenery', their journals don't reveal it. They don't, because they just preceded the cusp in time when Englishmen began doing so.

The Picturesque was the catalyst by which nature and the landscape became territories of taste. It did so, in the main, through one inveterate traveller, the Rev William Gilpin, writing the rules in the 1780s and '90s. For those seeking, in landscape, the outdoor conversation piece, Gilpin's *Observations Relative to Picturesque Beauty*... and *Essays on Picturesque Travel*... brought what had hitherto been 'waste', the wild wood, or the dark domains of history's outlaws and bandits, within the aegis of the aesthetics of admiration. And as those in whose interest it was to 'aestheticise nature and the natural'[9] reached far beyond England, so did the effect of their seeing other peoples' country as their picturesque scene. As Bernard Smith has written so eloquently, 'spiritual possession followed and reinforced material possession. While Gilpin toured the mountains of Scotland, Wales and Cumberland, Cook's artists began the long process of 'aestheticising' the exotic landscapes of the Pacific Islands, New Zealand and Australia'.

To the picturesque traveller on the quest for the perfect scene, a Claude Glass was as indispensable as a camera or camcorder are to today's tourist. Like learning to drive, once mastered, it was believed to transform experience. The fashion itself in turn was driven by the new factory cities of England's North and Midlands, from which thousands, not a few with rural roots, suddenly had the means to travel picturesquely — and fashionably. Many of these travellers sentimentalised their relationship with places concurrently strange and familiar; discovering an inverse closeness with environments that, courtesy of the Industrial Revolution, had largely

been superceded as dwelling places.[10] At the same time, a discourse of deep anxiety about the violation of traditional rural life was emerging.

England, it is said, was probably never so beautiful as it was in the closing decades of the eighteenth century and the first of the nineteenth. 'Man had everywhere civilised nature without over-exploiting or spoiling it. The great landscape-painters and ... the poets are the testimony to its inspiration.... every shire, every parish ... cultivated in the way which soil, climate and immemorial experience had proved best ... in the cumulative lore of centuries'.[11] Scenic guide after scenic guide attested to the Lake District being England's most picturesque place. By 1793, fifteen years after Thomas West published his *Guide to the Lakes*, the tourist season was bringing over 1500 visitors 'of quality and fashion' to the museum that by then stood beside Thomas Gray's 'sweetest scene', its shelves stocked with Claude Glasses and the Picturesque's other 'knick knacks'. This was nothing compared to the tourist traffic another poet was soon attracting to the Lakes.

White Moss Common is the quiet, beautiful place it is today because William Wordsworth loved and protected it. The coigne from which his sister Dorothy said 'the views wherever you turn are enchanting', was the high-point of the woodland path along which he walked so many of his poems into existence. A lake country native, he was a poet of scenes from the outset:

> .... 'tis mine to rove
> Thro' bare grey dell, high wood, and pastoral cove;
> His wizard course where hoary Derwent takes
> Thro' craggs, and forest glooms, and opening lakes
> ... Her rocky sheepwalks, and her woodland bounds;
>
> .... Fair scenes ![12]

As they do my popular edition of Wordsworth's poetry, the lines began many of the thousands of Wordsworth poetry anthologies that came to New Zealand in nineteenth-century settler baggage. Wordsworth was still at school — 'where twilight glens endear my Esthwaite's shore' — when he wrote them. In his seventies, but still in daily encounter with Rydale's mere and Grasmere, he recalled a moment of profound importance in his poetical history when, as a teenager, he noticed an oak tree silhouetted. The very spot was as vivid as the great pleasure of it. 'I date from it', he said,

> ....my consciousness of the infinite variety of natural appearances which had been unnoticed by the poets of any age or country, so far as I was acquainted with them.[13]

'Nature', said Wordsworth, had peopled his mind 'with beauteous forms and grand' ever since, and given his poetry a quality denied Thomas Gray: a poetry centred on the simple scenes of country life, where, he believed, the human

correlation with the spirit of Nature could be more closely contemplated and powerfully depicted than any other.

I don't have the direct evidence to prove it, but I have a hunch that had it not been for William Wordsworth, we simply wouldn't talk about land as scenery as we do in New Zealand. What's more, the actual land under our feet where the New Zealand drama of claiming and usurpation takes place would be noticeably different. Those myriad last bits of 'original bush' to which George Bernard Shaw kept being driven, where nature is preserved in 'scenic reserves', might simply not be there.

Wordsworth's forging of the nineteenth-century English passion for natural scenery that crossed the world with colonisation schemes led to New Zealanders 'preserving' theirs in a process that forced apart human life and indigenous nature, and still does today. Yet, in one of those intriguing, sane ironies history sometimes exposes, Wordsworth's own scenes were of ancient human kinship with the animate natural world. These scenes were akin to the reciprocity with local nature that made cultures like Maori 'native', but which Western civilisation in the South Pacific insisted must disappear. Devices like Scenery Preservation Commissions used the liminal frontier zone between surveillance and sight-seeing to ensure that Maori left behind their affiliations with nature and place, legislatively emptying the country as effectively as any English Enclosure Act.

Moreover, Wordsworth's nature poetry is a critique of the British colonial project in which, by the time it entered its New Zealand domain, he himself became so ironically implicated.[14] His scenes derive from, as they belong to, country whose independent space England had colonised:

> ...a perfect republic of Shepherds and Agriculturalists — a pure Commonwealth; the members of which existed in the midst of a powerful empire like an ideal ... [its] humble sons of the hills had a consciousness that the land, which they walked over and tilled, had for more than five hundred years, been possessed by men of their name and blood.[15]

People — local, native people, thrown out of their traditional balance with nature — were as integral to a Wordsworth scene as a Claude one. At the heart of Wordsworth's 'temples of Nature ... to be left unviolated' is his deeply unsettling sense of human unity with nature being lost, how a child's '*liberty of mind/Is gone for ever*' when taken from *the 'treading the green earth,... the forms of nature ... the ancient woods'*,[16] and put to work in a cotton mill.

* * *

> *Did you ever hear about...? Did you ever hear about.... ? Did you ever hear about*

> *Wordsworth and Coleridge, baby?* [17]

Until a few months ago, I could never muster much more than a vacuous demur to Van Morrison's interrogation of my generation. But now I have lain in the same long grass, by the lakeside, so to speak, in that conversation with country in which, as Barry Lopez says, you can sense 'a stifling ignorance falling away'.[18] I wish a few more New Zealand conservationists had done so. Those who presuppose their mission morally pure and whose great regard for the places the colonial project made so wild and empty for them is without regard for the irony that, less than a century ago, they were Maori homeplaces.

It is so easy today to deprecate Samuel Taylor Coleridge as an opium head and Wordsworth's preoccupation with daffodils and lonely clouds. Their Romantic times, and Wordsworth's close intimacy with his amanuensis, and sister, Dorothy, tend to rankle in ours. Critics castigate his romanticising of his native Lake District for tourism's ruining it, as though he ignored its harsh economic reality. But our urge to be modern blinds us to that rare quality in the Western literary tradition: deep ecological wisdom.[19] The quiet crisis in Wordsworth's scenes as their human life is propelled from the circular, centred, native sense of space and time to modernity's linear one, foreshadows a hunch of modern human ecology:

> ... the linear structure of purposive, problem-solving consciousness is incapable of grasping the circular connectedness of living systems,... explicit knowledge and rationality are insufficient tools for the sustainable management of ecological relations.[20]

The Wordsworth-Coleridge friendship was forged in reaction to the spread and sprawl of industrial capitalism, and their belief that its handmaiden, science, was inadequate to explain the natural phenomena confronting humans. The aspects of life which scientists denigrate, those apprehended through emotion, instinct and intuition, they considered the most noble.

Coleridge told of how frequently their conversation turned on two powers: 'exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature' and 'giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colours of the imagination'.[21] While the friendship lasted, scene-hunting was a way they took the idea for a walk. Wordsworth's lake country's 'heart-raising scenes', thrilled Coleridge, and in 1799, the year after their *Lyrical Ballads* launched them to fame, he joined Wordsworth in a tour, recording the ecstasies in a small clasp notebook, in the best tour-guide fashion: 'before me, O God, what a scene! The foreground a wood sloping down to the river and meadow, the serpent river ... beyond'.[22]

Writing to Dorothy Wordsworth how deeply he had been impressed 'by a world of scenery absolutely new to [him]', Coleridge displayed all the attributes of a picturesque traveller.[23] Wordsworth too, in his early work, often described scenery

according to the principles of the 'picturesque' as expressed by Claude and William Gilpin. But this 'strong infection of the age',

> Was never much my habit — giving way
> To a comparison of scene with scene,
> Bent overmuch on superficial things,
> Pampering myself with meagre novelties
> Of colour and proportion; to the moods
> Of time and season, to the moral power,
> The affections and the spirit of the place,
> Insensible.[24]

Coleridge once proffered the analogy of the Claude Glass to explain the mind's habitual tendency to admit impressions of the natural world:

> In the country, all around us smile Good and Beauty — and the Images of this divine......... are miniatured on the mind of the beholder, as a landscape on a Convex Mirror.[25]

But neither friend was enamoured with what — to lake country natives, who sensed the English invading again — the Claude Glass was coming to symbolise: the 'Gold-headed Cane on a pikteresk Toor' of Coleridge's scorn. 'These tourists, heaven preserve us!', Wordsworth began a narrative poem, *The Brothers*:

> Perched on the forehead of a jutting crag,
> Pencil in hand and book upon the knee,

Travel for the sake of seeing wild scenery was already being satirised in English literature:

> With curious eye and active scent.
> I on the picturesque am bent.
> This is my game; I must pursue it,
> And make it where I cannot view it.[26]

Wordsworth himself, in the same text, no less, as his *Guide*'s 'Descriptions of Scenery', admitted *scenery* to be 'a poor and mean word which requires an apology, but will be generally understood.'[27] Yet the *Guide* also carried a passage from one of the *Lyrical Ballads* from which his and Coleridge's fame derived:

> ..... the visible scene
> Would enter unawares into his mind
> With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,

> Its woods, and that uncertain Heaven, receiv'd
> Onto the bosom of the steady Lake![28]

Long after the friendship, Coleridge watched Wordsworth continue to work the poem. That passage and a changed phrase a few lines above — 'Mr Wordsworth's having judiciously adopted *'concourse wild'*... for *'a wild scene"* — led him 'to hazard a remark, which I certainly should not have made in the works of a poet less austerely accurate in the use of words, than he is'. 'It respects', said Coleridge:

> the propriety of the word *'scene'*, even in the sentence in which it is retained.... In Shakespeare and Milton, the word is never used without some clear reference, proper or metaphorical, to the theatre.... I object to any extension of its meaning....[29]

Yet Wordsworth knew enough of scenes to know:

> —How vast the compass of this theatre,
> ... the same pageant ... of the whole
> Harmonious landscape; all along the shore
> The boundary lost, the line invisible
> That parts the image from reality.[30]

* * *

'A perfect day. Read Wordsworth on the banks of the Henui....'

A Sunday in January 1854. Only six months in New Zealand, and Jane Atkinson was growing 'fonder and fonder' of the beautiful bush creek that divided their newly acquired piece of Taranaki, 'the delicious practice of bathing' in the Henui as summer arrived, and the hours spent on a rock midstream reading aloud to her brother James.

'Not being yet a *practical* farmer', Jane preferred 'beauty to profits at present'. As Wordsworth had taught her to wonder *'underneath what grove/Shall I take up my home? And what clear stream/ Shall with its murmur lull me to rest'*; *'a green shady place, where ... beneath a tree'* she could *'settle into gentler happiness'*,[31] she had learned to recognise 'a scene' when she saw one.

The Henui, in that regard, gave her great delight: 'scrambling down to the beautiful stream and feeling that a piece of it was our very own having our estate on both sides.... The great delight of the bush, and the banks of the stream to me is the exquisite variety and luxuriance of the ferns ... such as one only sees in little patches under steamy glasses in England, grown in the most profuse style all over the ground, and on the trunks of trees.... All are so wonderful to me.' While she was 'able to enjoy a great many scenes here that most women never see because few are so fond of

scrambling and climbing about as I am', a beautiful scene in New Zealand — such as 'the miles on miles of glorious untouched forest' at the base of Taranaki mountain — was already something different to what it might be in England:

> ... you find ... people who don't see any beauty in the place because there are not country lanes, hedges, pretty little villages with church spires dotted about. In a perfectly new country you of course miss the finished garden-like appearance that years of cultivation can alone give ... but how the absence of these things should blind people to the loveliness before their eyes, I cannot understand.

Jane Atkinson's were not the only Wordsworth poetries to cross the ocean to New Zealand. Novels being too bulky, or wayward, poetry was second only to Bibles in nineteenth-century colonists' ship-chests. But by the time England finally set about colonising New Zealand, the cult of scenery was so developed that most of those reading of Wordsworth's scenes did so not such much in his poems, as in his tourist guide's 'Description of Scenery...'.

Wordsworth's *Guide to the Lakes* was the first of his works to reach a fifth edition. It was, without question, the most widely read work of the most admired English poet of the first half of the nineteenth century[32]. Between 1842 and 1859, more constantly in demand than any of his poetry, the *Guide* went from its sixth to tenth edition. Presumably, Jane Atkinson had a copy too, even if she didn't read it on her rock in the Henui.

The sad irony of Wordsworth's success is that it was the agent that, more than any other, drew mass tourism to violate his beloved lake country's 'temples of Nature'. While his *Guide* did what was expected of such literature — 'supplying the Tourist with directions how to approach the several scenes in their best, or most convenient, order' — its real function was to educate tourists, and the nouveau riche, to care for its delicate ecosystem.[33] But by 1844, Wordsworth's pen was bitterly opposing 'swarms of pleasure-hunters': the 'intrusion of a railway ... transferring at once uneducated persons in large numbers to particular spots where the combinations of natural objects are such as would afford the greatest pleasure to those who have been in the habit of observing and studying the peculiar character of such scenes'.[34] A local native who had 'opportunities in some degree habitual' could. Not a simple tourist though:

> The perception of what has acquired the name of picturesque and romantic scenery is so far from being intuitive, that it can be produced only by a slow and gradual process of culture;... as a consequence, the humbler ranks of society are not, and cannot be, in a state to gain material benefit from a more speedy access than they have now to this beautiful region.

But the die was cast. Scenery had become — what it is now for millions of tourists worldwide — something curious to visit and from which to send postcards

and souvenirs as the evidence that *your* eyes had been there: the antithesis of home. So when an Englishman called a piece of New Zealand 'scenery', as Colonel John St John did when pursuing Te Kooti and ravaging the lives of his Tuhoe allies in 1869, he had, categorically, the tourist eye in mind:

> The scenery of the Urewera is grand and wild, and a tourist ... could have been delighted with the excursion I took under circumstances not unfavourable to a search after the picturesque.

Through the latter nineteenth century, while British settlers, their minds on fresh soil, poured in, scenery on which tourist eyes might gaze became a great New Zealand theme. Literary travellers like Anthony Trollope inevitably began their accounts with it: 'the scenery of the Middle Island, though perhaps as fine as anything in Europe, is ... altogether unknown to English travellers', and the country around Queenstown, where 'woods come down to the water's edge ... is or rather will be in coming days, a country known for its magnificent scenery'.[35]

Scenery was slower though at getting on politicians' minds. But when it did, in 1891, it was tourism that drove it there, Thomas MacKenzie bemoaning to Parliament that 'no efficient steps had been taken to open up ... the great store of wealth that this colony had in its natural scenery'.[36] Mr Rhodes worried that MacKenzie's scenic roads cut into 'places which were now extremely picturesque [and] would soon appear in a very dilapidated condition'. Nonetheless, he didn't think the government could make a better investment than 'opening up the scenery of the colony to tourists'. The mood of the House though was that any new expenditure on roads ought to be devoted to improving the wretched ones too many settlers still had to trudge along to reach their homes. Thomas MacKenzie's motion foundered.

But the colony's marvellous possession, and what the English papers were saying about the 'suicidal folly in not rendering it more accessible'[37] was becoming a matter of nationhood. When Richard John Seddon introduced his Liberal Government's Scenery Preservation Bill in October, 1903, it was in terms of 'our duty' to preserve our beautiful gorges and bush scenery... the light and the dark shades of green interwoven with the flowers of the rata'. The Bill made 'no distinction whether the land is Crown land, private land, or Native land'; as his example demonstrated, 'it is, I think on Native land.... Much better that the land should at once be set apart for all time'.[38]

* * *

King Dick Seddon's Liberals appropriated William Wordsworth's scene in the same sort of way Britain's Conservatives have William Blake's *Jerusalem*. 'New Zealand's Beauty Spots' — their preservation, 'one of the finest things we could do'[39] — frontispieced the Party's 1905 annual, *The Liberal Herald*, confirming that here were the champions of civilisation. Alongside it and *The Imperial Album of New Zealand*

Scenery in Seddon's library, are dusty Victorian volumes with titles like *The Web of Empire, Imperial Federation,* and *Problems of Empire*.

By the time their new country became a Dominion, for a quarter of a century Englishmen in New Zealand had been telling those who stayed home how 'the power of the natives is absolutely gone, never more to return',[40] crediting the might of their own 'customs' for the 'passing of the Maori' that virtually everyone assumed would happen — not least when the Government's new Scenery Preservation Commission's Chairman told his Prime Minister that to secure scenery for tourists, Maori land would be needed. Many forest-clad ranges, said Percy Smith, had been preserved by 'the Natives ... from time immemorial ... for the purpose of snaring birds, such lands being called Pua-tahere. Just such places his Commission 'would wish to see reserved in order to preserve ... the scenic features of the country'.[41]

At that early stage, the Commission considered it might be 'an advantage in every way if the Native lands could be reserved and at the same time leave the Natives their rights in regard to game, fishing, etc.' But simultaneously, other legislation was taking away traditional Maori birding and plant gathering rights. For a while Maori land was kept out of the scenery preservationists' reach, but by 1910 the Liberals acceded to the political perception that 'some of the most attractive scenery ... existed in Native land' and to subsequent demands that the state have the power to take it. Between 1913 and 1917, the peak period of scenic land acquisition, more areas of Maori land were taken than remained freehold.

* * *

Scenery's long sojourn in the Bermuda Triangle of conservation ideology, out of vogue amid the talk of biodiversity and representative ecosystems, inured generations into forgetting the past from which the whole museal imperative[42] of conservation in New Zealand derives. But as Maori actively renegotiate with the state for the power and resource sharing for which both signed the Treaty of Waitangi, it is a past in sharp focus.[43]

Of all the modern state's tendrils, the conservation estate is where the one-sidedness of the colonial project and its theory that the few Maori who didn't vanish would quietly assimilate, has hung on most tenaciously.[44] The good work of saving species and keeping 'pests' at bay, always proffered as a morally pure universal, is indeed one of New Zealand's most Pakeha arenas. Not least in those corners of the landscape where an aesthetic of nineteenth-century English taste, commandeered by the Empire's desire to separate Maori from their most beautiful country, persuades us that what we see is wild and original New Zealand.

Something is wrong here, and I suspect it's the conservation culture's inability to recognise that what orders their day-to-day actions is, essentially, a modern political desire, and to look back into the past to locate the roots of that desire; the turn-of-the-century scenic urge that cut Maori out of nature and cast them as pillagers.

Colonial landscapes at the imperial peripheries are deeply imbricated in the local contest, in which home-country ideas, long after they have slid out of vogue at home, are used to extend the coloniser's power over the indigenous. In asserting authority over the symbolic as well as the literal, the colonisers of New Zealand signalled not only their consciousness of victory over the native but also a continued anxiety about the re-assertion of that rival power. The English scenery cult, with its regard for quaint, cap-doffing shepherds and woodsmen, was waning as it slipped into New Zealand. But Maori scared some nineteenth-century Home Counties folk in New Zealand in the same kind of way gypsies and poachers had done. So while Wordsworth's scenes abounded in colonists' bookshelves, Maori could never quite fit in the colonists' landscapes.

Maori ruins could be as picturesque as any Roman forum, but Maori themselves, obtrusive and in your face, were not so easily part of a scenery package as Wordsworth's sentimentalisable rustics. Travellers could continue to 'expect to find may of the picturesque elements of Maoridom' as long as the 'natural beauty and novelty' of tourist attractions like Ohinemutu and Whakarewarewa weren't further 'disfigured' by their 'collections of the ugliest of European shanties'.[45] But elsewhere, in order to provide the dramatic or romantic contexts for tourists (to imagine themselves explorers), but provide it with security, New Zealand's beautiful scenes were emptied of rival human presences and 'returned', as the government men who oversaw the task put it, 'to their old primæval grandeur'.

What Maori lost when English taste for scenery took their most beautiful coast or lakeshore was not just the land as a tradeable commodity. As William Wordsworth knew, the greatest impact of taking a people's native country can be on their psychic, spiritual landscape. That landscape, with its ancestry in the intimacy, reciprocity and inhabitation that scenic reserves continue to illegalise, indeed had a life. We need do no more than go back to the few 1840s descriptions that have survived — like Charles Heaphy's observations of the superb, silent ease with which Te Atiawa hunters took Hutt Valley kereru (wood pigeons), or Thomas McDonnell's of Toenga Pou and his ropu kaiwhakangau, in one Hokianga valley, sustainably cropping 4,500-5000 birds each miro season[46] — to know it.

Largely because of the gutting of Aotearoa's lowland forests and swamps by the Britain of the South imperative, those ecosystems now have a mere fraction of the birds they had all through the centuries of Maori inhabitation. Nonetheless, the science the state has brought onto the conservation stage to spice up the scenic entertainment would have us believe that what we see when we walk under the trees is what 'primeval New Zealand' was like.

It doesn't matter whether it's a sweep of country simply seen, or, as a beautiful scene often is in New Zealand, emptied of human inhabitants and — notwithstanding the protracted absence of the main actors like moa and hokioi (the giant eagle) — preserved by law as 'original' nature.[47] As Coleridge of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* wisdom cautioned Wordsworth, a scene is never but theatre.

Notes

1 [Meredith] L.A. (neé Twamley) *An Autumn Ramble by the Wye*, London, 1838. Soon after its publication, Meredith emigrated with her husband to Australia, where she continued to write impressions of landscape.

2 I thank the British Council for making it possible to go there.

3 Eg. Charles Dilke, *Greater Britain: A Record of Travel in English-Speaking Countries*, Macmillan & Co., London, 1890.

4 Barron Field, *First Fruits of Australian Poetry*,1823 and *Geographical Memoirs on New South Wales*, 1825, quoted in Bernard Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific*, Harper & Row, Sydney,1984.

5 George Bernard Shaw, *What I said in N.Z., Newspaper Utterances of Mr George Bernard Shaw in New Zealand, March 15 to April 14, 1934*, pamphlet.

6 Ibid.

7 The *Guide's* subtitle indicated that it was *Dedicated to the Lovers of Landscape Studies, and to All Who Have Visited, or Intend to Visit the lakes in Cumberland, Westmoreland and Lancashire*.

8 John Brewer, 'Britain: Culture, Nature and Nation', in *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, Harper Collins, London 1997.

9 Ann Birmingham, *Landscape and Ideology: The English Rustic Tradition*, London ,1986.

10 Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, Allen and Unwin, London, 1983.

11 Arthur Bryant, *The Age of Elegance*, The Reprint Society, London, 1954.

12 William Wordsworth, 'An Evening Walk'.

13 Isabella Fenwick quoted in Russell Noyes, *Wordsworth and the Art of Landscape* Haskell House, NY, 1973.

14 Michael Wiley, *Romantic Geography: Wordsworth and Anglo-European Spaces*, St Martin's Press, NY, 1998.

15 Wordsworth's *Guide to the Lakes*

16 Wordsworth, *The Excursion*, Book viii.

17 Van Morrison, 'Summertime in England'.

18 Barry Lopez, *Arctic Dreams: Imagination and Desire in a Northern Landscape*, Picador, London, 1986.

19 Jonathon Bate, *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition* Routledge, London, 1991.

20 Alf Hornborg 'Ecology as Semiotics: Outlines of a Contextualist Paradigm for Human Ecology,' in P. Descola and Giselle Pálsson, *Nature and Society: Anthropological Perspectives*. 1993.

21 Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*, Vol 2, pp.5-6.

22 Quoted in Noyes, *ibid*

23 Quoted in Richard Holmes, *Coleridge: Early Visions*, Viking, London, 1986.

24 Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, XII, 109-21.

25 Coleridge, quoted in Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain, 1760 - 1800*, Scolar Press, Aldershot, 1989.

26 Canto XIII, vv 125-44: Thomas Rowlandson and William Combe*The Tour of Doctor Syntax in Search of the Picturesque*, 1809

27 Wordsworth, *Guide.....*

28 Wordsworth, *The Prelude*.

29 S.T.Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*: XX, 1817.

30 Wordsworth, *The Recluse*, I, 1.560-79

31 William Wordsworth, *The Prelude,Or, Growth of a Poet's Mind. An Autobiographical Poem*, Book First.

32 Jonathon Bate, *Romantic Ecology.Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition*, Routledge, London, 1991.

33 Bate, *ibid*

34 Wordsworth letters to Editor, Morning Post, 1844: re Kendal and Windermere railway, publ. in his *Guide to the Lakes* 5th Ed, 1835.

35 Anthony Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand*, Chapman and Hall, London, 1873; pp.333, 468.

36 *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates*, Vol LXXII - 26m July 22 1891.

37Ibid.

38 *NZPD*, Vol.CXXVI.-45, Oct 22 1904, pp704-5.

39 Sir J.G.Ward, Oct 22 1903, *NZPD, ibid*.

40 5 Dec 1878 letter of Joseph Kennerley, one of several 'Letters from Residents in New Zealand' publ. in Sir Julius Vogel (edit) *Land and Farming in New Zealand*, Waterlow & Sons, London, 1879.

41 Memorandum No 01/191, 4 Oct.1904, Dept of Tourist and Health Resorts, NA: LS/70/8.

42 'Museal' as in Theodore Adorno — 'The German word *museal* ... describes objects to which the observer no longer has a vital relationship and which are in the process of dying' — in 'Valery Proust Museum', *Prisms*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MS, 1986.

43 Judith Binney, 'Songlines from Aotearoa', in *Quicksands: Foundational Histories in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand*, edited by Klaus Neumann, Nicholas Thomas and Hilary Ericksen (Sydney: UNSW Press, 1999).

44 Geoff Park. 'Going between Goddesses', in *Quicksands*.

45 Annual Report of Scenery Preservation Commission, *Appendices of the Journals of the House of Representatives*, H-2, 1904, p 4.

46 Lt-Col T. McDonnell. 'Tales of the Maori', in T.W.Gudgeon, *Defenders of New Zealand*, Auckland 1887.

47 New Zealand Reserves Act 1977; sec 3(b).