

Nature Nationalism

The New Zealand Wilderness Myth and Pākehā identity in the South Island

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Abstract

New Zealand's landscapes have played a central role in settler and Pākehā cultural imagination, probably none more so than those that are considered to be wild or wilderness. These are the mountains, forests, wetlands, and other environments that are unfarmed, nonurbanized, perceived to be natural, and mostly composed of indigenous plant and animal species. I draw on a range of literature relating to New Zealand's wilderness, from the journals of explorers and settlers, to contemporary advertising in conservation and tourism. I argue for the existence of a dominant settler and Pākehā understanding of such landscapes as uninhabited and primeval, which I refer to as the New Zealand wilderness myth. I contend that this myth relies heavily on what I term the regional construction of the South Island, which represents the South Island as the true place of New Zealand's wilderness. I utilize critical regionalism to investigate the myriad ways in which this myth arises out of the transmutation of European understandings of the wild and landscape, particularly romantic and Victorian ones, within the context of New Zealand. I suggest that, according to this myth, New Zealand's wilderness signifies the pre-human past of origin. Moreover, as this past is not only inaccessible but also imaginary, the wild stands in for its lack of existence, allowing it to be experienced within the present. This past, which I theorize exists through what I label the simulacrum of wilderness, is longed for through the emotion of nostalgia. I assert that via this myth, and the nostalgia that underpins it, Pākehā form a politics of nature nationalism, as I call it, through which they claim that New Zealand's wilderness is their home and place of origin. Finally, I critique this simulacral landscape and Pākehā claim of neo-indigeneity to it, and ask the following question: what is the possibility of a post-colonial wilderness in New Zealand?

Introduction: Setting the Scene

Imagining the Alps: A Child's View

Growing up as a Pākehā in Christchurch, my experience of the world – my lived reality – was largely suburban¹. As a child, I blissfully enjoyed the birds, trees, and flowers in the gardens and parks of the city's northwest, with no awareness of how ideas of nature politicized them. On the weekends, I helped my parents maintain the garden on our quarter-acre section, that space that historically signifies the spatial constitution of New Zealand town and city life, as a top-down structure imposed upon the land from the birds-eye view of the colonist, but which is now almost non-existent due to population increase and greater demand for housing. The nature I knew was of a particular variety; it was the acclimatized garden of British colonialism, with its trees and flowers taken from around the world through the eco-cultural networks of botanical exchange. In my yard at home, I knew the smell of roses and the stunning blue, white, and pink of healthy Rhododendrons in full bloom. In my city's central park, Hagley, I marvelled at the tall Oaks, threw their acorns as far as I could, and ran through the yellow daffodils that clothed the ground between the trees in spring. As far as I can remember, I had no idea that the blackbirds that splashed about in the birdbath at home were introduced, nor that the sweet smelling Broom, which covered the slopes of the Port Hills on the outskirts of the city, was actually considered an invasive pest.

One summer, when the fruit on the three plum trees in our backyard was ripe, one bird in particular gained the attention of my mother and me. As if it were yesterday, I remember the noise of the large Kererū/New Zealand Pigeon, which sounded like a small helicopter as it flew onto our property one afternoon, landing on one of the plum trees to gorge itself on the sweet fruit, scaring off smaller birds in the process. My mother excitedly bent down next to me and pointed to the bird as it sat in the tree, explaining that it is not only recognizable for its size and for the noise it makes, but for its white breast, which provides a sharp contrast to the dark green of the feathers on its head and back. We watched the bird patiently as it ate before taking flight once again, leaving our backyard and slowly drifting out of our view as it flew further and further away. To me, the Kererū was not valuable for any other reason than its beauty and size, but my mother taught me that we were lucky to have seen it because it was a native bird, which meant that it was unique, found only in New Zealand. However, like many of the country's indigenous bird species, its numbers were declining, to such an extent, in fact, that only a few were left at all. My inquisitive mind formulated and asked the question that every child asks after having had something explained to them: why?

My mother paused for a moment to think before responding, and she then proceeded to explain to me that the Kererū comes from the native bush that once covered much of New Zealand, but which was now, in

Canterbury specifically, largely confined to the foothills of the high country, at the base of the Southern Alps. She went on to tell me that when she was a child there were many more native birds because there was much more bush, and that their numbers had since declined as the forest was slowly wiped away by both industry and farming. This then led her to express her nostalgia for the bird song that she knew from her childhood trips away camping with my grandparents. At my primary school each year, the teachers assisted the students in planting native trees on Arbour Day, and they explained to us that it was important to grow them, because, like the Kererū, there were not many left. They told us that if we did not do so, our children would not get to see them. It was through these experiences that I learnt to distinguish between two types of nature: the common, everyday nature that populated my suburban world, much like many other commonwealth suburban spaces found across the globe, and New Zealand's native nature, which was considered to be special and iconic of this country. I was taught, through the memory of my mother, to feel a sense of loss for the indigenous forest and its precious creatures, and to mourn their death, despite, ironically, never actually experiencing the slow process of their passing as previous generations did.

I finally got to experience the native bush, New Zealand's version of wilderness, when my parents took me to Arthur's Pass in the Southern Alps. To my parents' surprise, the strenuous walk up to the top of the Devil's Punchbowl Fall, as it is called, was not difficult for me, and a group of German tourists we passed along the track commented that they were impressed by my efforts to clamber over the numerous, large boulders considering how young and short I was. Through this trip, I learnt the cultural significance of being in the wilderness via the memes which construct the Pākehā experience of nature: the virtue of being outdoors in the fresh air once in a while, away from the city, and the idea that tramping, as it is known colloquially in New Zealand, has to be physically demanding to be considered authentic. I was beginning to internalize what Mike Grimshaw (2012) refers to as the anti-modern ethos of Pākehā, by learning to reject the urban in favour of the wild or the rural as somehow more important, more real. At the top of the track, looking over at the water crashing down on the rocks in the pool below, I learnt what the sublime was, through that paradoxical, yet powerful feeling of being terrified of nature while being in love with it at the exact same time. On the way back down the track, I first heard and then saw a Kererū as it took off from a tree, probably startled by our chatter as we passed it by. I then knew where its home was, just as my mother had told me. I remembered what she had said, and I felt bad for it as I pondered the possibility of it disappearing, or, in retrospect and more technically, becoming extinct through the anthropogenic destruction of its habitat.

As I grew older and bigger, I became rather good at climbing trees at home in my backyard. Besides the plum trees, my favourite was our silver birch, because its tall, straight, and slender trunk as well as its numerous perpendicular branches made it quite easy to ascend. From the very top of the tree on a fine day, I could see all the way over the north-west suburbs of Christchurch and the green pastureland of the

Canterbury Plains to the glistening Southern Alps, whose outlines could often only barely be made out. At that time, this was my landscape, although I did not call it that back then. What I was doing was conceptually framing my view of the mountains from the tree and making it meaningful by associating narratives with it. That landscape or snapshot of the mountains stayed with me, and every time I saw it or thought of it I reproduced the meanings that underpinned it. In doing so, each time, I imagined the native bush of Arthurs Pass being located somewhere within the distant alpine scene, too small to make out, I remembered what I had felt, seen, heard, and smelt when I was there. Although I no longer view the mountains from that tree, the image of that view is imprinted in my memory like a landscape photograph, and sometimes I still conjure it in my thought or see it in my dreams.

While the significance I gave to my landscape seemed to me to be purely individual at the time, I now know that it was cultural, and that it therefore resonates with a particular group of people from within a specific socio-historical context. Thus, the Christchurch poet Ursula Bethell (1929, unpaginated) juxtaposed her garden in suburban Cashmere to the distant Southern Alps:

“When I am very earnestly digging
I lift my head sometimes, and look at the mountains,
And muse upon them, muscles relaxing.

I think how freely the wild grasses flower there,
How grandly the storm-shaped trees are massed in their gorges,
And the rain-worn rocks strewn in magnificent heaps.”

Another writer, D’Arcy Creswell (1948, p. 282), wrote that while Christchurch itself was “swamp and shingle”, from its suburbs, looking over to the mountains, “the outlook was wilder and rougher”. For Creswell (1948, p. 282):

“New Zealand wasn’t truly discovered, in fact, until Ursula Bethell, ‘very earnestly digging’, raised her head to look at the mountains. Almost everyone had been blind before.”

For both Bethell and Creswell then, the wilderness became an accepted backdrop to suburban life in New Zealand, defining what it meant to be of this place, as that which surrounds and provides visual context (Grimshaw, 2012). Similarly, in his poem titled *Canterbury*, the poet Basil Dowling (1949, p. 11) articulated this regional expression of the Canterbury landscape and the sight of the alpine environment that has come to define it, when he wrote:

“Distance: then dreams begin
To see in vision colourless and thin

Beyond the western foothills lost
The huge and desolate ranges of the Coast.”

Although this vision of landscape was something I thought only I possessed, I felt a strange sense of déjà vu the first time I learnt that Dowling (1949, p. 11) too had claimed that this was, as he put it, his “holy land of childhood”, which he was “trying to comprehend”, and to learn, “like the features of a friend”.

I undertake this thesis as someone who tries to make sense of the concepts of landscape, nature, and wilderness, and the complexities surrounding these terms. While I inherited a love for New Zealand’s native bush and a particular, regional perception of the Canterbury landscape through my upbringing, I have always questioned these understandings of the environment. The dominant motivations for the appreciation, conservation, and promotion of New Zealand’s wild landscapes are often largely taken-for-granted by many concerned with such matters. Moreover, it is my opinion that these dominant understandings of landscape overshadow, obscure, or ignore significant problems associated with identity, history, culture, and politics in New Zealand, as these issues relate to wilderness specifically. Therefore, in light of this, I write this thesis not as an environmentalist, who recognizes nature as having a particular significance or value, who attempts to conserve it, and who campaigns against those who are purportedly corrupting it. Rather, I approach this research as a student of culture; I seek to unravel the specificities and intricacies of the contexts from which concepts like landscape are born and take hold in the world. Furthermore, I criticize the perceptions of the environment I reveal, as well as the concepts they are premised on, for they have particular consequences that I believe need to be explored.

Key Concepts: Unpacking and Defining Terms

I want to begin with the concept of nature. The term nature comes from the Latin *natura*, meaning birth or quality (Oxford English Dictionary, 2015). Nature is an ambiguous, yet often taken for granted term that needs to be conceptually unpacked to reveal its many elusive and contradictory meanings, which make it, as Raymond Williams (1976, p. 219) writes, “perhaps the most complex word in the [English] language”. In the vocabulary of Claude Levi-Strauss (1950, p. 63), nature is somewhat of an “empty signifier”, for it means so many different things that it has become a rather meaningless term. Firstly, nature can be conceptualized as a transcendental life force, equivalent to the will of god, that is behind every event, happening, or occurrence that takes place in reality. This makes matter, as Manuel Delanda (1997) notes, an inanimate, homogenous substance that exists as a receptacle for this inherent, external force, which enters it from the outside to transform it into a series of living and non-living forms. Secondly, from this first definition, the concept of nature then comes to mean something related yet different, because, as this primary understanding of nature as a transcendental force becomes engrained, the term no longer signifies

the force itself so much, but rather, its affect. This affect is apparent in the various ways in which nature animates different things by giving them a particular set of behavioural traits. Hence, one can speak of the nature of humans, dogs, or cats, for instance (Williams, 1976). Finally, as Paul Smethurst (2012) notes, a third and quite different notion of nature arises in the lexicon of European languages: it is both an object and an environment, a whole material form. This particular concept of nature has ramifications that are wider reaching than the others, and it is therefore what is referred to by the term nature within the remainder of this thesisⁱⁱ.

The notion that nature can be conceived materially as an object and environment is closely linked to Romanticism. Writing in the seventeenth-century, Descartes (1641) was the first thinker to suggest that nature could be defined as a series of objects. However, it was not until the eighteenth-century via the movement of Romanticism that nature was distinguished as a class of material forms separate from objects of different orders (Smethurst, 2012). In this way, natural objects were contrasted to man-made objects, for while the latter are produced from natural materials, they end up as things that seem entirely different from the former, and they therefore represent the human ability to master nature through intelligence and skill. Through Romanticism, nature, perceived as objects composing a place, such as the forest with its trees and plants, or the mountains with their crags and peaks, can be artistically represented (Williams, 1976). Therefore, Romanticism turns nature into a cultural construction for the first time, as a phenomenon that is determined by human representations (Williams, 1976). Here nature is no longer only that which guides the subject from within as a force, but is now that which, paradoxically, at the same time, is distanced from the observer through its externalization as a material realm. Furthermore, with the rise of urbanization and industrialization, nature as material realm becomes the creation and substance of an urban gaze upon the non-urban world.

Despite being something to romanticize, nature, as a physical realm, is also something to study scientifically. As Bruno Latour (2013) explains, when nature is conceptualized as the space in which natural, material forms exist, both the environment itself and the contents which compose it can be examined or analysed objectively through science, via tools and technologies which observe and measure, allowing the natural world to be known and categorized. In the eighteenth-century, the emerging notion of nature as an assemblage of natural things that form forests, jungles, woods, and mountains, meant that nature would be known and represented, on the one hand, aesthetically as landscape, and on the other, scientifically as object. Europeans did not encounter New Zealand until after the romanticization and scientivization of nature, and this determined their response to the landscapes of the Antipodes. The young Prussian explorer, Georg Forster (1773, p. 90), travelling with James Cook, recorded the following about a waterfall that he encountered at Dusky Sound in Fiordland, revealing elements of both the proto-sublime and the proto-scientific in his romantic travel writing:

“...[we] found indeed a view of great beauty and grandeur before us...a clear column of water, apparently eight or ten yards in circumference, which is projected with great impetuosity...[A]t the height of one hundred yards...[it] spreads on its broad back into a limpid sheet of about twenty-five yards in length. Here its surface is curled, and dashes upon every little eminence in its rapid descent...[We] were struck with the sight of a most beautiful rainbow of a perfectly circular form, which was produced by the meridian rays of the sun refracted in the vapour of the cascade...[T]he steam was tingled with the prismatic colours...The scenery on the left consist of steep, brown rocks...[O]n the right there is a vast heap of large stones, probably hurried down from the impending mountain’s brow, by the force of the torrent...The noise of the cascade is so loud, and so repeatedly reverberated from the echoing rocks, that it drowns almost every other sound; the birds seemed to retire from it to a little distance...[T]he enchanting melody of various creepers resounded on all sides, and completed the beauty of this wild and romantic spot.”ⁱⁱⁱ

According to Anne Salmond (1997), during Captain Cook’s proto-colonial voyages in the eighteenth-century, there is, in the writing of the naturalists who were on his ships, a pre-positivist attempt to objectify plants, animals, and also geographical and meteorological features, as a series of natural specimens, often using the Linnaean system of classification. Here Forster tries to make sense of the waterfall scientifically through observation, by measuring its shape, height, and length, and by referring to meridian rays, refraction, prisms, and limpidity. However, at the same time, Forster reads and interprets the waterfall and its surrounding environment as a sublime landscape, describing the scenery within it as beautiful, grand, eminent, impetuous, violent, rapid, perfect, and enchanted. Thus, here is the origin of the tension between the Enlightenment and Romanticism which sits at the heart of the modern, European encounter with nature, and, as a consequence, at the core of the European explorers’ and British settlers’ encounters with New Zealand’s landscapes.

Landscape becomes vital to the understanding of nature. As Geoff Park (2006, p. 97) notes, the term landscape comes from the Dutch words *landscip* and *landschap*, which refer to “a portion of territory the eye can comprehend in a single view”. But as Park (2006) notes, this definition is overly simplistic, because it hides the consequences that result from the use of landscape. These consequences stem from the fact that landscape is always a representation of land rather than what the land actually is, objectively, or in reality. Thus, landscape is always produced through representations that arise within an historically and culturally specific context. Giselle Byrnes (2001, p. 11) writes:

“A landscape is a cultural construction: it is a particular perspective *on* or *of* the land...While the physical landscape requires little definition, in the sense that it is part of the natural world, the concept of cultural landscape is more complex. Physical landscapes feature landforms and

vegetation...A cultural landscape, however, is a natural landscape that has been fashioned by a culture in a particular way..." [emphasis original]

Landscape is about fashioning the way an environment appears to a distanced and removed observer at any given moment, and that snapshot of what the eyes of the spectator see at that exact point in time then becomes a reproducible representation, which mediates the subsequent experiences of that environment. Ian Wedde (1995, p. 263) suggests:

"...nothing called landscape exists without itself *being* a representation; or without our seeing it as capable of *becoming* a representation; or without *having been* a representation. Landscape is culturally produced: it has a history, or if you like a mythology, which gives it a life in the present and a future." [emphasis original]

This idea, that the way an environment is represented through landscape mythologizes it, is highly important, for this is how landscape goes beyond mere stylistic depiction, becoming a more complex cultural construction which functions to invent place, by giving it an historical trajectory, and, therefore, a narrative. In this thesis I use the term myth in the sense that Claudia Bell (1996) uses it, as that which refers to the way that landscape is intertwined with concepts and narratives, often historical ones, which convey a certain meaning for ideological purposes. In this sense I follow Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno (1944) to suggest that myth is central to modernity rather than opposed to it. Furthermore, this understanding of myth means that landscape is always political, and the creation, imposition, and reproduction of landscapes in a colonial or post-colonial^{iv} context is therefore at the heart of the colonial undertaking as well as its contemporary residues.

Modern aesthetics has largely been encountered and made sense of visually through the gaze, as a product of the privileging of the ocular over the other human senses. The notion of the gaze is crucial in understanding how landscapes are created at a cultural level through the act of observation. As Byrnes (2001) explains, sight is thought of as the least sensuous and therefore the most mechanistic of all the human faculties. This results in the belief that observation is perceived to be the most reliable, trustworthy, and objective means through which to encounter and make sense of the world in an embodied way. Furthermore, with regards to landscape, the "aesthetic gaze", as Byrnes (2001, p. 40) calls it, allows the viewer to construct a pleasing image by ordering that which falls within the field of vision at a given moment in accordance with the principles of particular stylistic categories, such as the beautiful, the picturesque, or the sublime. However, within the colonial or post-colonial context, the aesthetic gaze creates unequal power relations through the production of landscape, because the white observer, as a detached and removed spectator, chooses what to include or exclude within each scene, and more importantly, how to represent

such contents. Therefore, through the aesthetic gaze of landscape, and in particular, through the lens of the sublime, the colonial observer of New Zealand's environments was able to reduce Māori to the status of mere figures, or worse, to consciously or unconsciously leave them out of their scenes altogether. In other words, Maori were removed from these scenes in order for them to meet the objective requirements of the sublime.

Within a colonial context, the sublime becomes critical to understanding landscape. The sublime is a pictorial and literary category that was first theorized by Edmund Burke (1757), who saw the shift away from the visually pleasing aesthetic form of the beautiful to the more rough and rugged style of the sublime, as defining the transition from the Neoclassical era to the Romantic period. Furthermore, as Francis Pound (1983, p. 19) notes, the artist draws on the sublime to represent that which falls within their gaze as “vast, negligent, perpendicular, obscure, terrifying, solid, and massive”. These attributes make the sublime appear in contrast to the beautiful, which is characterized by “light, clarity, delicateness, softness, and smoothness” (Pound, 1983, p. 19). Therefore, while the beautiful is founded in pleasure, the sublime is founded in pain (Pound, 1983). For one of Cook's painters, William Hodges, the gloomy sublime of Dusky Sound was contrasted to the paradisaean sight of Tahiti, which he depicted as a “perfected nature, pruned of fault and accident” (Pound, 1983, p. 21). Moreover, the artist utilizes the characteristics that the framework of the sublime is built on to depict the ocean, the sky, storms, avalanches, fires, torrents, volcanoes, and mountains, representing nature as omnipotent. In contrast, humans are portrayed as insignificant in the face of such might (Latour, 2011). Therefore, the sublime landscape, like other landscapes, produces a mythology of place, for it defines and frames the scenes it is used to read and represent as places of nature. Moreover, the observer of the sublime revels in the sensation of scenery that is dangerous and destructive, and at the very same time, awesome, fascinating, and familiar (Pound, 1983).

The natural scenery that is most often represented by the sublime landscape is wild nature or wilderness^v: those places outside the bounds and therefore also the control of society. This makes civilization and culture the necessary antitheses to wilderness, as Yi-Fu Tuan (1974) claims. The term wilderness originally meant a place in which only wild animals dwelt, as it comes from the old English *wildēor*, meaning wild deer or just wild animal more generally, and the English *ness*, meaning a headland or promontory (Oxford English Dictionary, 2015). Fredrick Turner (1983, p. 32) traces the formation of the concept of wilderness to the ancient Sumerians, explaining that, for them, it referred to the space outside of the city:

““Civilization” now had to entail the contrasted concept of “wilderness” and wilderness peoples. In marking out boundaries to their worlds – walls, man-made shelters, granaries, cisterns,

reservoirs – civilized peoples took the first long strides in the ongoing process of insulation from the rest of creation.”

Today wild nature is often considered to be scenery, and scenery is something that, for the contemporary tourist, lies outside of the places of everyday life. Therefore, just as the early European explorers saw the alien forests of the new world while on their journeys around the globe, now the nature-lover travels to the conservation area to see them (Park, 2006). Furthermore, when the place of wilderness is finally reached, it is generally through the aesthetics of the sublime landscape that it is understood and experienced by the modern subject. Thus, while there is certainly still an industry for beautiful and picturesque landscapes, the sublime tends to dominate the market of nature consumption.

The experience of the sublime is deeply complex. When it occurs in wilderness, the experience of the sublime is an emotional event that is often expressed as being a kind of “pleasurable vertigo” (Pound, 1983, p. 19). It is characterized by the feeling of being simultaneously overwhelmed by the non-human presence of nature, while also being romantically enchanted by the sense of wonder its alien quality produces. Furthermore, through the emotional response humans have to wilderness, it becomes a place in which the subject is forced to experience the self in certain ways. William Cronon (1995, p. 70) writes:

“...the emotion one was most likely to feel in its presence was bewilderment or terror...Many of the word’s strongest associations are biblical, for it is used over and over again in the King James Version to refer to places on the margins of civilization where it is all too easy to lose oneself in moral confusion and despair...Wilderness, in short, was a place to which one came...always in fear and trembling.”

The intense feeling of the discovery of the self in nature is historically located within the Judeo-Christian mythology of the desert, which is seen as being the original place of wilderness. This is the site in which the aimless wanderer experiences transcendence while undergoing a kind of deconstruction of their personal, individual identity through an encounter with the placeless god, as David Jasper (2008) has suggested. Moreover, for the modern, European explorers that travelled the globe and surveyed it through the gaze of the Enlightenment, this experience of the undoing of the self in wilderness occurred in both seascapes and landscapes, which were equally distant, unknown places. According to Jonathon Lamb (1989), this therefore made the process of self-preservation not only vital for maintaining physical health, but also for maintaining sanity.

It was during these imperialist journeys to foreign places of wilderness that perhaps the most significant consequence of landscape arose, not so much impacting the European self this time, but the non-

European Other. This occurred through the use of landscape as a colonial tool that functioned to claim land by dispossessing its indigenous inhabitants of it. Mary Louise Pratt (1991, p. 197) writes of the explorer, with his colonial gaze, as being “monarch-of-all-I-survey”. In this way the explorer has the ability to disregard the existence of the Other in places of wilderness outside Europe, and to claim them as the territory of the empire, by turning the non-event of discovery into an imagined process of winning land for Britain. For while such encounters were discoveries for Europeans, the lands they found were already known to the Other. Furthermore, the colonist was able to conceptually erase the presence of non-European people in order to consider foreign land to be an “unoccupied wilderness”, figuratively making it available for the empire to claim, and then, possibly also, to live on as a white settler colony (Byrnes, 2001, p. 95). Therefore, landscape was a method which the colonist could draw on to read and interpret foreign lands, categorizing them as wilderness in many cases, and describing them as primitive, uncultured, or uncivilized. Landscape also allowed the colonist to deny the existence of the Other within the wilderness, and to portray it as unoccupied, unfrequented, or uninhabited instead (Cronon, 1995). It was through this imperial gaze that colonists sought to improve, civilize, or domesticate environments, by drawing on a Eurocentric vision of landscape to transform wilderness into agricultural land that was seen to be productive and efficient (Park, 2006).

Nature Nationalism: Settler and Pākehā Identities

Cook’s proto-colonial encounters with the Antipodes in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were turned into supposed events of discovery. These events expanded the European understanding of the world, and allowed Cook to claim New Zealand as a territory of the British Empire. This claim effectively dispossessed Māori, New Zealand’s first human and therefore indigenous inhabitants, of any rights to the land they call Aotearoa (Salmond, 1993 and 1997). Furthermore, it was through these proto-colonial encounters that the concept of wilderness was first brought and applied to New Zealand, when the explorers gazed upon the country through colonial eyes coloured by notions of landscape and improvement. The explorer’s gaze surveyed the place and its environments for signs of fertile land, or for signs that the land could be made productive where it was not already (Park, 2006). Moreover, Tom Brooking (2011) notes that this conceptual framework, New Zealand’s numerous forests, plains, and mountains meant that the country was perceived by colonial authorities and the New Zealand Company as a wilderness with an abundance of land available for British migrants to settle on. However, as Jim McAloon (2013) explains, much of New Zealand would require large-scale acts of land transformation to render its indigenous environments suitable for living, and more importantly, for European style pastoral farming, because the agricultural industry was set to become the backbone of the colony’s economy, primarily through the exportation of wool back to Britain. Colonel Charles Mundy (1852, p. 380) summed up the situation while on a trip to the New Zealand colony from Britain:

“I have no words to describe the luxuriant beauty of the wilderness traversed by this monument of a young colony’s energy and industry, the gigantic size of the timber, the glossy tufted foliage of tree and creeper and parasite, the noble contour of the uplands wooded to their very summits, the dark, tangled and absolutely impervious glens, rock and ravine, brush and swamp, the natural bulwarks of a country inexpugible except by Anglo-Saxon enterprise.”

Therefore, for Mundy, unlike Māori, whose primitiveness impeded them from successfully transforming the environment, New Zealand’s white settlers would be capable of realizing the full potential of its natural resources. Through settler colonialism, it becomes the task of settlers rather than colonial authorities to undertake such tasks in New Zealand, and it is via them that colonial perceptions and understandings of the environment were reproduced through what Avril Bell (2014, p. 11) calls the “settler imaginary”.

To a large extent, the lives and identities of the British settlers of New Zealand were shaped by their experiences of living and working on the land. The settlers transformed the country’s wilderness by clearing the forests that cover the hills and mountainsides, and burning the shrubs and draining the wetlands on the low-lying plains (Park, 2006). As Alfred Crosby (1986, p. 148) suggests, the task of the British migrants in New Zealand, as it was for white settlers in other colonies, was to create an agricultural industry by transforming the country from a wasteland into what he calls a “neo-Europe”. Thus, through terraforming processes settlers would develop large tracts of grassed land suitable for rearing stock. After this environmental change had begun to occur throughout New Zealand, the distinction between the newly created gardens and farms of the British Empire on the one hand, and the country’s indigenous environments on the other, allowed them to be juxtaposed to one another via the concept of landscape. The early settler of Canterbury, Lady Barker (1866, p. 134-135), wrote the following about the geography of and around her property:

“...the Rockwood paddocks looked like carpets of emerald velvet, spread out among the yellowish tussocks; the fences which enclose them were either golden with broom and gorse, or gay with wild roses and honeysuckle. Beyond these we saw the bright patches of flowers in the garden, and nothing could be more effective than the white gable of the house standing out against the vast black birch forest which clothed the steep hill-sides for miles—the contrast was so picturesque between the little bit of civilization and culture and the great extent of wild, savage scenery around it.”

Therefore, as it is shown here, for settlers and their descendants, wilderness in New Zealand refers to the country’s indigenous environments, which are perceived to be large, remote places of forest and mountain

outside of society and human production. And these places exist in opposition to the managed, ordered, human-created nature locked in by the farm fence.

If, to the distanced and removed observer of landscape, the wilderness appears picturesque in comparison to farmland, up close and personal it becomes sublime, making its scale daunting, but also fascinating. Burke (1777, p. 12) wrote that the sublime is a source of the terrible, and for him, like the proto-colonial explorers, what was terrible about New Zealand was its “savage state”. This was how Europeans represented New Zealand’s geography and indigenous people after encountering them. Thus, it is no surprise that British settlers would subsequently encounter and interpret the country’s environments through the same register. This register is apparent in the writing of the British resident of Canterbury, Samuel Butler (1872, p. 46):

“I found myself upon a tableland, and close to a glacier which I recognised as marking the summit of the pass. Above it towered a succession of rugged precipices and snowy mountain sides. The solitude was greater than I could bear; the mountain upon my master’s sheep-run was a crowded thoroughfare in comparison with this sombre sullen place. The air, moreover, was dark and heavy, which made the loneliness even more oppressive. There was an inky gloom over all that was not covered with snow and ice. Grass there was none.”

As Claudia Bell and John Lyall (2002) note, the wild landscapes of New Zealand were depressing for the first Europeans that encountered them, especially in contrast to the safety of the grassed farm. In this sense the notion of the sublime wilderness was central to both the national identity of New Zealand and the cultural identity of the white settler.

Central to the settler identity is the question of emotion. Stephen Turner (2008) argues that the identity of the white settler of New Zealand is characterized by melancholy, and in many ways this is manifest in these migrant’s relationships to the land, via the hardship of being in and transforming the wilderness. Furthermore, as Jacky Bowring (2008) explains, British migrants often perceived this feeling of melancholy as emanating from the land itself, as if it was the emotional quality of the spirit of New Zealand’s wilderness^{vi}. However, as Monte Holcroft (1940, p. 21) suggests, the wilderness was in fact experienced and represented as melancholic by British settlers due to specific social, cultural, and historical reasons, for it is a constant and stark reminder of the following:

“...the comparatively shallow placing of Anglo-Saxon roots in the New Zealand soil. We have no ancient landscapes strewn with the memorials of past ages...We are still strangers in the land.”

As a cultural condition, this melancholy could be described as the emotional character of the settlers' lived reality within that specific time and place. Therefore, this melancholy must be made sense of by situating it within the context of Victorianism, through which it can be interpreted as a manifestation of gothic culture. And this gothic culture was reconfigured into a sense of estrangement and dislocation within the context of New Zealand's settler society (Bowring, 2008).

The label of the settler is not the only term that white New Zealanders employ to identify themselves. More recently, beginning with Michael King's (1985) work on the subject, the descendants of British migrants to New Zealand have, in some cases, appropriated the Māori term for foreigner, Pākehā, to refer to themselves. Pākehā is a term that is often used to stress a break with the identity of the settler, which is seen as an out-dated label referring to expatriates exiled from their motherland. Moreover, in many cases, these early claims of Pākehā identity from the 1980s were underpinned by a sense that the descendants of the British settlers of New Zealand had developed respect for and an understanding of Māori culture, as well as renewed and more positive relationships to the country's environments, particularly its places of wilderness^{vii}. However, as Paul Spoonley (2007) explains, since this first generation of Pākehā theorists has come about, many commentators^{viii} have subsequently criticized their claim of being a second, indigenous people of New Zealand alongside Māori, arguing that this claim is problematic given the nation's colonial history. Therefore, this thesis argues that Pākehā should be seen and used as a label of identity that challenges these simplistic, politically insensitive definitions of the term, and which recognizes that the descendants of white migrants to New Zealand need not seek recourse to Britain for a sense of belonging, but that before they make any claims of being at home in the former colony, they need to deconstruct their colonial history. In this sense, the project of Pākehā identity is one that must constantly be in the processes of becoming, seeking out what it could become or represent, rather than defining it through a foundationalist claim of neo-indigeneity. Finally, to ask what it means to be Pākehā is crucial, for Pākehā have spent much time romanticising Māori, as John Newton (2009) shows. But more often and even more problematically, Pākehā forcibly tell Māori who they are, impose biculturalism on them, and demand them to explain who they are as a people. Rather, as the "second settlers" of Aotearoa, as Turner (2008) puts it, the onus must be on Pākehā themselves to think about who they are more critically.

Presently, Pākehā understandings and representations of New Zealand's wilderness are no longer of a savage environment as they once were for settlers, because they are now of a pure place of nature. While the wild is still often seen as being remote, the vision of a distant landscape is now in most cases cast from the city rather than the farm. Today there are endless tourist advertisements that encourage both locals and those from abroad to temporarily leave their urban lives and have a wilderness experience in New Zealand, by essentializing the country's places of indigenous nature. *Lonely Planet* travel guide (2015, unpaginated),

for example, describes New Zealand as a place to which tourists can go to experience the “splendours of the natural realm”, because:

“There are just 4.5 million New Zealanders, scattered across 270,534 sq. km: bigger than the UK with one-fourteenth the population. Filling in the gaps are the sublime forests, mountains, lakes, beaches and fiords that have made NZ one of the best hiking (locals call it 'tramping') destinations on Earth.”

Through this nature nationalism, as I call it, the country’s wilderness landscapes are represented as being pristine and untouched. To a large extent this portrayal has contemporaneously been constructed and disseminated by the government’s tourism organization, Tourism New Zealand (2015a, unpaginated), through their “100% Pure New Zealand” campaign. As Alfio Leotta (2011, p. 202) puts it:

“...’pure’ is the antonym of ‘corrupted’, as the national tourist board attempts to position the country in radical opposition to the urban and industrial environments inhabited by the prospective tourists.”

To put it simply, New Zealand makes the claim that with its places of nature it has something to offer which other countries do not.

As a consequence of nature nationalism, the indigenous flora and fauna of New Zealand is represented as being exotic, making it something to be marketed to both tourists and its own citizens alike. Just as New Zealand’s geographical features are sold as sublime scenery, its native animals and plants are turned into commodities that have economic value (Bell and Lyall, 2002). To understand this, it is important to note that New Zealand’s flora and fauna was first considered to be indigenous when naturalists such as Forster (1773, p. 80) came here and found:

“...a new store of animal and vegetable bodies...[There were] hardly any that were perfectly similar to the known species, and several not analogous to even the known genera.”

For colonizers, native species were at once marvels of creation and also resources to be exploited in the name of European advancement. But New Zealand’s indigenous nature offered little in this regard, and many of its plants and animals were considered – first by explorers and then later by settlers – to be weak and inferior to European varieties (Park, 2006). However, today national parks and other conservation areas offer a way to both preserve indigenous nature while also making it profitable by attracting visitors who pay for guided tours of these places of wilderness (Bell and Lyall, 2002). Moreover, the real success of the way that

nature nationalism brands New Zealand's native plants and animals as exotic and its indigenous environments as sublime landscapes lies in the way that these representations are so often accepted, not only by tourists, but also by Pākehā.

I refer to this set of ideas about wilderness as a kind of nature nationalism because they play a specific role within the imagining of New Zealand as a nation. As Benedict Anderson (1982) has shown, the nation is a phenomenon that comes into existence as an imagined community of people who take it for granted that others within the community will have the same traits, ideas, beliefs, or values as they do. I argue that in New Zealand one particular form of nationalism revolves around the ideas of nature that I have begun to outline above, and which place value on the country's indigenous wilderness. Furthermore, through these ideas, New Zealand's indigenous wilderness is seen to represent the country as a nation, providing its citizens with something to be patriotic about, and with which to create a sense of national belonging. However, from a post-colonial point of view, one must ask who creates these ideas of nationhood, for what purpose, and with what consequences? Indeed, as Partha Chatterjee (1993 p. 3) suggests, "whose imagined community" is the question that is at stake here. In New Zealand, a country with a history of colonization, particularly via settler colonialism, second settlers are largely responsible for constructing the nation, which often occurs in ways that reify colonization by reproducing it conceptually through culture. As Byrnes (2009, p. 1) puts it, "national identity is a euphemism for continuing colonisation". Therefore, it is the various ways in which nature nationalism acts as a kind of conceptual colonization that I want to reveal and critique in this thesis.

The South: Critical Regionalism and the Simulacrum of Wilderness

The origins of critical regionalism lie in architectural theory, beginning with Kenneth Frampton's (1983) formulation of it as an approach that, at its point of departure, aims to tackle the increasing homogenization of culture in a globalizing world. Furthermore, through this theoretical endeavour, Frampton (1983, p. 149) is critical of the perpetual reproduction and subsequent universalization of what he refers to as "elementary culture". Frampton (1983, p. 149) writes:

"Everywhere throughout the world, one finds the same bad movie, the same slot machines, the same plastic or aluminium atrocities. It seems as if mankind, by approaching *en masse* a basic consumer culture, were also stopped *en masse* at a subcultural level." [emphasis original]

Therefore, it is in response to this that Frampton (1983, p. 149) goes on to identify critical regionalism as an approach, which, as he puts it, "self-consciously seeks to deconstruct universal modernism in terms of values and imagines which are locally cultivated." However, it is important to note that, although, in its original

formulation, critical regionalism identifies the styles of both modernism and postmodernism as that which it seeks to deconstruct, its scope has since transcended the disciplinary boundaries of architecture, extending it, as an approach, beyond a mere critique of aesthetics.

More recently, critical regionalism has been utilized as a methodology in cultural studies and other disciplines. For instance, Douglas Powel (2007, p. 7) has drawn on critical regionalism to examine representations of different regions in the United States, and he therefore suggests that it is useful for engaging with “an emerging strand of scholarship” which is characterized by:

“...a shifting of emphasis away from the products of regional culture, the definitions of region themselves and all their representative artifacts, to the process by which ideas about regions come into being and become influential.”

Furthermore, from this starting point, Powel (2007, p. 186) then goes on in his discussion to identify what he calls the “loftiest goal” of critical regionalism as an approach, suggesting that, for him, it is:

“...teaching people how to reconceive their own local spaces in terms that comprehend their social construction, [and to] understand the rhetorical force of social inventions of place...”

As Lawrence Grossberg (1994) explains, what distinguishes cultural studies from other academic fields is its radical contextualism, making it a theory of contexts. Therefore, I suggest that with its focus on the socio-cultural invention of place within modernity, critical regionalism is a suitable methodology for such a discipline, when and where place or the local is its point of inquiry. Thus, in this thesis, I investigate the sites of Fiordland in the first chapter and Canterbury in the second chapter, revealing the locally specific histories of Pākehā experiences, perceptions, and representations of these areas’ landscapes. This provides an understanding of how the rhetorical force of nature nationalism espoused by tourism and conservation functions, via the ways in which it draws on the South Island regional construction to produce the New Zealand wilderness myth.

In order to produce the New Zealand wilderness myth, nature nationalism draws on settler and Pākehā perceptions and portrayals of the South Island that have defined its geography as sublime and its landscapes as empty. Furthermore, the history of this South Island regional construction goes back to the European explorers’ proto-colonial encounters with the South Island in the eighteenth-century, when the place was classified as *terra nullius*: an empty land of nothing belonging to no one (Park, 2006). Moreover, this understanding continued and become widespread in settler society, when British migrants left the Northern Hemisphere and came to live in New Zealand’s South Island during the nineteenth-century. For

them, the South Island was an uninhabited wilderness where the *genius loci*, or spirit of the place, could be sensed as a deeply strange and elusive feeling of emptiness or nothingness (Bowring, 2008). Such notions of wilderness did not die off, but in fact lived on into the twentieth-century, when they were reproduced in the work of the poets and writers of the 1930s that become known as the cultural nationalists of New Zealand, as Stuart Murray (1998) explains. For instance, Holcroft (1940, p. 23), a perpetuator of the South Island Myth, as it was termed by literary critics, wrote:

“...the forest reveals itself as something that is not ours, something that has never belonged even to the Māori, but has known centuries of an undisturbed stillness...Perhaps it is merely an emptiness that reveals itself...”

Therefore, it is as if there is something alien and indescribable that could be experienced in the wilderness of southern New Zealand, which seems to emanate from the land itself.

In this thesis, I describe and critique nature nationalism, the New Zealand wilderness myth it produces, and the South Island regional construction it relies on to do so. I locate this regional construction textually in historical, literary sources, particularly, but not entirely limited to, the journals of explorers and the fictional and non-fictional works of white settlers. I label nature nationalism as textual following Graham Allen’s (2011) understanding of the textual as that which refers to a particular set of meanings, symbolic elements, and aesthetics found in writing. In order to undertake this critique I take a post-disciplinary approach by drawing on the work of environmental historians, geographers, sociologists, anthropologists, cultural and literary studies authors, and continental philosophers, particularly Jean Baudrillard, and to a lesser extent, Gilles Deleuze. I utilize these academic resources to relate the South Island regional construction to the present day, by demonstrating how, through both governmental and non-governmental tourism and conservation writing, it is reproduced in order to create the New Zealand wilderness myth. Furthermore, today this myth of nature nationalism defines New Zealand’s wilderness as pure. Hence, as Leotta (2011, p. 196-202) succinctly explains, “purity is equated with emptiness”, for “in these tourist campaigns, pure is a synonym for empty”. In both the main chapters of this thesis I trace this historical trajectory of the South Island regional construction from early European arrival in New Zealand to the present day, as Pākehā understand it.

I argue that nature nationalism, the New Zealand wilderness myth, and the South Island regional construction, are problematic for four main reasons that will be discussed in the subsequent chapters. My critique is largely post-colonial, and by post-colonial I mean that which strives for conceptual decolonization by questioning the Eurocentric and colonial ideas implicit in Western concepts, particularly those that have been used to undertake or justify colonialism, such as the concepts of wilderness, nature, and landscape,

which are of primary concern in this thesis. For scholars outside the natural sciences, there are many historical, cultural, social, and political reasons that suggest New Zealand is not quite so pure. Moreover, focusing on these takes the debate over New Zealand's branding and national identity through landscape beyond the often-heard claims made by environmental scientists and ecologists that it is pollution that is destroying the purity of Aotearoa's nature^{ix}. Firstly then, nature nationalism relies on an unquestioned conceptualization of wilderness as uninhabited: a place of pure nature. This reifies colonization and its imperialistic endeavours, for it is a mythical, factitious, and imaginary notion of landscape Romanticism brought to New Zealand by European explorers and British authorities, who used it to justify taking the land from Māori, transforming it, and settling on it. Secondly, nature nationalism essentializes the national identity of New Zealand as a place of indigenous nature by reducing the country to a series of national icons, which are its sites of wilderness. These generally include, among some possible others too, the volcanic and geothermal regions, the fiords, and Aoraki/Mount Cook. Thirdly, through nature nationalism an attempt is made to forget the country's pre-European Māori history and to denounce the colonial destruction of New Zealand's native environments and species of flora and fauna. At the same time, via nature nationalism there is a nostalgic remembering of the undisturbed state of the country's indigenous landscapes in the imaginary pre-human past. Fourthly, through nature nationalism the claim is made that the wilderness is now the homeland of the *New Zealander*, suggesting that the identity of the country's white citizens is no longer as settlers, but as a native people alongside indigenous Māori, or worse, in place of them.

My main theoretical resource is Baudrillard, specifically his work on simulacra, simulation, and the hyperreal. It is through this theory that I argue the main points of my thesis as outlined in the preceding paragraph, drawing on Baudrillard to undertake a post-colonial reading of a contemporary simulacral Romanticism. For Baudrillard (1981), reality is dead, for its simulations have replaced the real as its simulacra. This is because in Baudrillard's (1981) theory, representation is no longer a copy which resembles or imitates reality, rather, these simulations themselves are what are now taken to be real, making them hyperreals. As Baudrillard (1981, p. 10) writes:

“It is no longer a question of a false representation of reality but of concealing the fact that the real is no longer real, and thus of saving the reality principle.”

Moreover, the real is saved by the simulacrum, for “it is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal” (Baudrillard, 1981, p. 3). I argue that New Zealand's indigenous environments are hyperreal, or, as I call it: a simulacrum of wilderness. Firstly, I mean this in the sense that videos, photographs, writings, and paintings of these environments are simulations that have been reproduced to such an extent that they become a kind of technological simulacrum. Secondly, I refer to the simulacrum of wilderness in an environmental sense, and by this I mean the way that conservation tries to simulate the pre-

human state of New Zealand's indigenous wildernesses. Furthermore, I argue that the Pākehā memory of New Zealand's pre-human epoch is a false memory in the sense that it does not pertain to any past that was ever really experienced by humans. Finally, in light of this, the wilderness, which is seen as being synonymous with this prehistoric time, becomes a simulacrum that stands in for the lack of the pre-human past, making it real in the here and now. Hence, as Baudrillard (1981, p. 21) writes, the simulacrum is in fact "more real than nature".

Critical Regionalism is crucial to the understanding of identity I propose in this thesis. As Fredric Jameson (1994, p. 190) notes, critical regionalism is an approach that acts as a local response to the late modern possibility of "a universalizing homogeneity of identity". But at the same time as it does this, it also rejects the counter to this in the form of the fixation with cultural and social difference, as something that is taken to be inherently good, in and of itself. In this sense, this thesis is a critical regionalist critique of the homogenization of identity in New Zealand, through the ways in which nature nationalism constructs a myth of the wilderness-loving New Zealander. This is evident, for instance, in the way that the white majority government's Department of Conservation (2001, p. 1) promotes the country's indigenous environments as "the heritage of New Zealanders", meaning that the wilderness belongs to and is for everyone. As Charlotte Steel argues (2008), the notion of the New Zealander is one that is highly problematic, for it has been created and used by Pākehā as a political tool to envelop Māori identity within a nationalised identity, in an attempt to impede indigenous pushes for sovereignty. Thus, in response to this, I articulate Pākehā as a label of identity that is both modern and regional, for, as I show, it arises out of encounters with local landscapes, and the place specific understandings and representations of those geographies that result from such interactions.

Following the premise that cultural studies can utilize critical regionalism to determine the various ways in which the universal concepts of Western modernity are transmuted within specific sites, I argue that the European notions of nature, wilderness, landscape, and the sublime have taken on local meanings through their use by Pākehā in the South Island. Moreover, I argue that the aforementioned concepts were brought to New Zealand from Europe through colonization and settlement, and have since been reconfigured by Pākehā in the South Island, where they have been drawn on to describe its geography as empty. Indeed, as Byrnes (2009, p. 1) suggests, New Zealand's history and identity is not as unique as has been made out, for the nation "can be understood as a part of trends, practices and structures that have their origins beyond New Zealand's shores". Furthermore, in my conclusion I argue that the South Island regional construction stands in contrast to the North Island regional construction, which while also often being experienced, perceived, and represented as a place of wilderness by settlers and Pākehā, is seen by them to be a wilderness that is not deserted, but which is inhabited by Māori. Therefore, I show that in producing the New Zealand wilderness myth through nature nationalism, tourism and conservation give primacy to the

South Island regional construction. This creates the idea of the country's landscapes being pure and uninhabited, while downplaying the North Island regional construction. This is evident, for instance, in the way that the majority of tourism advertising that draws on the New Zealand wilderness myth utilizes images and videos of Fiordland's natural landscapes, which are presented as free of any sign of human presence, much more often than those which feature Māori and their culture and history.

In this thesis, I ask the following question: what is the possibility of a post-colonial wilderness in New Zealand? What must be asked first is why, in creating the New Zealand wilderness myth, tourism and conservation give primacy to the South Island regional construction over the North Island regional construction? This is an important question to ask, because as I have already mentioned, the South Island regional construction is highly problematic, for it reproduces and reifies colonial understandings and representations of nature, nationhood, and identity. By contrast, while the North Island regional construction may also be problematic via the ways in which it portrays Māori, it at least recognizes and represents the fact that they exist and have a history in New Zealand. Thus, what I suggest is that New Zealand's nationhood can be premised on nature nationalism, and that its citizens can understand and represent the country's identity as a place of wilderness, while also marketing it as such to tourists, but that in doing so, such perceptions and portrayals need to be decolonized. Moreover, this means not conceptualizing and representing wilderness areas as pristine, untouched, pure, pre-human places that belong to and are the home of the imaginary New Zealander as the country's icons. Rather, the indigenous, colonial, settler, and Pākehā histories that have occurred within them must be recognized and critically reflected upon, instead of being selectively remembered or forgotten for political purposes^x.

Chapter 1: Fiordland and the Primeval

The Eighth Wonder of the World: Encountering the South West

Fiordland is defined by its wilderness. On his trip to New Zealand in 1891, Rudyard Kipling was so struck by the nature he saw in the southern-most part of the country, that he described Fiordland as “the eighth wonder of the world”^{xi}. Similarly, writing about the Milford Track that takes walkers through the forests of Fiordland to one of its most famous wild places, Milford Sound, Blanche Baughan (1909, p. 7) claimed the following:

“...from the variety, the beauty, and the scale, of the scenes through which it passes, it must surely be accounted one of the most glorious natural wonders of the world.”

Baughan’s (1909, p. 7) travel writing on the scenes witnessed along the Milford Track was published as an essay titled *The Finest Walk in the World*^{xii}, in which she described the environment of Milford Sound as “nature at her loneliest and fairest”. Fiordland still lives up to the title of Baughan’s essay, with it now being named “the walking capital of the world”^{xiii}. Moreover, the Department of Conservation (2015a and 2015b, unpaginated) refers to Te Wahipounamu/South West New Zealand as “one of the great natural areas of the world”, home to the 1.2 million hectare Fiordland National Park, and three of the department’s nine “Great Walks of New Zealand”: The Routeburn, the Kepler, and the Milford. The environment through which these walks traverse have also made the region a UNESCO World Heritage Site; as UNESCO (2015, unpaginated) refers to it as a “vast wilderness” where “the landscapes are world class for the sheer excellence of their scenic beauty”. The almost 400000 annual visitors to Fiordland National Park, the largest national park in New Zealand, come to witness this scenery, which they will no doubt have already viewed as a series of landscapes on their television and computer screens before arriving to observe them first hand while walking, boating, hunting, fishing, cycling, or kayaking (Department of Conservation, 2015c).

Fiordland has been considered a wilderness since the first time Europeans encountered it a little more than two centuries ago. As Park (2006) explains, Fiordland’s Dusky Sound, or Dusky Bay as it was called at the time, was first described as wild in the travel journals of the sailors that arrived at it almost 250 years ago. Today tourist advertising continues to describe Dusky Sound in much the same way as it was described by Europeans back then; a visit to the sound, for instance, is promoted by Destination Fiordland (2015, unpaginated), the region’s governmental tourism organization, as “a great wilderness experience”. However, as Cronon (1995) notes, wild and wilderness are synonyms that carry very different connotations now to what they did in the past. Therefore, these concepts meant one thing for Cook and his shipmates when they

arrived at Dusky Sound in 1773, and another for tourists visiting Fiordland National Park in the present. Today the contemporary notion of wilderness as scenic is found in tourist advertising, like Tourism New Zealand's 100% Pure New Zealand campaign, for example, as well as in endless coffee-table books and calendars that feature scenes of the area's world famous mountains, glaciers, lakes, fiords, and forests.

It is these understandings of wilderness that I seek to explore and question in this chapter. As Janet Stephenson, Mick Abbott, and Jacinta Ruru (2010) claim, there are important political, historical, and cultural issues to be uncovered beyond the essentialized images of landscape that portray the South Island's environments as wild. Moreover, the confluences and departures between the romantic eighteenth-century notion of wilderness that explorers brought and applied to Dusky Sound from Enlightenment-period Europe, and the popular, contemporary notion of wilderness used to describe and depict the geography of Fiordland today, help reveal these issues. I trace a movement from a desire to civilize the wilderness to a desire to recreate and conserve. And through this movement, nature nationalism is revealed as a nationalistic discourse that is underpinned by the South Island regional construction. Furthermore, I show that the Pākehā imaginary of Fiordland is central to this regional construction. I then demonstrate how nature nationalism is linked to the construction of Pākehā identity through the simulation of New Zealand's indigenous nature, which turns it into a simulacrum of wilderness. Finally, I problematize nature nationalism by explaining how it relies on a colonial politics, and how this impedes the possibility of a post-colonial wilderness in New Zealand.

The European Arrival at Dusky Sound: Forster's Unfrequented Woods

During Cook's second voyage around the world from 1772-1775 aboard his ship the *Resolution*, he visited New Zealand for a second time. Dusky Sound was the first place Cook arrived in New Zealand during the proto-colonial mission, and one of his crew was the naturalist, Forster. After having been at sea for months near the Antarctic, failing to make any landfalls, the *Resolution* sailed into Dusky Sound in 1773, and Forster (1773, p. 80), looking out from the deck as the ship got close to the shore, wrote the following in his diary^{xiv}:

“...and so apt is mankind, after a long absence from land, to be prejudiced in favour of the wildest shore, that we looked upon the country at that time as one of the most beautiful which nature, unassisted by art, could produce.”

Here Forster's observation turns the environment of Dusky Sound into a European cultural space by seeing and interpreting it as a wilderness landscape. As Cronon (1995) notes, wilderness landscapes are seen to be untamed places of wild nature that are outside the control of humans and their places of habitation.

Furthermore, they are contrasted to places where nature is understood to have been domesticated by people through processes of ordering and managing, such as through artistic representation, as Forster mentions here.

It was the perceived lack of human habitation that made Fiordland a wilderness to and for those from the West, for in many cases early European sailors only encountered traces of Māori in the South Island. At Dusky Sound, Forster (1773, p. 80-105) was surprised to see such beauty in a landscape he imagined to be produced by nature itself, and he referred to it as “wholly uninhabited”, and to its forests as “unfrequented woods”. Similarly, the explorer, John Boulton (1826), wrote the following after arriving in “wild romantic” Fiordland a little more than fifty years after Cook was first there:

“...we did not see any traces of natives, till we came to Open Bay, where on the beach we saw a broken spear and a pair of old porraras.”

Despite this perception, Fiordland was in fact inhabited by small nomadic groups of Māori, which the *Resolution's* explorers encountered on more than one occasion at Dusky Sound. After a small batch of the sailors first met a group of “New Zealanders” while exploring the bay in a rowboat, the whole crew later came into the presence of another gathering of “natives” (Forster, 1773, p. 83). Although, after the encounter had occurred, Forster (1773, p. 82) admitted that his “opinion of it being uninhabited was premature”, he still referred to Dusky Sound as “an unfrequented part of the world”.

The observer of landscape often omits that which is actually seen, replacing it with culturally produced images which structure what is to be included and what is to be excluded from the scene that is being produced. Michel Foucault (1967, p. 107) writes about this way in which the imagination is always implicated in the process through which certain phenomena are revealed to the observer while others are concealed from them:

“The correlative of observation is never the invisible, but always the immediately visible, once one has removed the obstacles erected to reason by theories and to the senses by the imagination.”

In this sense, Māori were of course not invisible to Forster and the other explorers, but rather, they were immediately visible to the naked eye as a form of vision unconditioned by the images of nature produced by eighteenth-century European culture and its vision of landscape as uninhabited. Therefore, in contrast, Māori were made invisible to Forster's image of wilderness through which he saw the environment of Dusky Sound as necessarily empty of people, for the place appeared to him to be wild in every other regard, and

would have to conform in this way as well. This is similar to the way nomadic spaces were often viewed by Europeans as empty wildernesses elsewhere, because in their eyes, for a space not to be empty, it must be settled.

Europeans also imagined places of wilderness as being uninhabited by regarding the land through art. Smethurst (2012) explains that art is a technique for reading landscape and giving it meaning, and this occurs by framing the land, as Pound (1983) puts it. Moreover, this makes it possible for the viewer to choose what to include inside the frame and conversely what to exclude from the scene, which is then labelled sublime or picturesque (Pound, 1983). Furthermore, David Arnold (2006) suggests that the tableaux or spectacles created through the gaze of the colonial spectator are imagined as being whole or complete despite the fact that they are put together through the artistic movements of Romanticism, making them conform to the aesthetic ideas of its stylistic genres. Although it was not yet a common style in the eighteenth-century, the *Resolution's* painter, Hodges, applied “Salvador Rosa’s sublime” when painting scenes of Dusky Sound (Pound, 1983, p. 60). In the eighteenth-century the sublime was a way of contrasting people to the wild by portraying them as puny in relation to the grandeur of nature (Latour, 2011). And by imagining them as becoming visually unrecognizable in the scenes of giant mountains and thick forests among which they become lost and then disappear without so much as even a trace of their existence (Latour, 2011).

Despite its power of representation, sometimes art was believed to be incapable of adequately portraying the otherworldly sight of particularly stunning scenes of nature. While on a sightseeing trip of New Zealand at the beginning of the twentieth-century, the German tourist, Count Fritz Von Hochberg (1910, p. 104-111), wrote the following about Fiordland:

“To describe the woods we walked through seems to me almost impossible. They are too marvellously beautiful, almost unnaturally beautiful, so that one thinks oneself in an exaggerated stage scene that some wildly fantastic artist has created and painted...It would be impossible for a pen to describe so much beauty, such exquisite colouring, such harmony, scenery, poetry. The cleverest brush of an artist alone could render it, and then most likely people wouldn't believe it, but would say it was a fantastic, idealised landscape.”

Through art landscape is ranked and judged, creating an image of the ideal when a particular painting appears to perfectly meet the requirements of a specific style. While nature can be assisted by art, as Forster put it, adding to its beauty through representation, even the best painting may seem fake because it in fact appears to be too perfect. Therefore, for Von Hochberg, like Forster, Fiordland was an ideal wilderness that did not need improving through art, and which could not be fully captured within the frame of representation

anyway.

In order to make sense of the environments that they encountered, Europeans referred to a stock catalogue of ideal images of various types of landscape created and represented by art. Park (2006, p. 96) explains that colonizers only saw what their culture had taught them to expect to see, for, as he puts it, “colonial eyes see from the outside what the mind that informs them has learned, elsewhere, to see.” Hence, Forster’s (1773, p. 80) observations of the environment at Dusky Sound were informed by what he had seen elsewhere during the *Resolution*’s journey, and therefore referring to the crew during their stay, he said:

“With such warmth of imagination they have viewed the rude cliffs of Juan Fernandez, and the impenetrable forests of Tinian!”

The colonial observer is supplied by European culture with a series of images of landscape that aid in making sense of what the eyes see, by negotiating and situating it in relation to these models of the impenetrable forest and the rude cliff, through which Forster saw and read Dusky Sound as a text to be interpreted. Forster had learned to see environments imagined to be places of wilderness as unpeopled and therefore empty, by conceptualizing them as the domain of nature in all its impenetrable and rude glory.

In conjunction with art, Christianity also helped explorers read the wilderness as deserted. As Forster (1773, p. 79) visually read the landscapes of Fiordland, he depicted how in one scene he saw “antediluvian forests which clothed the rock” that jutted up from the sea. For Forster, antediluvian Dusky Sound was synonymous with the Garden of Eden after the Fall of Man, because he situated it within the prehistoric past as a primeval place from which all humans had been removed. Furthermore, Forster (1773, p. 105) observed that at Dusky Sound “immense numbers of plants” had been “left to themselves”. Here Forster creates after-Eden imagery of the fallen world in which humans, exiled from the garden, are not there to tend to the plants as God’s stewards, leaving only nature imagined to soon be swept away by the Deluge. Forster’s use of the Fall narrative to make sense of the environment at Dusky Sound was furthered by the idea of apocalypse heading toward it, making it deadly and too wild to inhabit. Forster (1773, p. 108) perceived this during a storm in which he experienced the “raw climate” of Dusky Sound, suggesting that the “tempest” and its “concomitant aetherial fires” made it seem “as if all nature was hastening to a general catastrophe”, leaving the *Resolution*’s crew to “perish”. In this regard, the wilderness provides an understanding of nature as a transcendent force with subliminal power over humans (Latour, 2011).

Forster’s understanding of Dusky Sound as postlapsarian also reveals his perceptions of the temporality of nature. Forster (1773, 105) suggested that Dusky Sound, with nature as its only inhabitant, had been “plunged in one long night of ignorance and barbarism”, and thus he explained that its vegetation

perpetually “lived and decayed by turns” without any human intervention. Here Forster’s understanding of nature as a self-reproducing form reveals its cyclical temporality, making it incapable of changing under its own powers, and therefore condemning it to endlessly reproduce itself over and over like Friedrich Nietzsche’s (1882) nightmare of eternal recurrence. Moreover, as the forms of its wild nature would not change, the explorers imagined Dusky Sound as being timeless or atemporal, as if it was outside of the linear temporality that they knew from home, and through which things developed and evolved over the course of time. As Cronon (1995, p. 79) sums it up, wilderness represents a “flight from history to the original garden”. In this way, Dusky Sound was situated in contrast to modern Europe, which was seen as having evolved beyond the primitive state of wilderness, and making the explorers’ journey to Dusky Sound a kind of “time travel”, as Lamb (1989, p. 213) calls it. Forster (1773, p. 81) drew on the idea that time and space separates humans from wilderness, when he claimed that Dusky Sound had not “undergone any changes from the hands of mankind”:

“It is indeed reasonable to suppose that in the southern parts of New-Zeeland, the forests have never been touched by human industry, but have remained in the rude, unimproved state of nature since their first existence.”

Here humans and nature are seen as separate phenomena, for while the former changes and evolves over time, the latter always remains fixed until it is improved by human industry.

The notion of wilderness as uninhabited was not an innocent cultural invention; it was not a phenomenon restricted to the aesthetics of European art or the narratives of the Bible. In a political sense it was in fact a highly important idea that informed claims to the land in colonized places. As Byrnes (2001) explains, environments in New Zealand were regarded as empty by colonizers as a way of justifying their appropriation of them. Furthermore, for Carolyn Merchant (1995), the concept of wilderness always foregrounded the issue of land in colonial territories, where it was employed as a conceptual framework for making sense of land ownership and rights. According to John Weaver (2001), in the South Island this was manifest through the British Empire’s declaration of *terra nullius*; the South Island’s perceived lack of human residents was interpreted as evidence of the mountainous terrain’s unsuitability for settlement. However, *terra nullius* was a legal fiction, for it was based on what colonial eyes imagined they saw, not what was really there. The romantic imagining of an absence of human presence was what underpinned this colonial tool, which systematically disposed indigenous peoples of any rights to their own land.

The Māori encountered by the *Resolution*’s crew in Fiordland were conceived in the same way that other indigenous hunter-gatherer peoples were by colonizers in other parts of the world. For their land use, or perceived lack of it, is what defined them as being primitive, and therefore as antithetical to civilized

Europeans. *Terra nullius* was a Eurocentric claim of ownership of land either unclaimed by people or empty of people who improved it, therefore making them backward, as Lewis Gordon (2013) notes, and as passive, natural, and inactive as the land itself was imagined to be (Cronon, 1983). According to Turner (1983), indigenous peoples were seen as childlike captives of the land rather than as adult masters of it, existing at the mercy of nature and reflecting its primordial, unconscious forces through primitive ritual, myth, and cave art. In this way, these ideas associated with indigenous peoples were similar to those associated with orientalism, as Edward Said (1978) explains it. Furthermore, indigenous peoples were seen as precapitalist, precontact, primitive-isolates from time immemorial, as Eric Wolf (1982) argues. To the explorers from the *Resolution*, the hunter-gatherer Māori that they encountered in Fiordland had not subdued the land and claimed dominion over it through sedentary agricultural practices, and they were therefore seen as being unable to claim sovereignty over it either.

It was within this context that the *Resolution's* explorers believed that it was their duty to transform the environment of Dusky Sound, for Māori had supposedly not done so. According to Forster (1773, p. 105), the explorers “gave life to the scene” at Dusky Sound; it “attracted the notice of philosophers”, it provided “a meal of delicious fish”, its plants were used to make “a salutary and palatable potion”, its “tall timber trees” were felled and cut into “billets for fuel”, and it was “imitated by an artist”. Reflecting on these changes, Forster (1773, p. 105) said:

“...the romantic prospects of this shaggy country lived on the canvas in the glowing tints of nature, who was amazed to see herself so closely copied.”

Forster (1773, p. 105) imagined the space of timeless wilderness to have been “converted into an active scene” through the explorers’ presence among it, because only they could bring it into linear time by helping it to evolve into a more advanced form of nature. Forster (1773, p. 105) wrote:

“The superiority of a state of civilization over that of barbarism could not be more clearly stated, than by the alterations and improvements we had made in this place. In the course of a few days, a small part of us had cleared away the wood from a surface of more than an acre, which fifty New Zealanders, with their tools of stone, could not have performed in three months.”

Therefore, these beginnings of environmental transformation initiated by the explorers symbolized progress through the land, because they produced scenes, which, to the colonial eye, represented nature becoming productive and efficient through such processes as industrialization and commercialization.

Despite the efforts of the explorers to transform it, the environment of Dusky Sound proved to be problematic for them. The duty of the sailors in Fiordland was to examine the “prospects of this shaggy

country”, as Forster (1773, p. 105) put it, but this was mostly disappointing for them. The *Resolution*’s crew found that Dusky Sound had little available pastoral land. Hence, surveying the local topography from the view he had on the top of a hill, providing him with a “panoptic gaze”, as Byrnes (2001, p. 63) calls it, Forster (1773, p. 90) said:

“No meadows and lawns are to be met with, and the only flat land we found, was situated at the head of deep coves, where a brook fell into the sea, which probably by depositing the earth and stones it brought from the hills, had formed this low and level ground. But even there the whole was over-run with wood and briars, and we could not find a single spot of ground which might have afforded pasture, the grass which grew on some beaches being very hard and coarse.”

Dusky Sound was considered to be a place that would be difficult to inhabit and colonize, because nature had been left to its own devices, making it seem inefficient and unproductive with its lack of flat, clear, fertile land.

Regardless of any setbacks, the explorers still attempted to domesticate and civilize the wilderness in the ways in which they could, taking the first steps towards transforming the land at Dusky Sound into a form that would be more acceptable to them. Even the smallest acts of land change would at least signal that the possibility of settlement was alive in Fiordland. While preparing to leave the area, Forster (1773, p. 106) said:

“We re-imbarked all our instruments and utensils, and left no other vestiges of our residence, than a piece of ground, from whence we had cleared the wood. We sowed indeed a quantity of European garden seeds of the best kinds; but it is obvious that the shoots of the surrounding weeds will stifle every salutary and useful plant, and that in a few years our abode, no longer discernible, must return to its original chaotic state.”

Here Forster (1772, p. 106) makes a distinction between the environment of Dusky Sound without humans as nature in its raw form, composed of “neglected indigenous plants”, and the same space under the control of people as homely. However, Forster also tells the reader that the efforts of the explorers were largely in vain, for without the ongoing presence of Europeans, the wilderness would inevitably return.

The National Park: The Past within the Present

The perceived lack of human presence still provides the basis for how wilderness is imagined to be in New Zealand’s national parks. Tourism New Zealand (2015b, unpaginated) promotes Fiordland National

Park as “untouched by man”. Indeed, Fiordland was one of the least ecologically affected areas of New Zealand after colonization and settlement (Crosby, 1986). Due to its terrain, climate, and distance from the two planned settlement sites in the South Island, Otago and Canterbury, few British immigrants settled there (Crosby, 1986). Moreover, the large tracts of Fiordland’s land that were unsuitable for pastoralism and which now compose the Fiordland National Park are described by Lonely Planet Travel Guide (2015, unpaginated) as forming “a remote and magical area”. This idea that uninhabitedness is spellbinding is found in earlier descriptions of Fiordland; hence, Forster (1773, p. 91) called it “enchanted”, and Baughan (1920, p. 91) labelled it the “enchanted forest-aisle”. Today this cultural desire for the enchanted has been taken up in *Lord of the Rings* promotion in New Zealand, as tourists are taken on tours of the movie’s wild filming locations in Fiordland and elsewhere in the country. Furthermore, Fiordland’s distant location away from the towns and cities allows it to be imagined as a far away landscape beyond the places people live and spend most of their days. As Steel (2008, p. 33) suggests, New Zealand’s landscapes are a “post-religious opiate”.

Fiordland’s wilderness has been enchanted since the first Europeans encountered it and today it is still experienced in this way by tourists and those from New Zealand alike. While walking the Milford Track, for instance, Von Hochberg (1910, p. 109-111) wrote of finding himself in a “green fairy cathedral” where he experienced “the delicious solitude” of nature. New Zealand’s cultural nationalists also brought the notions of solitude and enchantment together. Holcroft (1946, p. 194) shows this in his writing on Fiordland:

“...Te Anau, deceptively placid on a clear day, but with a mysterious light in the vapours that cling about the peaks where the lake turns deeply into the ranges; Manapouri, with a blue mist over the forest that grows to the water’s edge; and Wakatipu, unspoiled by generations of tourists, its wide waters unfolding to the northward traveller that sudden vision of Earnslaw and its attendant giants, clothed in white against the reticent green of native beech in the valleys...Further south, and of little repute among tourists – who scarcely know it - is the narrow and winding channel of Monowai. I came to it once in the twilight, and I shall never forget the impression of natural power and utter loneliness...The narrow waters were withdrawing into a shadow that came from the close and thickly-wooded mountains. These hills leaned over, making the lake a long and secret pool. Their debris has been cast upon its surface; I could see uprooted trees wedged against the bank, or adrift in the middle waters. And as a first rumble of thunder announced the storm that was to rage all through the night, I felt again the mystery of those secret places which seem to retain some essential part of the country – a privacy of nature, its meaning still undisclosed to the people who believed they have tamed it.”

Here nature is typically unspoilt, undisclosed, secret, and lonely. Moreover, this description of a lack of human presence combines with a representation of the range of colours and lighting found in the wild to

produce a sense of enchantment. More recent descriptions of Fiordland as enchanted still harken back to these earlier ones. For example, travel writer Paul Theroux (1992, p. 18) wrote the following about the “enchanted forest” he visited in Fiordland National Park:

“It was all visibly alive and wonderful...It was like a forest in a fairy story, the pretty perfect wilderness of sprites and fairies, which is the child’s version of paradise – a lovely Disneyish glade where birds eat out of your hand and you know you will come to no harm.”

In such writing, wilderness becomes the modern representation of the “great enchanted garden”, as Max Weber (1920, p. 270) put it, and the experience of landscape as enchanted is made to be a commodity that can be purchased.

The temporality of wilderness also makes it appear enchanted. Today Fiordland’s flora is still understood to be as prehistoric as Forster imagined it to be more than two hundred years ago. Hence, UNESCO (2015, unpaginated) suggests that the flora of South West New Zealand has “become the best modern representation of the ancient biota of Gondwana”. Like Forster then, a contemporary tourist visiting Fiordland already knows what to see and how to interpret it before actually going there. However, while eighteenth-century European culture imagined landscapes like those at Dusky Sound to strike the eye of the observer with their “rude sceneries”, as Forster (1773, p. 79) claimed, today this wilderness is valued for more than its utilitarian or aesthetic worth. When figuratively travelling back in time through the Fiordland National Park, individuals are told that they will be the spectators of “a thousand year old nature”, as Tourism New Zealand (2015b, unpaginated) proudly explains. Therefore, the wilderness is now seen as something to conserve and celebrate because it is where individuals are put in contact with what is imagined to be the primordial past. As former politician Simon Upton (1996, p. 15-17) suggests, there is something alien yet captivating about the grand age of wilderness in New Zealand:

“Face to face with that uniquely New Zealand possibility, of an original nature with which, according to the scientific-speak of biodiversity, we did not co-evolve (at least not in any time frame we can comprehend) and thus cannot coexist.”

Similarly, Theroux (1992, p. 31) echoes this experience of wilderness when he writes that in Fiordland he “was among ancient trees” that were “literally as old as the hills”, and of the “forest that is more than a thousand years old, and that has never been touched or interfered with”. In this sense, while wilderness is seen as transcending human existence through its spatial and temporal properties, it can, paradoxically, still be experienced contemporaneously, as if it is a remnant of the past that somehow persists into the present day.

Although wilderness appears to transcend human existence, certain measures must be taken to ensure that it is experienced as such. The Department of Conservation (2015d, unpaginated) provides this description of the experience of nature in Fiordland:

“Imagine standing high in the mountains, looking over a vast landscape of snow-capped peaks, glistening fiords, icy lakes in tussock and sheer, ice-carved valleys with rivers winding through the native forest.”

Within these sensuous landscapes there is an excess of the presence of nature, because inside the frame there is always too much to see, too much for the eyes to absorb. Moreover, as these landscapes are packed full of geographical features, such descriptions therefore represent New Zealand as a visual feast of scenery, overflowing with extravagant, decadent scenes of fetishized nature. However, Steel (2008, p. 32) problematizes this marketing of wilderness in New Zealand as nothing other than natural, asking “whether the New Zealander would realise, were she to open her eyes, that civilization has beaten her here and interrupts the picturesque emptiness”. Providing an answer to this, Timothy Morton (2007, p. 13) suggests that individuals are supposed to believe that:

“The stranger ruins [our] existential supping on wild vastness...the simple presence of others acts as an “internal haemorrhage”, undermining the self’s ability to consume the scene whole.”

Therefore, the act of witnessing scenery is one in which the presence of nature must be isolated from the contamination of the stranger, who disrupts the transcendent wholeness of the scene as a singular totality available to the individual to consume visually.

Valuing wilderness for its emptiness is odd given the reality of its history and use. “The rise of arts and the dawn of science” was how Forster (1773, p. 106) interpreted the *Resolution* crew’s interaction with and their impact on the environment of Dusky Sound. By contrast, today Fiordland National Park is imagined to be untouched, despite the fact that it involves a considerable amount of human presence, particularly as mediated by both arts and sciences. Firstly, the act of observing wilderness as uninhabited occurs through artistic categories, making the interpretation of such environments one that brings human presence to them through culture. Secondly, presence is also brought to the wilderness through conservation, which carefully manages the composition of its biota by eradicating pests and increasing the numbers of valued species through breeding programs. Many of these species that are now valued are indigenous birds, but for Forster (1773, p. 81), such animals were there for the taking:

“Numbers of birds which dwelt in the woods were so little acquainted with men, that they

familiarly hopped on the nearest branches, nay on the ends of our fowling-pieces, and perhaps looked at us as new objects, with a curiosity similar to our own.”

The wilderness experience in Fiordland National Park today is certainly not the experience of discovery that Forster and the *Resolution*'s crew had at Dusky Bay. For both Forster and most nature enthusiasts in the West today, wilderness is an uninhabited place, but rather than attempt to civilize it like the former did, the latter wants it to remain outside the bounds of human impact.

Human presence is brought to places of nature in a myriad of ways. Simon Schama (1995, p. 7) gives the following account of the modern wilderness experience in the American national park:

“Take the first and most famous American Eden: Yosemite. Though the parking is almost as big as the park and there are bears rooting among the McDonald's cartons, we still imagine Yosemite the way Albert Bierstadt painted it or Carleton Watkins and Ansel Adams photographed it: with no trace of human presence. But of course the very act of identifying (not to mentioned photographing) the place presupposes our presence, and along with us all the heavy cultural backpacks that we lug with us on the trail.”

The experience of national parks often involves technology, such as cell phones and GPS, let alone those that allow individuals to book things such as walks and camps and to be transported to these sites. Furthermore, the experience occurs on demarcated tracks or trails which visitors know the distance of, as well as what to expect to encounter on the way when taking them. Therefore, the wilderness experience is one that is focused on the idea of being away from society while continuously bringing more and more human presence to nature. But despite the inevitability of human presence amongst nature, those who view the wilderness from the window of a five star hotel while eating dinner are seen to be having a less authentic experience than those who hike.

A key trait of the wilderness experience is the demand that it must be strenuous on the human body. The wilderness experience is often connected to the idea of getting back to nature, through which, Kirstie Ross (2008) explains, it is linked to physical exercise, and this is manifest through outdoor recreation in schools, for example. Moreover, as Calder (2011) notes, here the idea of the outdoors being physically demanding becomes important, as it suggests that physical difficulty is a requirement of the wilderness experience, which counters the fear that urban environments make people weak and soft. But this physical demand separates the experience of landscape in New Zealand, and perhaps other former settler colonies, from England, where the relaxing act of rambling in the countryside predominates. This then links the wilderness experience back to earlier encounters like Forster's (1773, p. 90), for he found that it was

physically difficult to undertake his tasks at Dusky Sound, such as clearing the forest:

“...the prodigious intricacy of various climbers, briars, shrubs, and ferns which were interwoven throughout the forests, rendered the task of clearing the ground extremely fatiguing and difficult, and almost precluded the access to the interior parts of the country.”

In this way, the wilderness experience becomes linked to the colonial history of land claiming and the early experiences of European explorers and surveyors in New Zealand, who struggled in highly unfamiliar places of nature which they knew little about, and in which they often felt as though they were in grave danger.

This connection between the contemporary wilderness experience and that of the early European explorers of New Zealand reifies the colonial notion of nature, specifically as it is manifest through the South Island regional construction. As John Newton (1999, p. 92) has argued, the *Resolution* crew's climbing and claiming of Mount Sparrman in Dusky Sound became the “proto-mountaineering” climb for New Zealand's first mountain climbers and the Caxton Poets of the 1930's. Moreover, New Zealand's settler colonialists named their tallest mountain after Cook, and figuratively nationalised the South Island's mountain peaks by naming and territorializing them like he first did (Newton, 1999, p. 92):

“For nowhere has the relationship between climbing and colonialism been played out more intricately than in that territory which Cook had so recently claimed for Britain, and whose highest peak has since born his name.”

At Dusky Sound, Forster (1773, p. 104) said that “the inland mountains were very barren, and consisted of huge broken and craggy masses, all covered with snow on their summits”. This image of the wilderness, as a barren and deserted land that is outside of all known sovereign places, became important in colonial New Zealand because it symbolized that the South Island was as a frontier. Moreover, it is this experience of the frontier that is relived today through mountaineering and the summiting of peaks in New Zealand's national parks. Through such practices the alpine wilderness was turned into a masculine space of encounter between men and nature, as the tales of colonial struggle, often found in what Pratt (1991, p. 20) calls “survival literature”, became the basis of the white settlers' experience of the mountains in the South Island. This idea of mountain peaks as unclaimed is another example of how the Western understanding of wilderness situates nature as a place outside of the presence of people. Hence, although Māori had an extensive knowledge of the Southern Alps, mapping and naming them, this was largely unknown to the white settlers of colonial New Zealand, who imagined them as unexplored or unchartered (Byrnes, 2001).

The legacy of the colonial history of New Zealand has made its national parks places to recolonize

wilderness through forms of recreation that symbolize the domination of nature. This is exemplified by the introduction of deer to Fiordland National Park for recreational hunting by the New Zealand government in the mid-nineteenth-century (Young, 2004), as a form of ecological colonization that would give the wilderness of the Antipodes what it was perceived to lack. The number of introduced yet wild deer increased drastically after they were brought to South West New Zealand, very quickly becoming a pest. However, the numbers have since been reduced through the aerial dropping of poison and recreational hunting marketed to tourists, which sometimes even involves the shooting of deer from helicopters (Young, 2004). When the *Resolution* was in Dusky Sound, the crew, including Forster, shot and killed hundreds of birds every day, eating them and also preserving them as specimens to be scientifically studied and classified (Salmond, 1997). In this way, the introduction of deer purely for the purpose of hunting them as wild animals exemplifies the colonial quest to tame all that is natural, particularly as it is made easier today through the use of technologies such as helicopters and guns with high-powered scopes. Today hunters can relive the experience that Forster had at Dusky Sound, where he was presented with various wild animals available to him to kill.

The way in which New Zealand's national parks became symbolic sites of recolonization reflects the generally socially and culturally conservative history of conservation in New Zealand. The early practice of preservation, as it was called, involved the protection of sights of scenic nature for their aesthetic qualities as picturesque or sublime, with the crown even removing Māori from these sites in some cases (Young, 2004). Therefore, through the South Island regional construction, New Zealand's places of wilderness were made to be the uninhabited landscapes that they were imagined to be. Moreover, preservation was a quest to keep places of wilderness in the form that they were in when explorers like Forster first encountered them, so that the public would be able to see what they saw. However, these ideas were far different from those driving the conservation movements that exist today, for in the nineteenth-century they were underpinned by the ideas of well-to-do gentlemen surrounding state control and use of land (Ross, 2008). Preservation was only considered on land that had no material resources of commercial value, and such places were therefore only considered valuable based on their scenic beauty, as a utilitarian ideal linked to the rise of tourism as an economically viable industry. Today, by contrast, conservation and the national parks of New Zealand are premised on the idea of nature having "intrinsic value", as Al Morrison (2010, unpaginated), the former Director-General of the Department of Conservation calls it.

Early New Zealand conservation and its philosophy have a legacy that affects the Pākehā understanding of wilderness in Aotearoa today. Ajay Skaria (1999) notes that the conservation of wilderness in fact authenticates and legitimizes environmental colonization by reifying the European desire for total control over nature. Indeed, in New Zealand the conservative history of conservation has led to the country's national parks often being problematically situated. Wilderness in New Zealand's national parks is

still often defined negatively as what it is not, becoming symbolic of nature as uncivilized, uncultured, and undomesticated (Abbott, 2011). Furthermore, due to the need to travel away from towns and cities to reach these places, the primary experience of wilderness in New Zealand's national parks has become an urban one, produced through a conceptualization of nature conditioned by an urban context and an urban angle of vision or point of view. Within this context, such landscapes are contrasted to urban sites as if the wilderness is a necessary outside to them, and from which it is imagined as being an escape from them. Also, the fences that border many of the national parks in New Zealand, separating them from neighbouring farmland, are symbolic of the fact that despite being sites of wilderness, the flora and fauna within these fences is bounded and contained, and is no longer the threat to people which it once was for explorers like Forster.

Decolonizing: Pākehā Identity and Simulation

Fiordland National Park is integral to the existence and perpetuation of the 100% Pure New Zealand campaign. The campaign relies heavily on images of landscape from Fiordland National Park to represent New Zealand as a place of nature, because this provides the basis for the country to be considered pure. Furthermore, New Zealand's wilderness is equated with purity largely because it is indigenous. It is therefore this type of nature specifically that is separated off, conceptually and physically, from introduced flora and fauna, which is not considered to be of the same order. For example, stories of supporting endangered native species like the Kākāpō and the Takahē are narratives often heard in New Zealand. On the one hand this indigenous nature is threatened by extinction, but on the other it provides New Zealand with a point of difference in a globalizing world based on national image (Steel, 2008). Within this context, New Zealand's endemic animals and plants are now valued culturally for being unique, and their indigeneity is perceived as being a property of nature in and of itself, making it the result of the biological tendencies of species themselves. Hence UNESCO suggests:

“...it is the unique biota displaying evolutionary adaptation over a diverse range of climatic and altitudinal gradients, all in a relatively pristine state, that give Te Wahipounamu – South West New Zealand its exceptional and outstanding natural characteristics.”

In contrast to New Zealand's other places of nature, such as its farmlands, which are modified by humans and are composed of mostly foreign plants and animals, the wilderness of Fiordland carries far fewer questions surrounding contamination from industry and human interference more generally. It is for this reason that Fiordland's landscapes are seen as being a world-leading example of nature in its pristine form. Therefore, because Fiordland had no economic value for explorers and settlers it was not greatly impacted by humans, and so it can now be given economic value as an untouched sight that is utilized by the tourism industry.

The notion of indigenous nature underpins the philosophy of conservation in New Zealand. As James Beattie (2011) explains, the aim of conservation in New Zealand is to replicate the country's pre-European or pre-human environment. The history of this approach to conservation resides in settler narratives concerned with restoring New Zealand to the Eden it was before the environmentally destructive event of European arrival to its shores (Beattie, 2011). However, as a mainstream approach to the creation and maintenance of conservation areas, Beattie (2011) locates this narrative in the Department of Conservation's (2001) *Protecting and Restoring our Natural Heritage: A Practical Guide*. In this guide readers are taught how to restore New Zealand's indigenous ecosystems to the state they were in at the furthest point back in time that is known. Similarly, the conservation organization, Landcare Research, suggests in its *Wetland Restoration: A Handbook for New Zealand Freshwater Systems* (2010, p. 246), that when monitoring the condition of wetlands in Aotearoa, researchers should compare the state of such environments to their so-called "natural state", which is defined as being how they were in "pre-settlement" times. In response to this, Beattie (2011, p. 102) writes:

“...the aim to restore vegetation to its pre-1840 state – a date that marks the colonisation of New Zealand through a formal treaty between Māori chiefs and the British Crown – is a very culturally specific decision that smacks of the colonial fiction of arriving in a primeval undisturbed land.”

Therefore, operating within a bicultural frame, this thinking makes a clear distinction between nature that is associated with Māori and which is perceived as pure, and that which is associated with white settlers and which is perceived as constituting weeds or pests. Furthermore, this thinking incorrectly implies that Māori had no impact on New Zealand's environments, and that Europeans were thus the first humans to alter them.

The distinction in New Zealand between landscapes created by white settlers with introduced plants and animals and Aotearoa's indigenous nature goes back to the early twentieth-century. William Guthrie-Smith (1926, p. 320) followed a similar approach to contemporary conservation in New Zealand through his attempt, in his old age, to let the "primordial conditions reassert themselves" on his farm, as he put it. Guthrie-Smith had success at recreating indigenous nature, and he suggested that the ancient environment that he had brought back to life on his property looked like "a lilliputian Eden; [with] small natives thriving unobstructedly and veiling the ground with green luxuriance of shinning sappy leafage." This approach to the conservation of wilderness can therefore be seen as an effort to decolonize New Zealand's landscapes by undoing the environmental effects of colonization through the planting of indigenous flora, and by understanding the bush as something to value for existing since before European arrival. This approach to conservation is opposed to earlier ones, through which places of nature were preserved as symbolic representations of environmental colonization and the domination of wilderness it entailed. Moreover, the

necessity to civilize, labelled the “white man’s burden” by Kipling (1899, p. 1), is replaced with a guilt-stricken necessity to undo the effects of colonization. Furthermore, it is this understanding that determines the contemporary experience and perception of wilderness in New Zealand’s national parks, through which these environments are regenerated as reproduced versions of untouched indigenous landscapes.

In some respects New Zealand’s nature is nothing but a simulation, which allows the country to be marketed as a place of wilderness. Calder (2011) argues that there is a contradiction between how the experience of New Zealand is promoted through images of its landscapes, taken from national parks like Fiordland, and how it is actually observed by individuals when they are physically present within it. With regard to this Calder (2011, p. 132) writes:

“[This]...discrepancy...involves the notion of wilderness and the paradox of attracting tourists to places they cannot go and to sights they cannot see. Relatively few tourists and few New Zealanders for that matter, will ever be in a position to see our landscape from the exciting point of view of a helicopter as it swoops along the coastline or banks over the snow-clad alps.”

It is not the gaze of the physically present tourist – that consumer of the wilderness – that is being reproduced here, but rather the technological gaze of a video recorder from a helicopter that captures the view to be simulated for the expected guest, bearing no relation to the reality of what is really seen by the actual consumer.

The wilderness is a simulacrum. The image of nature is no longer an example of Baudrillard’s (1981, p. 6) first order of simulation, as “the reflection of a profound reality” represented in Hodge’s paintings of Dusky Sound, for instance, which closely copied the real wilderness through the model of the sublime. Rather, Baudrillard (1981, p. 6) writes that the simulacrum is “never exchanged for the real, but exchanged for itself, in an uninterrupted circuit without reference or circumference.” In other words, the representation no longer stands in for the real but for itself as the real. Steel (2008, p. 35-37) writes:

“New Zealand truly does become the embodiment of Jean Baudrillard’s famous statement that ‘the territory no longer precedes the map, nor survives it’ in the desert of the real itself. New Zealand is hyper-real, nothing but an idealised simulation of what it once was. Furthermore we are not equipped to recognize our simulation because we are a by-product of it. As New Zealanders in the landscape era, we are simulation in its most developed state, but possess no language in which to describe it, since we are ourselves the model. We become lost in a world of image that is void of social substance...[A]s Baudrillard explains, ‘for the sign to be pure, it has to duplicate itself; it is the duplication of the sign which destroys its meaning.’”

But New Zealand has always been hyperreal. Hence, for the first settlers who came to Aotearoa with nothing but an image of the place as a wilderness, which was the virtual Antipodean landscape created by Cook, the hyperreal map of New Zealand preceded the land itself. Moreover, now it is the simulacrum of wilderness as pure that tourists and citizens experience in New Zealand: a nature whose only reference is not real, but is an imaginary primeval past.

New Zealand is a world-leader in the simulation of nature. As Urry (2002) suggests, the simulation of nature for tourists is taken to its extreme in New Zealand, perhaps more so than anywhere else in the world. This is evident in the case of the famous pink and white terraces of Lake Rotomahana. In the following, Urry (2002, p. 131) explains the story behind the terraces:

“This theme was taken to the extreme in New Zealand. A popular nineteenth-century tourist attraction was a set of pink and white terraces rising up above Lake Rotomahana. These were destroyed by volcanic eruptions in 1886 although photographs of them have remained popular ever since. They are a well-known attraction even if they have not existed for a century. Now, however, the physical attraction has been recreated by running geothermal water over artificially built terraces in a different location, but one close to existing tourist facilities. This set of what might be called themed terraces will look more authentic than the original which is only known about because of the hundred-year-old photographic images.”

For the purpose of tourism then, an attempt is made to bring back nature by recreating the terraces as they were prior to the event that destroyed them^{xv}. But what is interesting is that this recreation is based on photographs, which themselves are the only copies of the real thing. The photographs become iconic and authentic because they are all there is: the real no longer exists and thus can no longer be taken to be the real. Baudrillard (1981, p. 6) writes: “whereas representation attempts to absorb simulation by interpreting it as a false representation, simulation envelops the whole edifice of representation itself as a simulacrum.” The photographs, originally a first order simulation at the time of their taking, are now no longer just mediated copies that represent the terraces, but are themselves the simulacrum of the terraces which no longer truly exist. Therefore, the new themed terraces are in fact not a replica of the photographs, for the hyperreal images already reached the highest order of simulation themselves.

The simulation of New Zealand’s indigenous wilderness is part of the Pākehā desire to encounter untouched nature. As Guthrie-Smith (1926, p. 29) suggested in reference to the native ecosystem on his farm, he hoped that his practice of conservation would have “restored it to pristine conditions existent ere Tasman, Cook, Banks, and Solander, were born or thought of”. Moreover, if conservation is underpinned by the desire to recreate the pre-human environment of New Zealand within the country’s national parks, then it

must follow that the wilderness experience of today is based on reliving the experience of explorers like Cook, who were the first Europeans to make contact with those ancient lands. Therefore, the wilderness experience is recreational because it literally recreates. It is no surprise then that Fiordland's boat cruises often follow the path that Cook took through the area's various bays^{xvi}. Dean MacCannell (1976, p. 3) writes that "for moderns, reality and authenticity are thought to be elsewhere: in other historical periods". In New Zealand it is as if Pākehā want to recreate the first encounter differently, a second time, so that this time it does not result in a Fall from Grace. In other words, they want to rewrite their prehistory so that that authentic moment of encounter with nature occurs in a non-destructive way.

Pākehā identity and history begins and ends with the question of nature as the place of origin. The ancientness of the places of wilderness that the colonial explorers found on their travels, such as those in New Zealand, meant that their viewing of these landscapes was like looking back in time to the environments of the past that their own ancestors dwelt within (Lamb, 1989). This then makes these places of nature sites of origin from which the Western narrative of progress begins on its mission to civilize (Lamb, 1989). In New Zealand today, Pākehā can read the landscapes of Fiordland National Park to see their own foundational history of arrival to this land via Cook's encounter with it, making it their own garden from which the wilderness was "found, lost, and restored" (Beattie, 2011, p. 1). But there has been a general shift since the 1970s from Cook as an ancestral figure to the Treaty of Waitangi as an ancestral, textual event. However, while the Treaty of Waitangi represents the origin of New Zealand as a nation, allowing Pākehā to claim political legitimacy, the wilderness represents the pre-treaty origin of Pākehā as a people. And this of course has its own political effects through the way in which it informs nature nationalism via a desire to simulate the early explorers encounters with the land.

Despite being the point of origin for Pākehā, as the site of their narrative of arrival to the Antipodes, New Zealand's wilderness still remains an empty landscape. Because the late arrival of Pākehā within the temporal schema of global colonial expansion makes them recent migrants, they have not had time to layer the geography of New Zealand in thousands of years of memories. Also, as Christine Dann (1991) explains, the narratives of peasants working the land and green men hiding in the forest brought to New Zealand from Europe do not make sense here. Instead, according to Turner (1991), the internal lack that constitutes the cultural condition of Pākehā, and which was caused by the displacement and sense of not belonging felt by the settlers who voyaged to this foreign land far from Europe, is projected outwards onto New Zealand's environments. Hence, as Steel (2008, p. 33) sums it up, in New Zealand "we locate our identity in the landscape because we have nowhere else to put it and no way of defining our collective identity without it." Put simply, the South Island regional construction is underpinned by the settler condition of alienation.

Central to the question of how Pākehā identity and landscape function within nature nationalism is

the question of indigeneity. Patrick Evans (2002, p. 42) suggests the following about this in reference to Lamb's notion of the New Zealand sublime:

“This is a term for what he sees as an aspect of the colonialist's residual sense of guilt and deracination and involves an impossible dream of prelapsarian, pre-treaty state in which the settler becomes indigenous, through some kind of transformation, some kind of sacramental moment that will wipe the slate clean of its accumulated grime of expropriation and conquest.”

If this Pākehā narrative of identity is read through the argument of this chapter, then New Zealand's national parks must be understood as sacramental spaces of nature in which to simulate the pre-Fall, read pre-treaty, state of the country's indigenous environments. They become the spaces in which the impossible necessity of the settler to be the first to encounter Aotearoa's wilderness and to thus become indigenous to it can take place. Furthermore, the exclusion of Māori from national parks through the legal devices that prevent them from living or hunting within them, even if it is their ancestral land, again provides the emptiness that the Pākehā settler requires to become native. Becoming native also means regaining the connection to nature which indigeneity represents, and which Pākehā have deemed themselves to have lost through processes of urbanization and consumption^{xvii}, finally grounding themselves within a land which has felt alien to them for so long.

The simulation of nature in New Zealand is underpinned by romantic discourse. Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy (1988, p. 4) write the following about Romanticism and its construction of nature as a concept:

“Romantic – especially in its English provenance – is the landscape before which one feels the sentiment of nature, or the epic grandeur of the past, or a mixture of both: ruins in a wilderness. But romantic, as well, is the sensibility capable of responding to this spectacle, and of imagining, or better, recreating – *phanta-sieren* – what it evokes.” [emphasis original]

Thus, the simulation of a landscape is about the reproduction of the feeling that a scene invokes within the self as the observing subject. However, in New Zealand, the only landscapes that exist are natural ones, which are sublime because they are free of any human presence. For Pākehā then, the grandeur of the past and the sentiment of nature conjoin as one and the same thing, because as the New Zealand wilderness myth implies, the country has no other ancient history besides its pre-human past. Therefore, nature nationalism is largely based on the romantic sentimentalization of wilderness as prehistoric, for New Zealand is marketed as a country in which the feeling of nature as primordial can be experienced. Here the white settler state effectively negates Māori from wilderness, whereby prehistoric means the exclusion of Māori.

The New Zealand wilderness myth must also be read through the imaginary of the deserted island. Deleuze (1953) refers to the deserted island as a vacant place of nature which can be inhabited, and upon which civilization can be recreated anew as an improved or alternative version of existing society. New Zealand is premised on this very idea, for it was imagined by colonizers as empty of people and therefore as available for settlement. Moreover, as Rollo Arnold (1981, p. 1) explains, New Zealand was marketed to settlers as a “promised land” in which British society could be recreated in a more fair, just, and egalitarian manner. While it would seem that the inhabitation of the deserted island would tarnish its emptiness, Deleuze (1953, p. 10) explains that this is not the case:

“Only in appearance does such a movement put an end to the island's desertedness; in reality, it takes up and prolongs the *élan* that produced the island as deserted. Far from compromising it, humans bring the desertedness to its perfection and highest point...[T]hey make it sacred.”
[emphasis original]

It is via this *élan* that pulls Pākehā towards the uninhabited that they turn to the wilderness to look back to New Zealand's pre-human past. Once *terra nullius* is inhabited, desertedness is no longer real but becomes an idea, making the deserted island or the wilderness, which in this sense are one and the same thing, simulacra. When he arrived at Fiordland, Forster saw the landscape there as unfrequented, but now, as an impossibility due to the human presence that was brought to it through settlement, New Zealand's wilderness is remade through the increasingly potent notion of uninhabitedness. Moreover, as empty, New Zealand's wilderness is brought to perfection in Fiordland National Park, where it becomes sacred. Baudrillard (1981, p. 69) writes:

“What is lost is the original, which only a history itself nostalgic and retrospective can reconstitute as “authentic.””

Therefore, in this place to which Europeans once travelled to start anew, Pākehā now start anew a second time, more authentically, through nature nationalism. It is the “the settlement of settlement” says Evans (2007, p. 123) in reference to Guthrie-Smith specifically.

Through the simulation of nature, New Zealand's wilderness, as a simulacrum, becomes iconic. New Zealand's landscapes produce the country as a whole series of “national icons, the Mt Cooks, Fiordlands, and Catlins of the country” (Steel, 2008, p. 33). Steel (2008, p. 37) writes:

“The history of landscape, as W.J.T. Mitchell states, is ‘told as a story of the disappearance of the figure, the erasure of narrative, allegory and legibility in favour of the “pure” icon of nature’.

The supposition is that outside the frame is tarnished by human development; purity is thus where humanity is not, the final unadulterated space. Paradoxically this space remains out of reach for if we break the boundary of the frame the space is abolished through our presence.”

Again it is the paradox of emptiness being required by but then being contaminated by human presence that is at play here. But through this tarnishing of nature the wilderness no longer exists as real but as a simulacrum, transforming it into a pure icon of what no longer is but what was. Furthermore, the effect of this process is that as an icon, the wilderness is essentialized as meaning nothing more than just beautiful scenery to be admired (Calder, 2011). This is as true for Pākehā as it is for the international tourists that come here on holiday, for due to their lack of cultural embeddedness within New Zealand’s landscapes, the former are turned into tourists in their own country (Calder, 2011).

Remaking History: Forgetting and Remembering

The Pākehā act of remembering the prehistoric through the simulacrum of wilderness is bound up with an act of forgetting. As Homi Bhabha (1991, p. 212) argues, the nation is a temporal phenomenon that is formed through a contemporaneity, which constitutes what he calls the “national present”. Moreover, through what he labels “the everyday”, which is the day-to-day acts that reify nationalistic discourse, Bhabha (1991, p. 211) argues that the national present is continuously reproduced. According to Turner (1991, p. 31), Pākehā live in a kind of “white dreamtime”, through which they experience landscape as a site of pleasure. As Bell (1996) notes, by relaxing at the beach or hiking in the wilderness, the act of recreating in nature, as a tranquil space that is imagined to be public and open to all, reproduces New Zealand’s egalitarian and bicultural ethoi. If Turner is read through Bhabha, then white dreamtime must constitute New Zealand’s national present, and the everyday must be the Pākehā act of recreating in nature. However, for Bhabha (1991, p. 212), this contemporaneity is haunted by the “double time” of the nation, and thus he writes: “there is...always the distracting presence of another temporality that disturbs the contemporaneity of the national present”. This other temporality forms the “cultural unconscious” of the nation, which is composed of the voices of those minorities who are excluded from mainstream, nationalistic narratives, and which threaten to undermine the everyday and the national present (Bhabha, 1991, p. 213). In New Zealand, this is the “settler unconscious”, as Turner (1999, p. 35) terms it, and its latent content is the forgotten memories of the pre-colonial and colonial conflicts that occurred between European settlers or explorers and Māori, which have been repressed by Pākehā through guilt. Seen as ahistorical sites, the beach and the wilderness are places in which these problematic encounters between colonizer and colonized are figuratively pushed underground. Similarly, as Park (2006) argues, the Austral city is haunted by the *genius loci*, which is composed of indigenous understandings of place that have been written over by Pākehā through the colonial production of cultural landscapes.

I argue that nature nationalism is underpinned by the Pākehā belief that New Zealand's places of indigenous nature are the site of its egalitarianism and biculturalism. The wilderness experience is the performance of the everyday in New Zealand that reproduces this nationalism as an enactment of the national ethos of equality. Moreover, the contemporaneity of nature nationalism is the white dreamtime that constitutes New Zealand's national present by seeking recourse to the pre-human past through a romantic memory of wilderness as ancient and enchanted. Furthermore, this imaginary upon which nature nationalism is premised underpins the construction of New Zealand's indigenous wilderness as a simulacrum: an environmental and technological replication of the country's primordial origin which is now registered by Pākehā as the real thing. This imagined past and its recreation serves the function of making it possible for Pākehā to become native to an empty land found by European explorers, by moving backward to a time that precedes the conflicts between Māori and colonizers, and therefore allowing them to be forgotten through repression. Despite being an attempt to decolonize New Zealand's landscapes by undoing the effects of environmental colonization, the process of conservation that recreates Aotearoa's pre-human environments in fact colonizes the country anew. Thus, by looking back to the pre-human past and Cook's encounter with it via an untouched wilderness, Māori are successfully erased from Aotearoa's history, while European arrival, it is implied, is made to mark the beginning of New Zealand as a nation. Hence, as Bhabha (1991) suggests, the national present always begins from an historically constructed point of origin that problematically serves nationalistic discourse. In this sense, Pākehā allow themselves to stand outside of history by denying colonization and its legacy, and by failing to ask how nature is the source of the nation's egalitarianism when their recreation in the wilderness is premised on the historic forced removal of Māori from conservation areas.

Nature nationalism does not go unchallenged. Māori contest it when, for example, debates over the ownership of New Zealand's seabed and foreshore ensue, or when tribes take legal action to claim ancestral use rights to Aotearoa's conservation areas. Such events challenge the Pākehā legal devices that are used to ensure that New Zealand's wilderness is empty. In doing so, these counter-claims to the ownership and use of land rupture white dreamtime, often inhibiting its reproduction through the everyday of Pākehā recreation in nature. This happens when Māori protestors prevent non-Māori from accessing beaches, for instance. This also happens in a more cultural sense, through contemporary artworks, for instance, which appear to be typical depictions of New Zealand's landscapes, but which challenge their Eurocentrism by placing Maori in the foreground, rather than as tiny figures amidst a sublime backdrop, or leaving them out altogether^{xviii}. Furthermore, these disputations of the New Zealand wilderness myth and the South Island regional construction it relies on, disrupt the cultural unconscious of Pākehā. This is because they force the repressed memories of the colonization of New Zealand's environments back into the conscious memory of Pākehā. Hence, through the national debates over the ownership and use of land in New Zealand that accompany these challenges, Pākehā are forced to recollect and reflect upon a part of their history that they seek to deny and disown because it is too troublesome. Therefore, as a consequence of this, the Pākehā simulacrum of

New Zealand's wilderness as primeval is somewhat destabilized, rendering it not quite so undisturbed, and pushing it one step closer to becoming post-colonial.

Chapter 2: Wild Emotion in Canterbury

A Continent on an Island: The Turn to the Interior

The variety of country in Canterbury, as in Otago, gives the South Island a continental feel, despite being a long, thin island surrounded by sea. Geographically speaking, Canterbury is composed of a range of landscapes, which are made up of braided rivers, plains, forested high country, and alpine mountain ranges. Hence, the Pākehā cultural imagination has associated the South Island with a turn inward, away from the coast, to the wilderness of the interior. For example, after travelling to New Zealand and spending two years in the Canterbury high country on her and her husband's farm, Barker (1867) saw the sea for the first time since her arrival, while tramping up a hill. Barker (1867, p. 170) was shocked:

“Presently some one called out ‘there’s the sea’, and so it was, as distinct as though it were not fifty miles off; none of us had seen it since we landed...”

Questioning the possible existence of what she thought of as the “soul of nature” while climbing Mount Cook, Baughan (1910, p. 51) wrote that “in the solitudes of the sea, one sometimes suspects this; in these precincts of Aorangi one is sure of it”. Thus, the sea does not feature in the same way that the interior does in Canterbury, and so it is the latter which becomes more important for Pākehā.

While its geography is always captivating in some way, either good or bad, New Zealand's wilderness has meant different things to Pākehā at different times. The main historical transition within the Pākehā understanding of the wilderness is from a negative settler perception of New Zealand's native nature during the beginnings of the colony to its appreciation by later settlers. Peter Gibbons (2002, p. 8) describes how second-generation settlers thought of New Zealand's landscapes differently to first-generation settlers:

“They have no direct experience of the old world, or very little, as an internalized, remembered frame of reference, so they cannot be shocked by the contrast between old and new to the extent that the migrants once were. Nor, as a consequence, do they feel so obsessively impelled to transform the ‘wilderness’...Conversely, they grow up with, say, cabbage trees as part of their visual experience: they cannot regard such species as alien in the way their migrant parents did or do...indeed, they may come to think of their spears as friendly and familiar shapes.”

As Lynne Lochhead and Paul Star (2013) note, during the early decades of the twentieth-century, Pākehā began to culturally appropriate the indigenous environments of New Zealand and their plant and animal

species, by, for instance, teaching about them in schools and depicting them on postage stamps. Furthermore, according to Peter Holland (2013), by the end of the nineteenth-century many settlers were using native plants to decorate garden areas around farmhouses and homesteads on properties in the South Island. In this way, New Zealand's native nature and its conservation became linked to patriotism (Lochhead and Star, 2013). For the widely accepted idea in settler society of the inevitable, necessary, and irrelevant loss of indigenous flora and fauna was replaced with the belief that such nature is specific to and representative of both the character of New Zealand as a nation and the identity of its citizens.

In this chapter I argue that within the context I have outlined above, there is an historical shift in the perception of wilderness from settler notions of Canterbury's mountains and plains as melancholic wastelands to a more recent Pākehā nostalgia for them as pre-human landscapes. Firstly, I examine this melancholy in the work of Butler, demonstrating how his understanding of Canterbury's plains and mountains draws on notions of aboriginality, origin, the sublime, and the wasteland. Secondly, I show how this melancholy transforms into nostalgia for some settlers concerned with the settler colonial impact on New Zealand's indigenous environments at the beginning of the twentieth-century. Thirdly, I analyse this nostalgia as it manifests in Maoriland poets from Canterbury concerned with the loss of New Zealand's native bush. Fourthly, I then demonstrate how today nature nationalism is underpinned by this same nostalgia. In this way this chapter develops the idea of the hyperreal wilderness theorized in the preceding one, for the simulacrum of the pre-human past, as an imaginary time and place of origin that never existed for humans except as an invented memory, is premised on this nostalgia. Finally, I criticise the colonial understandings that underpin this nostalgic simulacrum of wilderness, for, as I argue, they inhibit the possibility of a post-colonial wilderness in New Zealand.

Melancholic Settling: The Plains and the Mountains

To a large extent, the figure of the settler is defined by melancholy, as an emotion that becomes manifest within landscape. As Andrews Scull (2014) explains, the term melancholy comes from the Greek *melas*, meaning black, and *khole*, meaning bile, and has been used to refer to sadness and depression since the Middle Ages. Turner (1999, p. 22) identifies what he calls the "melancholy condition of the settler", which refers to the dislocation, lack of belonging, and lack of grounding experienced as a cultural emotion produced by the process of settlement. This then makes the site of settlement a place of lack and loss (Turner, 1999). Moreover, Bowring (2008, p. 69) speaks of this condition of melancholy becoming manifest in New Zealand's environments, as an internal condition experienced by Pākehā and expressed externally by them in the country's "empty landscapes", which they described as "indifferent" and "isolated". Furthermore, these landscapes are exemplified by the mountainscapes of the Southern Alps. As Charles Brasch (1957, p. 51) puts it in his poem *The Estate*, for instance, the Southern Alps became the

“uncolonized nothing” for the white settlers of southern New Zealand to discover and claim, as if Māori did not know that they existed. Therefore, it was the perceived nothingness that characterized both the settler’s understanding of the South Island’s landscapes and his or her own cultural condition, which was grounded within and contextualized by the new surroundings.

The melancholy of the South Island settler was also experienced in and represented by the flat landscape that stretches out from the bottom of the alps and across Otago and Canterbury to the east coast of the island. Hence, it was in that place where “the plains are nameless” that settler society was seen to exist in an abyss (Brasch, 1945, p. 133). According to Robert Peden and Peter Holland (2013), the plains were a site of significant environmental transformation for settlers, who removed the indigenous vegetation and animals living on them and replaced them with flora and fauna from Europe. Moreover, the plains were seen in a negative light as a place where nature was unproductive and sick, especially its wetlands. Tom Brooking and Eric Pawson (2013) note that the wetlands on the plains were a melancholic site to the eye of the settler, who read and interpreted them as swamps. These swamps were also known to the settlers as “quagmires”, or as “treacherous and quaking surfaces”, as one resident of the emerging city of Christchurch disparagingly described them (Wilson, 1979, p. 7). Furthermore, the quagmires needed to be transformed into pastureland through the terraforming processes of draining and trampling, for this would turn the plains into a European agricultural landscape. In short, as Park (2006) explains, the settlers hated the swamps, and they desired to convert them into arable land, which was perceived as being healthy and as an efficient use of the environment. The pioneer surveyor Charles Hursthouse (1857, p. 69) demonstrates this Eurocentric attitude towards the wetlands via the colonial idea of curing them through science and technology:

“Fen and marsh and swamp, the bittern’s dank domain, fertile only in miasma, are drained; and the plough converts them into wholesome plains of fruit, and grain, and grass.”

Despite New Zealand’s wetlands being composed of complex ecosystems, Hursthouse imagined them as infertile swamps because they did not serve settler needs, despite being an important food source for Māori.

For the English farmer and author, Butler, the Canterbury Plains were a waste. In his book *A First Year in Canterbury Settlement*, Butler (1863, p. 59-63) describes the Waimakiriri River as a “nasty place”, and similarly, he depicts the Rangitata River and its tributaries as forming what he calls “an ugly, barren-looking place”. Cronon (1995, p. 70) notes that prior to the twentieth-century, wilderness was a concept with very negative connotations, for in the Anglophone world it was most commonly expressed as a “wasteland”:

“...the most common usage of the word “wilderness” in the English language referred to landscapes that generally carried adjectives far different from the ones they attract today. To be a

wilderness then was to be “deserted,” “savage,” “desolate,” “barren”—in short, a “waste,” the word’s nearest synonym.”

Drawing on this wilderness imagery, Butler (1863, p. 52) refers to the Rakaia River as a “wasteful shingle-bed”. Therefore, Butler perceives the nature he finds in Canterbury as having, for some reason or another, undergone a Fall from Grace, therefore turning the plains into a melancholic wasteland. Thus, as Candice Slater (2002) has shown, Europeans often thought of wastelands as places synonymous with the Fallen Eden.

Butler exemplifies the settler encounter with the melancholic wasteland of the South Island and the need to transform it from its fallen state into farmland, or more specifically, into a neo-Europe. Through this transformation, supposedly useless indigenous vegetation was replaced with European plants that were perceived to be hardier (Park, 2006). Hence, Butler (1863, p. 52-53) makes a comparison between the plains as they were before European arrival and then as they were after they had been subjected to settler processes of environmental transformation:

“There were a few scrubby, stony flats covered with Irishmen and spear-grass (Irishmen is the unpleasant thorny shrub which I saw going over the hill from Lyttelton to Christ Church) on either side the stream; they had been entirely left to nature, and showed me the difference between country which had been burnt and that which is in its natural condition. This difference is very great. The fire dries up many swamps – at least many disappear after country has been once or twice burnt; the water moves more freely, unimpeded by the tangled and decaying vegetation which accumulates round it during the lapse of centuries, and the sun gets freer access to the ground. Cattle do much also: they form tracks through swamps, and trample down the earth, making it harder and firmer. Sheep do much: they convey the seeds of the best grass and tread them into the ground. The difference between country that has been fed upon by any live stock, even for a single year, and that which had never yet been stocked is very noticeable.”

As Graeme Wynn (2013) notes, settlers perceived the transformation of New Zealand environments as a process of improvement, which signified the ability of humans to make nature serve them. Moreover, by being made to serve human needs, nature was seen as being given a legitimate purpose and function in the world, rather than as merely existing to chaotically reproduce itself, which it was thought of as doing when in its so called natural condition or state. Ross Harrison (2003) shows that the notion of the state of nature was first invented used in reference to the primitiveness of indigenous peoples. However, here it is used to describe natural environments that were considered to be depressingly uncivilized and undomesticated.

The colonial act of land claiming and the melancholic settler processes of civilizing and

domesticating the wilderness are brought together through the concept of dominion. For Mathew Scully (2011), dominion is understood as the human ability and right to subdue nature and triumph over it. In New Zealand's settler society, dominion represented the transformation of nature from a wild state into a tamed one through both law and agriculture. As opposed to places of wilderness that are seen as being outside of social systems of ownership, John Protevi and Mark Bonta (2004, p. 85) refer to Deleuze and Guattari's conceptualization of land as wilderness which has been legally transformed into "terrain that can be owned, held as stock, distributed, rented, made to produce and taxed. Moreover, "land can be gridded, distributed, classified and categorized" (Protevi and Bonta, 2004, p. 85). Upon the colony's newly divided plots of land, the settlers of New Zealand set about claiming dominion over the country's plains with the plough. Hence, when he speaks of settlers "sowing in the wilderness", Brasch (1957, p. 48) refers to the physical transformation of the South Island's flat wastelands into farmlands. And it was in that "howling wilderness", as Henry Sewell (1853, p. 403) called the Canterbury Plains, that settlers endured the forces or elements of nature while trying to create an agricultural industry. Therefore, settlers claimed dominion in New Zealand through the creation of property first and the production of a neo-Europe second, as a depressing task which added to the melancholy of settlement.

Like the plains, the wilderness of the Southern Alps also became a wasteland for settlers. However, as Tuan (1974) suggests, while plains may be wastelands, they can be dominated, conquered, and controlled by humans. Mountains, on the other hand, form unchangeable places of wilderness perceived as the antithesis of humanity, thus making them the true outside to civilization (Tuan, 1974). Butler's (1863, p. 45) expeditions into the wilderness followed routes that took him from the dry wasteland of the plains, described by him as "monotonous and sad", to the forested, alpine environments of the mountain ranges in the high country. It was there that Butler (1863, p. 54) depicted the surroundings as sublime with great enthusiasm, but was simultaneously disappointed not to see any signs of human presence within them:

"The ranges on either hand were, as I said before, covered with bush, and these, with the rugged Alps in front of us, made a magnificent view. We went on, and soon there came out a much grander mountain – a glorious glaciated fellow – and then came more, and the mountains closed in, and the river dwindled and began leaping from stone to stone, and we were shortly in scenery of the true Alpine nature – very, very grand. It wanted, however, a chalet or two, or some sign of human handiwork in the foreground; as it was, the scene was too savage."

Therefore, although mountains cannot be wholly transformed like plains, they can at least be humanized through the situating of buildings among them. Moreover, if this handiwork were to have been placed in the foreground, the scene would have been raised from a melancholic wasteland to the status of an ideal landscape for Butler, because it would have offset the savage mountains in the background.

While Butler makes a comparison between the Southern Alps and the Canterbury Plains, he also makes a distinction between the former mountain range and the Swiss Alps. Butler (1863, p. 61) writes:

“Suffice it that there is a magnificent mountain chain of truly Alpine character at the head of the river, and that, in parts, the scenery is quite equal in grandeur to that of Switzerland, but far inferior in beauty. How one does long to see some signs of human care in the midst of the loneliness! How one would like, too, to come occasionally across some little *auberge*, with its *vin ordinaire* and refreshing fruit!” [emphasis original]

While Butler sees the Swiss Alps as a sublime wilderness that is similar to the Southern Alps, unlike the latter, he thinks of the former as having been made picturesque and beautiful through human presence. Moreover, this human presence gives the Swiss Alps a visible human history and makes them a place where humans are meant to be. Moreover, the grandeur, gloriousness, and magnificence of the Southern Alps makes them sublime like the Swiss Alps, such scenery means little without human presence, for that lack produces a melancholic loneliness which defines the mountains in Canterbury as a wasteland. Therefore, the use of European place names that characterized the naming of New Zealand’s geography by settlers reflects the image of the colony as a similar yet different version of Europe.

What made the wilderness of Canterbury appear to be a melancholic wasteland was the combination of its lack of human habitation and agricultural landscapes. For the settlers of the South Island, Māori were thought of as being a people of the past, partly due to what was perceived to be their primitiveness, which made them unable to progress into a civilized state, and partly due to the arrival of Europeans to New Zealand, who brought a new way of life that they were seen to be unable to adapt to. Butler (1863, p. 116) referred to Māori only a few times in his writings about his stay in Canterbury, of which the following best expresses his perception of them:

“The only plant good to eat is Māori cabbage, and that is swede turnip gone wild, from seed left by Captain Cook. Some say it is indigenous, but I do not believe it. The Māoris carry the seed about with them, and sow it wherever they camp. I should rather write, USED to sow it where they CAMPED, for the Māoris in this island are almost a thing of the past.”

The settlers’ sublime paintings of the South Island’s landscapes often only featured Māori as tiny figures surrounded by gigantic mountains, depicting them as only being there with a kind of half presence. Here the existence of the Māori cabbage, as Butler calls the swede turnip, has the same effect, because it exists as a trace of a Māori presence that is seen to be vanishing. Furthermore, in contrast to the extensive and ordered

agricultural landscapes found in Europe, the dispersed swede turnip growing wild on the plains through sporadic Māori planting, further made the place a melancholic wasteland.

In his novel *Erewhon*^{xix}, Butler (1872) focuses on the melancholic isolation of being alone in a sublime wasteland. Although this place is fictional, it is most likely based on Canterbury. In the following passage, Butler (1872, p. 46-48) describes his psychological experience of the sublime in that “dreadful wilderness”, as he called it:

“Each moment I felt increasing upon me that dreadful doubt as to my own identity—as to the continuity of my past and present existence—which is the first sign of that distraction which comes on those who have lost themselves in the bush. I had fought against this feeling hitherto, and had conquered it; but the intense silence and gloom of this rocky wilderness were too much for me, and I felt that my power of collecting myself was beginning to be impaired.”

Here Butler (1872, p. 247) expresses the undoing of the self in nature, which he does on several occasions, including, for instance, when writing of “those alpine gorges which reach the very utmost limits of the sublime and terrible”. Moreover, these descriptions demonstrate the way that the wilderness not only poses a physical threat by presenting the lone human with rough and rugged terrain, but also a psychological one, experienced as the terror and fear of being trapped outside of civilization. Similarly, John Mulgan (1939) writes of the impersonal and unnerving feeling experienced when alone in the forest, as a sense of being nowhere and everywhere at the same time. In this sense, it could be argued that Butler provides the backstory to the South Island Myth, by supplying its writers with the trope of landscape as melancholic that they so often drew on.

Butler’s imagery and descriptions of his experience of wilderness were conventional in many ways, but his sublime wasteland was also unique. Julian Kuzma (2011, p. 104) writes:

“The idea of ‘wilderness’ debatably came to an end in New Zealand in 1863 when Samuel Butler transported a piano and a library of classical volumes inland to Mesopotamia Station at the remote headwaters of the Rangitata River.”

But rather than bringing the wilderness to an end through the contamination of its domain with culture, Butler’s act actually produces wilderness as he conceptualizes it, exemplifying the incongruity that his idea of it is premised on. Here Deleuze’s (1968, p. 333) suggestion that Butler reconstructs the ordinary in such a way that it “seems to us not only a disguised no-where but a rearranged now-here” becomes pertinent. Thus while his Canterbury farm is figuratively in the middle of nowhere, the introduction of the piano and the

library purposefully contradict its perceived remoteness by providing it with the mundane familiarity of an ordinary home. Therefore, in this sense the melancholic wilderness is a nowhere disguised by the piano and the library, and the piano and the library are a now here rearranged outside of the space of civilization that they are normally found in. Furthermore, Butler did not stay in New Zealand but came to make money and then return to England. Hence he created a kind of wilderness with culture, rather than develop culture over and against wilderness. In this sense it is almost as if Butler desired to preserve the feeling of melancholy after becoming so well acquainted with the wilderness.

The sublime wilderness of the South Island was the nowhere of origin for the settler. This idea was central to the Victorian understanding of nature. Hence John Ruskin (1849, p. 322-323) writes:

“It would be difficult to conceive a scene less dependent upon any other interest than that of its own secluded and serious beauty; but the writer well remembers the sudden blankness and chill which were cast upon it when he endeavoured, in order more strictly to arrive at the sources of its impressiveness, to imagine it, for a moment, a scene in some aboriginal forest of the New Continent. The flowers in an instant lost their light, the river its music; the hills became oppressively desolate; a heaviness in the boughs of the darkened forest showed how much of their former power had been dependent upon a life which was not theirs, how much of the glory of the imperishable, or continually renewed, creation is reflected from things more precious in their memories than it, in its renewing. Those ever springing flowers and ever flowing streams had been dyed by the deep colours of human endurance, valour and virtue; and the crests of the sable hills that rose against the evening sky received a deeper worship, because their far shadows fell eastward over the iron wall of Joux, and the four-square keep of Granson.”

Within the context of Victorian colonialism then, the distant uncolonized wilderness is seen as a pre-colonial place of origin, precisely because it is indigenous. Hence, aboriginal nature refers to those environments, those *terrae nullius*, which have remained unchanged since time immemorial, just as aboriginal people have. Furthermore, unlike the natural environments of Europe, which have been lifted through human presence, the aboriginal forest is a melancholic wasteland darkened and oppressed by the absence of civilization. As Deleuze (1953, p. 141) suggests, Butler draws on this idea of origins:

“Samuel Butler coined a fabulous word to designate those stories that seem to come from elsewhere: EREWHON, it's both 'no-where,' the nowhere of origins, and 'now-here', the here and now turned upside down, displaced, disguised.”

Thus, for Butler, the idea of the colony is as a wilderness that constitutes the nowhere of origins, but at the

same time, that distant and ancient place is no longer just imaginary, like it was for Ruskin, for it has been brought into the present as the here and now that the modern settler inhabits, and in which he undertakes the task of civilizing.

Butler represents the melancholic condition of the South Island settler. This is because he is beginning again in place of aboriginality, struggling to transform both himself and the land, and therefore becoming locked in the darkness of waging the settler colonial war on these two fronts. Butler writes (1863, p. 66)

“If a person says he think he has seen Mount Cook, you may be quite sure that he has not seen it. The moment it comes into sight the exclamation is, “That is Mount Cook!” – not “That must be Mount Cook!” There is no possibility of mistake. There is a glorious field for the members of the Alpine Club here. Mount Cook awaits them, and he who first scales it will be crowned with undying laurels: for my part, though it is hazardous to say this of any mountain, I do not think that any human being will ever reach its top. I am forgetting myself into admiring a mountain which is of no use for sheep. This is wrong. A mountain here is only beautiful if it has good grass on it. Scenery is not scenery – it is “country”, subaudita voce “sheep”. If it is good for sheep, it is beautiful, magnificent, and all the rest of it; if not, it is not worth looking at. I am cultivating this tone of mind with considerable success, but you must pardon me for an occasional outbreak of the old Adam.”

This quote by Butler must be read alongside Deleuze’s (1969, p. 302-303) work on the imaginary of origins:

“On one hand, the image of the origins presupposes that which it tries to generate... On the other hand, the world which is reproduced on the basis of this origin is the equivalent of the real – that is, economic world...”

Here Butler juggles with the Victorian distinction that Byrnes (2001) identifies between aesthetic nature for leisure and landscape Romanticism, and utilitarian nature as a commercial or economic resource. Moreover, within the context of settler pragmatism and practicality, Butler writes ironically of his attempt to develop a sense of the latter in himself, while also attempting to suppress his inclination for the former. This juxtaposition is evident, on the one hand, in Butler’s reproduction of the real capitalist world out of the fallen indigenous wilderness, thus revealing his fixation with extracting the maximum productivity out of the land by wrestling with nature. Furthermore, here Butler becomes what Merchant (1995, p. 137) calls the new, modern, and sophisticated “fallen Adam” of the frontier, with science, technology, and rationalism on his

side. However, on the other hand, by admiring the sublimity of the primeval South Island landscape as the old Adam of the old world, Butler aestheticizes nature as an artistically cultured European.

As Butler expressed it through the landscapes of Canterbury, the notion of wilderness as melancholic In New Zealand's settler colony was formed from a combination of the imagery of the wasteland, the genre of the sublime, and the idea of origins. Lochhead and Star (2013, 142-143) note that Victorian descriptions of wilderness as "gloomy" should not be seen as demonstrating a hatred of landscape, but rather, as the "conventional expression of the sublimity of nature" when placed "within the context of nineteenth-century cannons of taste". However, in light of Butler, perhaps there is something particular about the melancholy attached to the landscape in the New Zealand colony. Bowring writes (2008, p. 70):

"In New Zealand the melancholy has tended toward a gothic, brooding quality, where the pioneering spirit encountered the *genius loci*, the spirit of the place. Emotion flowed from the country's spectacular natural scenery, bringing forth the awe of the Sublime and the solitude of melancholy." [emphasis original]

Therefore, for the Victorian settler, the gothic sense of darkness emanates from the colony as wasteland, almost as if it came from nature itself. Moreover, as Butler demonstrates, the feeling of melancholy is the opposite of the pioneering attitude; it is the ghostly other of or outside to settlement, which broods in the background of the colony and haunts its civilizing mission, threatening to hinder or maybe even undo it.

From Melancholy to Nostalgia: Holding on to what is Gone

Melancholy and nostalgia are closely connected. Bowring (2008, p. 101) suggests, "nostalgia holds a particular affinity with melancholy". Furthermore, Sigmund Freud (1917) does not directly refer to nostalgia, but he does suggest that unlike mourning, which pushes the subject to move on from their loss, melancholy holds on to loss, allowing yearning to arise. Furthermore, in its original formation melancholy was connected with wistfulness, from the old English, *wist*: the feeling of vague or regretful longing (Scull, 2014). As Peter Fritzsche (2001) explains, nostalgia comes from the Greek *nostos*, meaning to return home, and *algia*, meaning longing. Hence, as Svetlana Boym (2001) identifies, nostalgia was first coined by the Swiss physician Johannes Hoffer in the seventeenth-century, who used it to refer to the homesickness felt by soldiers and exiles for their homeland. However, nostalgia soon became much more complex, involving elements of both melancholy and mourning, and referring to yearning for almost anything, such as childhood moments or particular historical periods (Boym, 2001). In this sense nostalgia became increasingly abstract, referring less to the homeland one grew up in and knew well, and more to times and places from the past often only ever experienced through the vagueness of false memories. Therefore, nostalgia became a

complex cultural emotion afflicting the West, for it has a special place within the modern condition, lying somewhere between the personal yearning specific to an individual's life and experiences, and the collective memory of the past.

Nostalgia is always present for the dislocated settler. At first, the nostalgia of the settler fits perfectly with the classical case, for it is expressed as an exilic yearning for the homeland. The disease of "scorbutic nostalgia", which produced a longing for England brought on by scurvy, had riddled Cook and his crew by the time the *Endeavour* arrived in New Zealand (Lamb, 2001, p. 9). Similarly, first-generation settlers brought memories of the environs of their homeland to New Zealand, which A.R.D. Fairburn (1934, p. 213) called "nostalgia for the vast movement of the English seasons". But in New Zealand, this external nostalgia for Britain then becomes an internal longing oriented around the history of the colonized land itself. Near the end of the nineteenth-century, the first steps towards protecting certain aspects of New Zealand's native environments began to occur (Young, 2004). Within the context of these early attempts at preservation during the late nineteenth-century, a sense of melancholic loss for the rapidly disappearing indigenous landscapes began to emerge (Young, 2004). For the settlers that challenged the narrative of progress, which had been unquestionably used to justify the large-scale transformation of New Zealand's environments, the idea that nature could have inherent value in and of itself became increasingly prevalent, and it supported the first quests to protect remnants of the country's indigenous landscapes (Star and Lochhead, 2013). This increasing minority of settlers were saddened by the loss of the native plant species of New Zealand. Thus, in them there was a deep sense of melancholic and nostalgic brooding for the forests that were disappearing, and being replaced with the introduced flora and fauna of Europe.

The New Zealand government soon became concerned with deforestation too. With the influence of pioneering conservationists and politicians from Canterbury who promoted the protection of New Zealand's native plants and animals, such as T.H. Potts, Julius Vogel's government passed the Forests Act in 1874, which aimed to slow rates of deforestation to secure the future interests of the country (Star and Lochhead, 2013). Furthermore, in 1890, with rates of deforestation at the highest the colony had ever seen, the government declared New Zealand's first national Arbor Day (Ross, 2008). Moreover, Arbor Day was an annual date designated to forestation by promoting the participation of citizens in group acts of tree planting right across the country (Ross, 2008). One place the planting of trees was especially encouraged was at schools, for the government hoped that if it instilled in children the values of the wise use of nature, as it was called, the colony's natural resources would be saved for future generations yet to come (Ross, 2008). Therefore, the nostalgia-driven preservationists, whose environmental politics were at one time considered completely mad by the majority of settlers, had managed to create effective change by forcing the government to take steps towards the protection of New Zealand's indigenous ecosystems and their plant and animal species.

For settlers concerned with deforestation, Arbor Day was too little too late. Less than a month after New Zealand's third annual Arbor Day, Arthur Appleby (1892, p. 3), member of the Christchurch Council for North-West Ward, wrote a letter to the editor of *The Press*, expressing his concern with the settler impact on the indigenous environments of Canterbury:

“The practical observance of Arbor Day will be productive of much benefit in years to come, but it comes rather late for many districts of our colony, now denuded of every vestige of native timber. What a different aspect in our Peninsula country to even twenty years ago. Close home we used to have lovely bush land at Purau, in all the bays on the seaboard of the peninsula, and in Akaroa harbour...Not a vestige of native bush now, save a few old stark, gnarled stumps and short manuka scrub....The early settlers must have some regrets that they failed to preserve some small clumps of native bush...Is it not heart-rending to see grand specimens of the various tree ferns, the Todeas and other fine varieties dragged out from their native spots...”

As Eric Pawson and Peter Holland (2005) explain, while Banks Peninsula went from being largely forested at the beginning of the nineteenth-century to almost bare of trees by 1920, it was most extensively cut between 1860 and 1880. Appleby's expression of his melancholy for the loss of the wilderness and his nostalgia for the past when it was more vast therefore came at a time when Banks Peninsula experienced its greatest levels of deforestation, making this an emotional reflection on that radical change.

In settler society, nature was seen as something to both appreciate for its beauty and to use for commercial purposes, and thus its transformation produced nostalgia in some and joy in others. Evans (2007, p. 61) describes this dual understanding and use of nature in Victorian society when he writes:

“The wilderness might be something to cut down and dig up, to utilise as a resource, but at the same time it was something to be stood back from and admired aesthetically...”

Most settlers appreciated nature as scenery but recognized that it was a necessary sacrifice for progress, and so its transformation was mostly registered as a positive change. Moreover, this view was often accompanied by the dominant belief that indigenous plants and animals, like Māori, would inevitably die out and become extinct. However, for settlers who challenged this opinion, nostalgia became a driving force. Bowring (2008, p. 100) demonstrates how challenges to the hegemonic idea of advancement are often connected to the emotion of nostalgia:

“...nostalgia is often seen as a reaction to progress, a yearning for simpler times, a longing for that which has been sacrificed.”

Settlers concerned with preserving New Zealand's indigenous environments became nostalgic for the disappearing forests, or bush, because their removal was thought of as a profound and tragic loss; it was the death of the primeval wilderness. The psychologist Glenn Albrecht (2005, p. 41) coined the term "solastalgia" to refer to the existential stress suffered by individuals that have witnessed drastic environmental change near to or where they live, and who long for the solace that the landscape once gave them before it was transformed. Therefore, what is at play here is a kind of cultural solastalgia; the melancholic mourning and longing for the native bush which acted as the structure of feeling for those settlers concerned with the rapid and extensive environmental change that occurred in the New Zealand colony.

One such settler was the progressive radical and Fabien socialist from Christchurch, William Pember Reeves. In 1898 Reeves published his book *New Zealand and other Poems*, which included the well-known poem *The Passing of the Forest*. This was considered to be the best verse the first minister of the Labour Party and writer produced over his career, due to its emotional expression of the melancholy experienced by settlers who witnessed rapid deforestation. In the poem Reeves' (1898, p. 380) paints a picture of the primeval wilderness of New Zealand lying undisturbed before being hunted down by destructive settlers with axes and fire:

"Ancient of days in green old age they stand,
In grandeur that can never know decay,
Though from their flanks men strip the woods away."

Reeves (1898, p. 381-382) writes of native species of bird, flower, and bee as having all "died and passed away"; a death that he says is "the bitter price to pay for man's dominion". Via this narrative of an Antipodean Fall from Grace, the poem charges settlers with having been bad stewards or guardians of nature, through their relentless claim of dominion over the land. Moreover, what is sacrificed is not only the indigenous animal and plant species, but also the human experience of the bush. Reeves (1898, p. 381) writes:

"Gone are the forest tracks where oft we rode
Under the silvery fern fronds, climbing slow
Through long green tunnels, while hot noontide glowed
And glittered on the tree-tops far below."

Bowring (2008, p. 70) suggests that "nostalgia is a melancholic prolonging, a retardation of closure", because "nostalgics do not seek a cure, they want the pleasure of the pain of separation". Therefore, although *The Passing of the Forest* is a tangi or eulogy of the bush, Reeves (1898) sentimentalization of it

prevents its death from being fully accepted, for he keeps it alive by memorializing it as it was in the past instead.

Christchurch poet Dora Wilcox echoed the nostalgic sentiment of Reeves in her poem *The Last of the Forest*, from her 1905 book *Verses from Maoriland*. Wilcox (1905, p. 172-174) addresses the same issue; again expressing the melancholy of mourning the forests of the “old worlds passing by”, but this time making nature a spirit or force which haunts the settler:

“They are the Ghosts of Earth, of Air, that cry,
Moaning a requiem, in their utter desolation...”

Wilcox (1905, p. 172-174) writes of the spectre of nature asking the settler if he feels guilty for what he has done to the forest, questioning whether or not he can live with himself and his actions, and if he understands the extent of the harm his acts of destruction have caused:

“Dost thou not hear, O White Man, through thy troubled dream
On this calm night when all the world lies stark,
Sharp through silence, moaning of the sea, and screaming
Of night birds in the dark?

What dost thou say, O White Man, shivering when the shrieking
Wild voices thrill thee in an agony of pain:
‘Peace! ‘tis the Ocean calling! ‘tis The Dead Tree creaking!
Hush thee, my heart, again!’”

Jane Stafford and Mark Williams (2006) suggest that the late-colonial writing of *Maoriland* gave Pākehā their language, practice, and expression of landscape. But it also gave Pākehā their ability to appropriate the indigenous in order to speak as or for it, often doing so to make new claims of national identity (Stafford and Williams, 2006). Hence, Wilcox overturns the colonial narrative of claiming dominion over nature, revealing the price of domesticating the land. Moreover, in *The Last of the Forest*, the *genius loci* of New Zealand’s native wilderness appears to become a spirit which haunts the settler, raging from the loss of its embodiment in the form of the bush. But the spirit is in fact the settlers’ own guilty conscience. Therefore, again there is no closure for the lost forest here, but only, rather, the ongoing melancholy caused by pondering the question of whether its killers will someday regret what they have done. Furthermore, here nostalgia is the relishing of the pain of never being able to return to a past that has been taken away for eternity.

Of the many works dealing with the loss of the indigenous forest in Maoriland writing, the emotional topic found one of its most evocative expressions in the lines of Baughan's poem *Burnt Bush*, published in her 1908 book *Shingle Short*. The poem begins with Baughan (1908, p. 63) setting herself up as a solitary figure that "lingered alone" in the landscape. Baughan then describes her confrontation with the environment, which is the scorched and lifeless wasteland of a burnt forest:

"Naked, denuded,
Forestless, fernless,
Mute, now, and songless..."

Baughan (1908, p. 65-67) refers to the native flora and fauna that have disappeared in the fire when she writes, "sad, I salute you", as she bids farewell to the "Totara, Rimu", and the "flute of the Tui", for instance. The purpose behind the settler destruction of the indigenous landscape is well known to Baughan (1908, p. 65), "old forest, new pasture", she writes. Furthermore, Baughan (1908, p. 64) finally makes explicit her brooding sadness for the destruction of the landscape when she says, "sorrow, ah, sorrow". However, for Baughan (1908, p. 65-67), the melancholic spirit of the bush in the now scarred land it once clothed is made evident by its "pulsing the gloom", and its "presences alien, undescribed, flitting", which "knock'd at the gates" of her senses, confronting her mind with "palpable pinions". Therefore, via her description of her sensuous experience of the "raw devastation" upon the land that is now "unmelodious, barren, unfragrant", Baughan (1908, p. 66) preserves the pain through nostalgia. Moreover, here memory becomes a nostalgic process that holds open the landscape that went before, preventing it from passing on and disallowing a sense of closure to form. Most importantly though, there is an incompleteness that arises during the transition from indigenous environment to neo-Europe, because the former is entirely removed, leaving only its charred remains, but the latter is not yet created, and this in-between state therefore produces a double sense of melancholic loss and lack of fulfilment.

Origins and the Pre-human Past: Embracing the Native Bush

At first glance it appears that what is at play here is nostalgia for the indigenous forest that is lost, but perhaps this longing is more complicated than that. The narrative of those concerned with the environmental destruction caused by the civilizing mission paints a picture of an undisturbed bush existing in primeval stillness since time immemorial before then being spoilt by heartless settlers. But the settlers never actually experienced the bush as untouched, for as soon as they arrived from Britain their presence ruined its stillness, and even before they got to it the existence of Māori had already humanized it. Furthermore, even before the native bush was burnt, its *genius loci* could only barely be felt, for it was experienced as nothing more than an affect, a fleeting feeling. Moreover, as the poets show, the *genius loci*

in fact lives on even after the burning, for its presence is registered in the charred remains of the forest. But even when in the Southern Alps, those mountainous ranges physically unchanged by humans, Baughan (1910, p. 48) says: “our minds go back to the ages when these scenes were uncared for and unknown”. Therefore, it is not the transformation of the environment, it is not the burning, but rather, it is the mere existence of human presence in general that corrupts ancient nature. And the nostalgia, then, is not for the bush itself, but for the pre-human past which the wilderness, whether mountain or forest, signifies. Here the legacy of romanticism is at play, for, as Paul DeMan (1985, p. 6) writes, it is a movement “inspired by a nostalgia for the natural object, expanding to become nostalgia for the origin of this object”. Therefore, the burning of the forest signifies the further disconnection of Pākehā from an ancient origin that they were never actually connected to, but hold with them as a mere thought.

The simulacrum of wilderness is premised on nostalgia. Baudrillard (1981) argues that for the simulacrum to form, the real must not just die, but its simulation must be taken to be the real. Hence, the pre-human past is never real for humans, precisely because it is of a time that exists prior to the time of their existence, but because the wilderness itself is equated with that primeval epoch, to the point where the two become one in the same thing, the mountains and the forest then became a simulacrum of origins. Baudrillard (1981, p. 20) claims, “simulation corresponds to a short circuit of reality and to its duplication through signs”. Thus, the hyperreal wilderness is in fact a simulacrum of the pre-human past, for the wilderness becomes a sign that duplicates origins. Moreover, for Baudrillard (1981, p 6):

“When the real is no longer what it was, nostalgia assumes its full meaning. There is a plethora of myths of origin and of signs of reality”

Nostalgia for the pre-human past is the driving force that overcomes the nonexistence of the real origin, by making the wilderness the simulacrum of that time and place. Edward Casey (1987, p. 366) writes:

“...the past at issue in nostalgia is the past of a world that was never given in any discrete, present moment...Nostalgia without explicit, recollective memory! Nostalgia over a past which seems to be no past at all, so absolute and interior is it! Indeed, nostalgia over a place that proves to be no place at all!”

Therefore, this recollected memory, which is of the place of origins from the pre-human past, is not real nor ever was, but is an idea that has been taken to be real, for the wilderness, as its simulacrum, gives it a life by making it exist in the here and now.

The Pākehā memory of the pre-human past is not a true memory, for it is a memory of something that

never existed for them. In the work of Deleuze (1968), memory, like all thought, is first virtual before it is actual, unconscious before it is conscious. For Deleuze (1968), virtual memory is an objective, unconscious record of the past, which is formed alongside or parallel to reality itself, as reality itself unfolds. The Deleuzian unconscious is impersonal but collective, for it is from this external unconscious that the personal memories of every individual are formed (Deleuze, 1968). Furthermore, Deleuze (1968, p. 103-159) refers to the unconscious memory of the past, following Henri Bergson, as the “pure past”, and it is from this that our own subjective thoughts of the past are created as what he calls “memory-images”. Deleuze (1968) suggests that a trace of the pure past is captured in memory as an affect of the virtual, and this is experienced nostalgically as the feeling or sense that a memory-image is becoming diluted, weakened, or dissolved in relation to its former fullness in thought. However, following Baudrillard, I argue that the pure past of origins, that is, the true recollection of the pre-human time, never exists for humans, because this time itself never existed for them. Therefore, despite only ever having a memory-image of ancient nature, Pākehā believe that the pure wilderness, as the simulacrum of the pre-human time, allows them to truly remember and be put in touch with the pure past of origins.

The simulacrum of wilderness creates the purity and ahistoricity that nature nationalism requires. Jacques Derrida (1967, p. 369) critiques the way Europeans have historically romanticized non-Europeans, when he charges Levi-Strauss of relying on: “an ethic of nostalgia for origins, an ethic of archaic and natural innocence, of a purity of presence.” But this also applies to the Pākehā perception of nature in New Zealand. Hence, the purity of New Zealand’s native wilderness is the purity of a pre-human presence that can be felt within it. Furthermore, as a nostalgic recreation of the ancient past, the hyperreal wilderness is “cleansed of history” (Turner, 2008, p. 15). Moreover, as purity is in fact not natural but created, Pākehā must conceptually cleanse the wilderness of its history of Māori occupation in order to make it a simulacrum of the pre-human past. Turner (2008, p. 14) explains that New Zealand has long been marketed “as an ideal destination for tourists, through imagery of friendly and exotic Māori”. However, because of the purity that nature nationalism now demands of New Zealand’s wilderness, Māori cannot have a history in the country’s wild landscapes, for they must now be and must now remain untouched spaces exclusively for those who want a wilderness experience, that is, an experience of pre-human ancientness. In this way Pākehā undertake the settler colonial act of appropriation one more time, but this time it is not the indigenous person who is romanticized as exotic, pure, and uncorrupted, but native nature.

The simulacrum of wilderness and its nostalgic affect are crucial to the marketing of New Zealand. For early settlers and perpetuators of the South Island Myth, desertedness made New Zealand’s southern landscapes depressing. Hence, it was in a melancholic tone that Brasch (1939, p. 23) wrote of there being “no dead in this land”. However, more recently the South Island regional construction has become a positive thing for Pākehā. Hence, it is with pride that the Department of Conservation (2015e) explains that the rocks

at Castle Hill in Canterbury's Kura Tawhiti Conservation Area are not manmade but are natural, and that they are therefore special when compared to most rock formations around the world, which, by contrast, are the products of ancient civilizations. Furthermore, while in New Zealand Theroux (1992, p. 36) claimed, "nothing induces concentration or inspires memory like an alien landscape", for "it is an experience of intense nostalgia." But the nostalgic recollection that is conjured when in an unfamiliar landscape, like the rock-strewn hillside at Castle Hill, for instance, is the simulacral memory of a prehistoric past that humans have never known because it precedes their existence in time. Hence, as Beattie (2011) notes, even the Department of Conservation admits that the pre-human state of New Zealand's environments cannot be accurately simulated, for science can only speculate as to their exact composition. In light of this, I argue that nature nationalism is founded on the belief that New Zealand's historic lack of human presence and its ancient nature make the country's wilderness unique. Indeed, as Bell (1996, p. 39) writes: "nostalgia for the past and the romanticisation of nature entwine". Therefore, the advertising of Aotearoa through the New Zealand wilderness myth cleverly combines these two elements, portraying the country as a destination which fits perfectly with the demands of romantic consumerism.

The simulacrum of wilderness and the nostalgia that drives it are crucial to the reproduction of desirable citizens in New Zealand. Deleuze (1953, p. 13) writes:

"...it is true that from the desert island it is not creation but re-creation, not the beginning but a re-beginning that takes place. The desert island is the origin, but a second origin."

Put plainly, the desert island is a natural origin that can be returned to, as a kind of primeval source from which moderns can begin again, a second time, as more authentic people. Baudrillard (1981, p. 9) claims: "we require a visible past, a visible continuum, a visible myth of origin". Thus, for moderns, "their nostalgia and their search for authenticity" lead them back to the pre-human past that is found in nature, which, as the simulacrum of origins, is only legitimized through hindsight (MacCannell, 1976, p. 3). And this is the hindsight of a late modern, Western society which has begun to reflect on the previously infallible narrative of progress, leading to a valuing of nature, sometimes even as a total but impossible rejection of society^{xx}. But as Skaria (1999, p. 7) suggests, Western celebrations of wilderness today are not innocent:

"They are about a nostalgia for wholeness, about going back to a 'natural' state of affairs. They associate wildness with the prehistory of civilization, with the moment of its origins, with authenticity, and they yearn for unity with this moment."

In this way moderns are "falling victim to a nostalgia for a return or regression" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, p. 190). In New Zealand Pākehā turn back to the wilderness to "discover themselves" anew, for it is

outside of society in nature, their real home, that they learn to become their true selves (Turner, 2008, p. 15). For Pākehā, the wilderness experience is a process of character building, to express it colloquially, for it is in nature that the country's national values of egalitarianism and giving it a go, as the New Zealand saying has it, are instilled in its subjects. Therefore, nature and society are in fact not so separate at all, for in New Zealand, nature nationalism combines the late modern appreciation of and nostalgia for nature as ancient and original with the social values and morals it desires in its citizens.

Ahistorical Landscapes: Memory and the Ability to Reconstruct

Nature nationalism is the Pākehā desire and process of nation building. Nigel Clark (2004) argues that Pākehā understandings of nature in New Zealand are closely linked to their desire to become New Zealanders. Nature and nation share the same Latin root: *nasci*, meaning to be born (Williams, 1976). Furthermore, as Bhabha (1991) notes, to be of a nation means to be native to its soil, forming a timeless connection between ancestral lineage and nature. This then is the core of the tension between Māori, as Tangata Whenua, or people of the land, and Pākehā, who are not native unless they either remove Māori, or conceptually erase their claims from the national imaginary. Turner (2008) suggests that it is through the label of Kiwi that Pākehā seek to indigenize themselves as naturalized New Zealanders, for through this identity they claim to belong to the country's native wilderness like the bird itself does. Moreover, through this indigenization, Pākehā seek to deny their "feral nature" as settlers, who are perhaps best represented by foreign species of animal and plant, like possum and gorse, which quickly became invasive pests after being brought to the country from Europe (Turner, 2008, p. 16). Instead, as "indigenous Kiwis", white New Zealanders represent themselves as special and down-to-earth like the unique flightless bird (Turner, 2008, p. 15). This is what Turner (2008, p. 15) calls the "counter-indigeneity of Pākehā wilderness aesthetics". Therefore, I argue that nature nationalism – as a nostalgic turn back to the pre-human past through the simulacrum of wilderness – is a settler colonial process of indigenization that problematically allows Pākehā to claim to be native New Zealanders. At best this is an uncritical claim of being at home in New Zealand made through white colonial privilege. And at worst it is the writing out of Māori from the history of Aotearoa and the subsequent denial of their status as the country's only indigenous people, which is often done by drawing on the South Island regional construction.

Nostalgia is central to nationalism and the reconstruction of history in Western modernity. As Boym (2001) shows, nostalgia becomes political when it is used to motivate a return to a national origin envisioned with a collective memory. In this way nostalgia lends itself to a fascist imagining of the past, through which history is reconstructed so that an idealized, traditional way of life or time that existed before the nation was supposedly corrupted can be recovered (Boym, 2001). Stephen Keane (2008) demonstrates how the German notion of *heimat* expresses national nostalgia for the peasant farmer in the German past and his moral way

of life, which has since been lost in modernity. However, the past of the peasant farmer represented by *heimat* is almost entirely fictional, for it is a reconstruction of German history through collective memory that glosses over or even leaves out key aspects. The Pākehā yearning for their homeland in New Zealand's wilderness is not entirely dissimilar, for it is nostalgia for the place and time of an imaginary origin. Moreover, through the nostalgia of nature nationalism, Pākehā make the pre-human past New Zealand's national prehistory, which becomes seen as the timeless, pure origin of the nation that settlers arrived at. Furthermore, it is of course after this pure moment of origin, recreated through the simulacrum of wilderness, that the colonization of New Zealand occurs, resulting in the dispossession of Māori and the devastation of the country's natural landscapes. Therefore, in this way nostalgia drives the Pākehā reconstruction of New Zealand's history.

The wilderness is made to be timeless and empty so that history can be forgotten. Paul Ricoeur (2004, p. 292) speaks of Nietzsche's work on the ahistorical, the antihistorical, and the unhistorical, as processes of thought that have acted as responses or even as cures to history within the history-oriented culture of western modernity. The ahistorical specifically, writes Ricoeur (2004, p. 292), "is associated with the art and power to be able to forget". The South Island regional construction employs this notion of the ahistorical, and on this basis nature nationalism creates the New Zealand wilderness myth. For unlike a human landscape, if a place is natural, then it can have no history, because nature itself has no history. And if humans can create history, then they can erase it too. Therefore, the political function of the simulacrum of wilderness, as much as the nostalgia through which it operates, allows Pākehā to forget the environmental history of New Zealand. Moreover, by forgetting the history of Māori occupation of the wilderness, Pākehā can seek recourse to the pre-human past to form a sense of belonging within New Zealand, for it gives them a timeless connection to an untouched land to which they wish to be indigenous to. Thus, it is this understanding of history and nature that inhibits a post-colonial wilderness in New Zealand.

Conclusion: Future Environments

Summary: Return to Critical Regionalism

I want to begin by summarizing the argument I have made in this thesis thus far. I have argued for the existence of what I call the South Island regional construction, which refers to an historical, textual discourse that represents the South Island as an uninhabited wilderness through a romantic understanding of landscape. In the preceding chapters I have shown how this regional construction has developed through the colonial writing of explorers and settlers, while also demonstrating its political consequences. These consequences include, among other things, the explorer and settler practice of transforming New Zealand's indigenous wildernesses into European-style farmlands, the failure of explorers and settlers to recognize the existence and place of Māori in terms of their relationship to New Zealand's landscapes, and their forced removal of Māori from conservation areas. Furthermore, I have argued that this regional construction informs what I call nature nationalism, which is a nationalistic discourse found in contemporary writing on tourism and conservation, and which produces what I call the New Zealand wilderness myth. This myth, I argued, reproduces the colonial ideas that inform the South Island regional construction. More specifically, I have theorized that what is at play here is a nostalgic, Pākehā turn to the pre-human past, which creates a simulacrum of wilderness. Moreover, here the wilderness becomes a sign that stands in for and reproduces the ancient past of origins as its simulacrum. Finally then, I argued that the primary consequence of this is the formulation of the Pākehā politics of nature nationalism, which operates as a kind of conceptual colonialism through which Maori and their history are erased from New Zealand's landscapes, allowing Pākehā to claim to be indigenous to the country's untouched wilderness.

I now want to return to critical regionalism and the wider argument of this thesis. In the introduction I spoke of critical regionalism as a methodology that I would use for two reasons. The first reason is to determine the ways in which the modern, Western concepts of wilderness, nature, landscape, and the sublime are transfigured within the context of the South Island, with regards to their usage, meaning, and significance specifically. The second reason is to subsequently determine how the South Island regional construction – which is based on the local transfiguration of the aforementioned concepts – is employed within nature nationalism. I begin this concluding chapter by summarizing what wilderness, nature, landscape, and the sublime mean in New Zealand, and how these meanings have significant political consequences with regards to identity and nationalism. I then show how the South Island regional construction differs from the North Island regional construction, and the consequences of nature nationalism drawing on the former rather than the latter to represent the country through the New Zealand wilderness myth. Finally, I return to my overall question: what is the possibility of a post-colonial wilderness in New

Zealand? To answer this, I suggest some of the ways in which these Pākehā understandings of the environment can be decolonized.

Antipodean Transfigurations: The West Down Under

While the association between wilderness and the sublime is a modern romantic one dating back to eighteenth-century Europe, in New Zealand, the sublime has come to define the country's wilderness areas in a similar, yet different way. In critiquing the settler and Pākehā representations of New Zealand's landscapes, Pound (2009, p. 26-27) refers to the "eye that endlessly gazes over what it sees as the land's emptiness". This emptiness becomes for the New Zealand artist, "that personage who comes from the wilderness", "a golden transcendence" (Pound, 2009, p. 26-27). For the Victorian settler of the Antipodes, and then later for the nationalist, Pākehā artist of the 1930s, New Zealand was to be represented through its places without human habitation or farming, which defined it as "the space of an alien desert or wilderness" (Pound, 2009, p. 55). As Pound (2009) makes clear, in New Zealand, the European concept of the sublime takes on its own form through its use by settlers and Pākehā, for whom it refers to the grandeur and awesomeness of wild nature, but, more specifically, to the perceived emptiness of the country's mountainous alpine areas and its indigenous forests. Therefore, for settlers and Pākehā, New Zealand's wilderness, particularly because it is native, is perceived as being something that is primordial or primeval in its essence, or at its core (Pound, 2009). Moreover, it can only be expressed through the language of the sublime as a kind of nothingness that is timeless and deeply inhuman (Pound, 2009).

In the West, the sublime acts as a representation that is beyond all other representations, and in New Zealand this transcendence of the sublime is transferred onto the wilderness. Slavoj Žižek (1989, p. 203), following Burke, writes:

"The paradox of the Sublime is as follows: in principle, the gap separating the phenomenal, empirical objects of experience from the Thing-in-itself is insurmountable – that is, no empirical object, no representation [*Vorstellung*] of it can adequately present [*darstellen*] the Thing (the suprasensible Idea); but the Sublime is an object in which we can experience this very impossibility, this permanent failure of the representation to reach after the Thing. Thus, by means of the very failure of representation, we can have a presentiment of the true dimension of the Thing. This is also why an object evoking in us the feeling of Sublimity gives us simultaneous pleasure and displeasure: it gives us displeasure because of its inadequacy to the Thing-Idea, but precisely through this inadequacy it gives us pleasure by indicating the true, incomparable greatness of the Thing, surpassing every possible phenomenal, empirical experience..." [emphasis original]

In New Zealand, the indigenous wilderness and the mountainscapes become the sublime for settlers and Pākehā because they represent this very paradox. While transcendence can never truly be experienced, the perceived greatness of the South Island landscape indicates the possibility of it occurring. In other words, the greatness of the mountains and forests can never be overcome by the civilizing mission, for no explorer or settler can ever obtain the sublime object that lies within them.

The sublime offered the conceptual framework by which Europeans could make sense of New Zealand's wild environments, for it allowed them to be compared to similar places in the Northern Hemisphere. As Bell (1996) notes, the sublime became especially important for promoting tourism in New Zealand, because it related the country to Europe and America, providing the means by which to represent it in a way that tourists would understand. Lydia Wevers (2002, p. 187) suggests:

“The Wonderland of the Antipodes was compared with Yellowstone, the Southern Alps with Switzerland, the Canterbury plains with Kent, to form what Mary Louise Pratt has called the ‘standard metonymic representation’ of iconic images of nature: a textual culture composed of layers of recorded journeys from which the topography and equivalence of New Zealand could emerge – revealed, recognized, mapped and brought home.”

As I have previously mentioned, settlers saw the Southern Alps as comparable to the Swiss Alps. However, what gave the Southern Alps their regional uniqueness was not only their beauty like those in Switzerland, but also their sublime emptiness. It is this combination of beauty and the absence of humans that made the Southern Alps doubly sublime, as a type of relic of a primeval sublime. Importantly, it is because of such comparisons that New Zealand could emerge conceptually for Europeans and those of European descent. While similar to Europe, New Zealand's geography was perceived as being locally distinct in some way and still is today, but it could only be read by settlers (and made sense of by Pākehā today) through Western notions of topography. Nature nationalism constructs places of wilderness in the South Island, like the Southern Alps, as the national icons of New Zealand, but while it attempts to do so by portraying them as being significant for their uniqueness, it relies on standard, European representations of geography to do so.

It is the translation of European understandings and representations of nature that underlies the settler and Pākehā perceptions and portrayals of New Zealand's wild landscapes, specifically through the ways in which they are formed out of the transmutation of the Western myth of wilderness into the geographical and cultural context of Aotearoa. Cronon (1995, p. 23) critiques this myth within the North American context:

“...to the extent that we live in an urban-industrial civilization but at the same time pretend to ourselves that our real home is in the wilderness, to just that extent we give ourselves permission

to evade responsibility for the lives we actually lead. We inhabit civilization while holding some part of ourselves—what we imagine to be the most precious part—aloof from its entanglements. We work our nine-to-five jobs in its institutions, we eat its food, we drive its cars...we benefit from the intricate and all too invisible networks with which it shelters us, all the while pretending that these things are not an essential part of who we are. By imagining that our true home is in the wilderness, we forgive ourselves the homes we actually inhabit.”

What is most problematic about the myth of wilderness within the context of settler societies like America and New Zealand is not the radical and contradictory separation between nature and civilization it produces, but the way it is used by the settler culture in these former colonies to claim that the places of wild nature within them are *their* homelands. It may not be so problematic for native Europeans to trace their social and cultural past as a people back to the wilderness of their countries, making them the primeval site of their prehistory, from which they progressed to become modern and civilized. However, when whites draw on this myth in former settler colonies, they undermine indigenous claims of home through conceptual displacement and dispossession. Therefore, this is a highly politicized (if under-acknowledged) form of conceptual colonialism, an essentialism of the imagination, for the wilderness is neither where settlers emerged from nor where they lived in harmony with nature before modernity. Furthermore, in this sense Pākehā create a kind of hyperreal homeland through the simulacrum of wilderness. This is not just a Romanticist atonement or liberal urban gnosis that in America goes back to Ralph Waldo Emerson, for such claims, made either implicitly or explicitly, are the greatest expression of the settler identity crisis, which results in this ultimate act of colonial dispossession.

This is true of New Zealand, where Pākehā rework the Western myth of wilderness, ending up with a cultural nostalgia for the country’s primordial past. This takes Pākehā back to a pre-human time, when Aotearoa’s indigenous environments supposedly lay in an undisturbed state. Holcroft (1940, p. 23) writes:

“...the forests of older countries are peopled with the memories of remoter times, made warm with human occupancy, saturated with an effluence of history; and although the scenes of past violence may have left their residue of fear – thickening the shadows of Westernmain – it is a fear that can be traced back or given its vague association of ideas. But in New Zealand the empty places lead us straight towards the unknown; the sharp edge of silence has a primary significance, and thought grows dim – as if the collective mind has its margins here, and is replaced by the deeper unconsciousness of inorganic nature.”

In New Zealand, the imagining of this ancient past allows, and in fact encourages Pākehā to forget the country’s human history, undermining the status of Māori as Aotearoa’s indigenous people, by claiming to

be a new native people who belong to the nation's wilderness. Cronon (1995, p. 23) writes: "in its flight from history, in its siren song of escape", "wilderness poses a serious threat". In New Zealand, the flight from history that the Western myth of wilderness produces poses a serious threat to biculturalism and the relationship between Māori and Pākehā, for rather than claiming and working through the histories of both peoples and the encounters between them, it condemns these narratives to the dustbin of history.

Nature nationalism draws on the country's primordial past to construct the New Zealand wilderness myth, and on the surface it appears to be unproblematic, despite the fact that it sidesteps everything that is troublesome about the nation's colonial history. Moreover, this includes the Pākehā-majority's ownership and control over the land via state-ownership, which allows such myths to be produced in the first place. Through tourism and conservation, the political function of nature nationalism and the New Zealand wilderness myth it constructs can be seen. As Bell (1996, p. 48) writes:

"...myth transforms nature into history and political expediency. We can then sell it to tourists as national identity; and half-believe it ourselves. The status of nature within the notion of national identity renews a sense of pride in the nation. The authenticity of New Zealand's history embedded in nature is rarely challenged."

In the European version of the myth of wilderness, the place of untouched nature represents the pure and innocent starting point that can be travelled back to, by figuratively slicing through the different levels of landscape layered over the earth's own geological strata, which are rich with the narratives and encounters of different periods. However, in New Zealand, through the politicization of landscape that nature nationalism entails, and in particular, the South Island regional construction, the blood of those from the colonial conflicts of the past is not seen as staining the soil because they are forgotten. Therefore, the New Zealand wilderness myth is in fact entirely inauthentic, but it is not seen as such precisely because it is a simulacrum, for rather than representing pristine nature as the beginning of history, it portrays it as still being in an unspoilt state contemporaneously.

The South and the North: Geographical Regionalism

As I have argued, nature nationalism produces the New Zealand wilderness myth by drawing on the South Island regional construction, which has been developed by European explorers, settlers, and Pākehā since the late eighteenth-century when Cook and the *Resolution's* crew first arrived at Fiordland. Moreover, as I have suggested, the South Island regional construction exists in contrast or even in opposition to the North Island regional construction. In the North Island, the wilderness becomes the place of Māori, and European explorers, settlers, and Pākehā also produced this idea. As Park (2006) suggests, one of the first

settlers to produce the idea of the North Island as a wilderness inhabited by Māori was the anthropologist, Elsdon Best, through his ethnography of the Tūhoe people near the end of the nineteenth-century. As Jeffrey Holman (2007, p. 114) observes, Best had “an atavistic attraction to Māori [Tūhoe] and the bush (the primitive in the wilderness)”. For Best, the way of life and culture of Tūhoe made them an atavistic representation of the past, because he conceptualized them as a people in a state of nature, living within the wilderness, much as Forster imagined the hunter-gatherer Māori he and Cook’s crew encountered in Dusky Sound centuries earlier. However, the contrast between these two regional constructions of New Zealand can be seen when the idea of the North Island Māori as an almost eternal, primitive character is contrasted to the idea of the nearly extinct South Island Māori. For instance, Butler (1863, p. 127) writes: “there are few Māoris here” because “they inhabit the north island”, but even there they “are only in small numbers, and degenerate in this, so may be passed over unnoticed.”

The North Island regional construction was also developed in settler literature. This is evident in the novels of William Satchell, an Englishman who migrated to Waima in Hokianga from London during the late nineteenth-century, and who became well known in New Zealand as a prominent Maoriland author after publishing several books. One of the things that characterized Satchell’s work was the way that it was contextually grounded by the geography of the North Island. Jane Stafford and Mark Williams (2006, p. 228) write:

“Satchell's most intense response to the new place was directed at its wild, curious and captivating nature.”

For Satchell, the wild nature of the North Island was anything but empty, for he understood its forests, or bush, as he called it, to be enchanted by the spirit of their Māori inhabitants, who he romanticized in his writing. Philip Wilson (1968, p. 23-136) observes:

“He came to identify himself in his fiction largely with the New Zealand past, with the wilderness and with the Māori point of view...[N]ot only Satchell’s fervent response to nature, but his idealization of those who lived and died in the wilderness, was decisive in his vision.”

For Satchell, Māori and the bush were cognate; he understood them to be as primeval as one another, as if the forces of nature were expressed through the mythology of its indigenous inhabitants, who were, for him, primitives in the wilderness.

The distinction between the North Island regional construction and the South Island regional construction was also imagined and promoted by tourism. Visitors to New Zealand from as early as the late

nineteenth-century noticed considerable differences between the two islands. Wevers (2002, p. 209) writes that travellers to New Zealand near the end of the nineteenth-century perceived a difference:

“...between the wilder, less developed and more conventionally aestheticized landscapes of the South Island and the more urbanised landscapes of the North...”

While the South Island was perceived as nothing but an uninhabited wilderness, making it a picture-perfect example of the sublime, the North Island, considered a Māori wilderness, was already beginning to be noted for being more urban than its southern counterpart by the end of the nineteenth-century. While on a trip from Christchurch to Mount Cook, Ardaser Wadia (1932, p. 117-119), an Indian professor travelling around New Zealand, wrote the following about the South Island:

“From travel books and picture-magazines I had imagined New Zealand to be one endless stretch of lovely green country, thickly wooded and highly cultivated, where smiled eternal spring from year’s end to year’s end. Instead, I found undulating plains and high rolling downs covered with short, stubby, dried grass, the every-tiring monotony of which would have got on my nerves were it not relieved here by a cluster of cottages and then a clump of trees. Especially was this the case in the South Island, where again and again I felt as if I were carried on a magic carpet back to my native land of India, so very brown and parched the country looks at times.”

The continental feel of the South Island, with its seemingly endless plains and tussock-covered hills, make it stand out from the North Island, which for the most part is more green and forested, but which could also never be compared to a country the size of India because the coastlines that surround it are almost always in view when travelling around it.

In forming the regional constructions of the South Island and the North Island, tourism advertising during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries contrasted the landscapes of one to the other through the imaginary of New Zealand as a scenic wonderland, representing both as places of wilderness, but in distinctly different ways. As Evans (2007, p. 137) suggests, there was both:

“...the northern Scenic Wonderland (bubbling mud, seething blowholes, decorative native flora)...[and] the southern Scenic Wonderland, with its more forbidding landscape (snow-capped mountains, bottomless fiords, glassy lakes and glaciers).”

New Zealand’s two main islands were marketed in contrast to one another to suggest to the tourist that they could experience every kind of landscape in New Zealand. Hence, a trip around the country could take a

visitor from the sublime, alpine wilderness in the South Island, to the geothermal marvels in the North Island. As Evans (2007, p. 63) explains, alongside notions of how varied New Zealand's landscapes are, these regional constructions also reproduced ideas about the location of Māori:

“In distinctive contrast to the northern wonderland, there were far fewer Māori in the South...[and] no Māori at all in the deep south.”

Therefore, just as the explorers and settlers experienced New Zealand to be populated by Māori in the North Island and almost entirely free of them in the empty wilderness of the South Island, so too did tourists, who went to the former to encounter the exotic Other, and to the latter to see the country's stunning natural scenery.

The South Island Myth of the 1930s was also influential in reproducing the regional construction of New Zealand's two main islands. The Caxton poets aimed to create an understanding of the south as differing from the north, not only with regards to Māori and landscape, but also in terms of settler culture. As Grimshaw (2015) notes, for the cultural nationalists, the South Island Myth arises in response to a North Island myth, because its notion of the south as an empty wilderness inhabited by white New Zealanders can be seen to exist in contrast to the idea of the north as a green garden occupied by Englishmen in exile, which is found in the work of A.R.D. Fairburn, for instance. Moreover, Grimshaw (2012, p. 83) notes the differences between the South Island and the North Island as the South Island Myth produces them:

“If the North Island is contested and bears the recent scars of intercultural struggle, then the South Island is the land where a new, modern, struggle occurs. If the North Island is a land of struggle with indigenous inhabitants, the South Island – ‘where there was never before to my knowledge, so large and so fair a land to be had for the taking’ – is where a new struggle with nature occurs.”

Therefore, the South Island Myth reproduces the South Island regional construction – which both precedes and exceeds it in time – in a literary way, by turning the historical facts of the South's sparse Māori population as well as its lack of violent encounters between Māori and settlers into poetry.

The South Island Myth could only occur due to a combination of factors, both geographical and historical, which was used to justify the white claim of the New Zealander as indigenous. In contrast, being a settler or former settler meant something almost entirely different in the North Island. Keith Sinclair (1959, p. 301) writes the following about the regionalism underpinning the South Island Myth and its rejection by Pākehā in the North Island:

“It is worth noting that almost all the writers whose work expresses this attitude were South Islanders. It is a regional myth, which has little appeal in the North Island, with its monuments to ancient Māori occupation and its denser population.”

The North Island arises out of an interaction between Pākehā and Māori that does not occur in the South Island. The former then becomes the location of both New Zealand’s pre-European past as well as the modern biculturalism that underpins its political sense of nationhood, while the latter becomes a neo-Europe, in terms of both geography and culture. With regards to this, Newton (1999, p. 91) writes:

“This local actuality which the nationalists discover, then, is mythical. And it is also indispensably parochial. New Zealand is constructed on the model of the South Island, whose regional topography is deployed in a rationalization of regional history. In styling that landscape as bare and inimical...the Caxton poets rewrite as geographical destiny the comparative ease and efficiency with which settler domination was achieved in the South. A smaller indigenous population, a costly period of warfare in the 1820’s (both inter-tribal and intra-tribal), and the overwhelming European deluge generated by the southern goldrush, were among a combination of factors leading to a Pākehā ascendancy won without military conflict.”

Therefore, the South Island Myth invents a southern history composed of a pre-human past that is then followed by Pākehā settlement, and it is indeed so parochial that it in fact represents this history as an almost providential story of a primeval wilderness that was waiting for the European migrants who would come to occupy it and to transform it into cities, towns, and farmland.

In order to both justify and bolster the South Island Myth, the cultural nationalists create a myth of the North Island in their very production of that of the South, representing the North as its opposite. Alan Mulgan (1935) exemplifies this point by contrasting the Māori, geography, and history, as well as the Pākehā culture and politics of the North Island to that of the South Island, in resounding favour of the South as having the more successful story of settlement out of the two. Mulgan (1935, p. 93-95) writes the following:

“It could be argued with some force that the worst disaster in the history of New Zealand was the separation of the North from the South Island...by the formation of Cook Strait. The wide ‘S’ shaped waterway, made dangerous by currents and winds, has been an estranging sea, dividing New Zealanders into camps, placing a check on travel and therefore on mutual understanding, and perpetuating jealousies and parochial quarrels...Yet there is something appropriate in this division by the sea, for the South Island differs from the North Island so much

as to be almost another country... You have noticed how hilly and mountainous the North Island is. The South is much more so, and its mountain system incomparably greater and grander. For every snow peak in the North, the South has scores. There is solitariness in the uprising of Egmont and Ruapehu, but the South Island is alpine from end to end... In the North Island the word 'pass' is never used, but in the South it is familiar... Politically, socially, and economically, as well as geographically, the South has been different. The island as a whole was always sparsely populated by Māoris, who preferred the milder, more equable climate of the North. This meant that there was little difficulty over the acquisition of land. After the 'Wairau Massacre' in the forties, caused by the white man's impetuosity and ignorance of native customs and land rights, there was no trouble with the Māoris; the wars that scarred so much of the North and left a legacy of bitter memories did not touch this island... [I]n addition to the absence of difficulties with the natives, the new-comers found a country that was largely open. There was little of the heavy bush-felling that had to precede so much of the settlement in the North, with lush secondary growth to combat if the farmer neglected his cleared land... The great gold discoveries in Otago and Westland quickly increased the wealth of the island... Far from the war in the north the communities of Canterbury, Otago, and Marlborough prospered in peace and plenty and were better able to develop their political and cultural life."

As expressed here, the South Island Myth represents the South as cold, alpine, uninhabited by Māori, and free of wars between them and settlers, reproducing and providing a more literary expression of the South Island regional construction.

While the cultural nationalists of the 1930s actively and consciously tried to mythologize southern New Zealand, the South Island regional construction can be found in various other sources, in which it also, in many cases, appears in contrast to the North Island regional construction. While on a trip to find cave art of early Māori in southern New Zealand, the psychologist T.H. Scott (1950) contrasts the geography of the South Island that he arrives at and sees for the first time to that of the North Island that he is familiar with and has left behind. In the following passage, Scott (1950, p. 289-301) describes his experience of the South Island, that "great and desolate land", where he went "ranging into the wilderness" of the interior:

"When I left the North Island and came to the South to live, I felt immediately and overwhelmingly that I had come to quite a different country... I had come to what could have been a continent, from places that could only be an island. Here was the dryness of continents, the vastness, the shape of country that could go on and on... [I]mmediately in the South Island I sensed this strangeness, as if I had stepped into a world of a different order, the meaning of which I could not grasp."

The South Island is like a continent, and it has an alien feel due to its “undisturbed” state, as Scott (1950, p. 289) put it, compared to the North Island which is experienced as a island because its coasts are seemingly always in view. Moreover, these coasts provide a constant, visual marker of the significant Māori presence there as the site of the first encounters between them and Europeans.

Moving Forward: A New Possibility

As I have suggested, nature nationalism, which is found in both national as well as international tourism and conservation advertising, produces the New Zealand wilderness myth, and it does this by drawing on and utilizing the South Island regional construction. For instance, in producing the 100% Pure New Zealand campaign, Tourism New Zealand (2015c and 2015d, unpaginated) relies on the South Island to market the country as being home to pristine, wilderness landscapes:

“A palette of dramatic scenes, New Zealand’s South Island hosts the purest natural landscapes you’ll ever experience. Showcasing the best of nature’s assets where towering alps meet peaceful sounds and rugged coastlines merge with sweeping plains. Let’s not forget the backbone of the island - the most down-to-earth locals you’ll ever meet...Active volcanoes, island sanctuaries and history top the list when visiting New Zealand’s North Island. From the far north where New Zealand’s political history began, journey through landscapes that blend magnificent coast, sprawling farmlands and geothermal wonders. Māori culture is rich and ever-present in many parts of the North Island.”

The geographical features of the South Island that are described as being nature’s assets are in fact the icons of nature nationalism, which uses them to portray New Zealand as a pure wilderness. While the North Island is also represented as being a wilderness, it is one, which in contrast to the South Island, is home to Māori culture and the country’s political history, because it is where the Treaty of Waitangi was signed. In further contrast to the North Island with its Māori population, the only thing that exists in the South Island besides nature are its Pākehā inhabitants, who are colloquially described here as down-to-earth-locals, as if their contact with nature has made them genuine, humble people who are grounded in reality through a kind of volkgeist environmental determinism. Therefore, what the North Island is the South Island is not, and vice-versa, meaning that the alpine wilderness of the south is pure because it has no history or culture like the geothermal, beach-lined wilderness of the North.

Nature nationalism bases its representation of New Zealand on the South Island regional construction, through the way in which it markets the country as a place of mountainous, forested environments that are portrayed as pure and untouched, and it relies heavily on technology to do so. Bell

(1996, p. 47) speaks of this dominance of the regional imaginary of the South Island's natural landscapes in the construction of New Zealand's national identity, and how it is through forms of media that they become iconic:

“How many North Islanders actually see the South Island mountains, apart from on brochures and as backdrops on television ads? Yet they clearly inform our collective identity.”

The simulation of natural landscapes via postcards, to take one form for instance, is more important than the real thing that the simulacrum of wilderness stands in for and replaces. This is because most people will not see the real thing, which in fact does not even exist in the way that it is represented, and because it allows the environments of southern New Zealand to be portrayed in a way that reifies the South Island regional construction. When visiting the national parks of the South Island, tourists from New Zealand as well as those from abroad may be disappointed to find that they do not look as perfect as they do on a computer screen. Further contradicting their expectation and tarnishing their experience as consumers of landscape, tourists may find that there are actually other people visiting these sites at the same time as they are.

Nature nationalism relies on the constant reproduction of images of the country's southern landscapes, which represents them as deserted, because they give the South Island its symbolic value within the national imaginary, and such images therefore allow the New Zealand wilderness myth to be formed. Here I want to argue that nature nationalism represents New Zealand through the South Island regional construction in order to attempt to overcome the problems of identity and biculturalism, and I suggest that it tries to do this by simply avoiding them altogether. The reproducible image of the South Island landscape – as a scene of pure wilderness that is free of any human presence – bypasses the difficulty of representing Māori in a way that does not exoticize them. At the same time, this simulacrum also depicts the perceived peacefulness of untouched nature rather than the problematic history of biculturalism, which is plagued by the violent intercultural encounters between Māori and Pākehā. The image of landscape is much like the South Island Myth of the cultural nationalists, which, as Grimshaw (2015, p. 10) notes, represented southern New Zealand as not just free of Māori, but as free of Pākehā too, making it entirely empty of all people, because “everything and everyone known was absent”. Therefore, just like the South Island Myth, nature nationalism markets Aotearoa by orienting both the tourist and the citizen away from the North Island and all that is problematic about it, and towards the pristine environments of southern New Zealand, except through landscape images this time rather than via poetry.

New Zealand is sold on the model of the South Island as the place of Aotearoa's pure wilderness. In contrast, with its geothermal areas, beaches, its culture, history and city life, the North Island provides a secondary or subsidiary model by which to market the country. On Tourism New Zealand's (2015d,

unpaginated) “essential New Zealand” list, nine out of eleven of the tourist “must do’s” in the country involve wilderness, seven of which are located in the South Island, while the two other activities are experiencing Māori culture in Rotorua and café and dining culture in Wellington and Auckland. Hence, experiencing the cultural performances of Māori and drinking flat white coffees are the only two officially sanctioned alternatives to hiking and camping in New Zealand, as the country looks to offer something else to tourists who are not travelling to it entirely for the experience of visiting natural landscapes and observing wild scenery. However, the urban can be experienced in numerous places elsewhere around the world in a seemingly much more pronounced way than it can be in Aotearoa^{xxi}, where the offer of a particular coffee is perhaps the only thing that sets its cafés apart from those overseas. Furthermore, the traditional performances of Māori paint a picture of them that differs greatly from their lived reality as modern people. What this shows is that the only thing that is considered to be truly authentic about New Zealand, by both tourists and locals alike, is its indigenous nature – that unique and iconic simulacrum of wilderness that sets the country apart and makes it special.

There are ways in which the goal of decolonizing the dominant Pākehā perception of New Zealand’s wild landscapes can occur, allowing for a new way of making sense of them that moves beyond the essentialized understandings of nature nationalism and towards a post-colonial wilderness. Firstly, this means realizing that every landscape is never solely human nor purely natural, for they are always produced by the interaction between humans and non-humans. For indeed, there is no landscape, wilderness, or nature without the human naming, viewing, and dividing of the world as such. Thus, with regards to places of wilderness, recognition of the stories that are layered over them – both historical and contemporary – is crucial to developing a more refined and nuanced understanding of them. In realizing the colonial histories embedded within New Zealand’s landscapes, Pākehā need to accept them, rather than perceive the wild as places of pure nature which are supposedly untouched or undisturbed. For this reifies the simplistic and problematic understandings of wilderness that explorers like Cook had of New Zealand’s landscapes when they encountered them more than two centuries ago. As historical sites, Pākehā should not conceive of New Zealand’s wild landscapes through an Antipodean transfiguration of the Western myth of wilderness, making them their simulated homeland or place of prehistoric origin. Nor should they continue to act as if Cook, the founding figure of Pākehā, discovered these supposedly primeval environments lying in wait of European settlement. Rather, Pākehā should understand their identity as that of a people who have simply found themselves in New Zealand due to historical circumstances that they cannot control. This means that Pākehā should realize that, no longer Europeans, they do not have or need to form the connection to the land that Māori do, but can respect it and move towards being at home in New Zealand, whatever that might mean, without undermining Tangata Whenua or seeking recourse to claims of neo-indigeneity.

Notes

ⁱ 86.3% of New Zealand's population is urban. See: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2212.html>

ⁱⁱ Despite the idea of nature as object and environment being the most significant concept of nature for this thesis, it is important to note that this understanding of nature does not exist in a void, separate from the aforementioned types of nature. Thus, the three versions of nature discussed here do arise sequentially in time, but they do not form a teleology within the history of ideas. Hence, the genesis of each does not result in the erasure of the one before it. Rather, each new one exists alongside the ones before it and reworks their meaning, often relying on them despite putting them in the background to some extent. This point should be made evident and given more clarity through the rest of this thesis.

ⁱⁱⁱ I have shortened this quote considerably. The full quote is as follows: “The water-fall, at the distance of a mile and a half, seems to be but inconsiderable, on account of its great elevation; but after climbing about two hundred yards upwards, we obtained a full prospect of it, and found indeed a view of great beauty and grandeur before us. The first object which strikes the beholder, is a clear column of water, apparently eight or ten yards in circumference, which is projected with great impetuosity from the perpendicular rock, at the height of one hundred yards. Nearly at the fourth part of the whole height, this column meeting a part of the same rock, which now acquires a little inclination, spreads on its broad back into a limpid sheet of about twenty-five yards in length. Here its surface is curled, and dashes upon every little eminence in its rapid descent, till it is all collected in a fine basin about sixty yards in circuit, included on three sides by the natural walls of the rocky chasm, and in front of huge masses of stone irregularly piled above each other. Between them the stream finds its way, and flows with the greatest rapidity along the slope of the hill to the sea. The whole neighbourhood of the cascade, to a distance of one hundred yards around, is filled with the steam of watery vapour formed by the violence of the fall. This mist however was so thick, that it penetrated our clothes in a few minutes, as effectually as a shower of rain would have done. We mounted on the highest stone before the basin, and looking down into it, were struck with the sight of a most beautiful rainbow of a perfectly circular form, which was produced by the meridian rays of the sun refracted in the vapour of the cascade. Beyond this circle the rest of the steam was tinged with the prismatic colours, refracted in an inverted order. The scenery on the left consist of steep, brown rocks, fringed on the summits with overhanging brown trees; on the right there is a vast heap of large stones, probably hurried down from the impending mountain's brow, by the force of the torrent. From thence rises a sloping bank, about seventy-five yards high, on which a wall of twenty-five yards perpendicular is placed, crowned with verdure and shrubberies. Still farther to the right, the broken rocks are clothed with mosses, ferns, grasses, and various flowers; nay several shrubs and trees to the height of forty feet, rise on both sides of the stream, and hide its course from the sun. The noise of the cascade is so loud, and so repeatedly reverberated from the echoing rocks, that it drowns almost every other sound; the birds seemed to retire from it to a little distance, where the shrill notes of thrushes, the graver pipe of wattle-birds, and the enchanting melody of various creepers resounded on all sides, and completed the beauty of this wild and romantic spot.”

^{iv} It is debatable whether or not New Zealand is post-colonial. In a structural sense New Zealand is post-colonial because it is a sovereign nation. However, while New Zealand is no longer a colony its colonized population still live alongside their settler colonialists, who are also citizens. The ongoing impact of settler colonialism that is at the heart of this thesis suggests that there is much to do before New Zealand can truly be post-colonial in every sense of the word.

^v The sublime may also represent places that are not considered natural, like buildings. However, the sublime was originally used in reference to nature.

^{vi} For instance, in Katherine Mansfield's (1912, p. 3) story *The Woman at the Store*, she writes of "the savage spirit of the country".

^{vii} For instance, see the essays in King's (1991) book *Pākehā: The Quest for Identity in New Zealand*.

^{viii} Such as Donna Awatere (1984).

^{ix} For such stories, see, for example: <http://www.stuff.co.nz/environment/8023412/100-Pure-Fantasy-Living-up-to-our-brand>

^x I am referring to certain ways in which the wilderness in New Zealand can be decolonized in a conceptual sense specifically. However, there are other potential practices of environmental decolonization, but they are outside the scope of this essay because they are more practical. One example, for instance, is Mairi Jay's (2005) proposal for the creation of a hybrid wilderness composed of both indigenous and non-indigenous flora and fauna. An analysis of the cultural, social, and political significance of this idea, rather than a scientific one, could be an avenue of future research.

^{xi} Almost every website related to tourism in Fiordland claims that Kipling called Milford Sound the "eighth wonder of the world". However, it is not mentioned in his autobiographical writing on New Zealand. In the following entry in the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, it is claimed that Kipling called Fiordland "one of the wonders of the world": <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/photograph/37101/rudyard-kipling-in-dunedin>. In the following New Zealand Herald article from 1933, a list of Kipling's personal wonders of the world are revealed, in which he lists Milford Sound as his fourth wonder: <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=d&cl=search&d=NZH19310219.2.95&srpos=1&e=19-02-1931-----10-NZH-1-----0the+fourth+wonder-->

^{xii} As Evans (2002) notes, Baughan worked as a poet for the New Zealand Government in its then Department of Tourism during the early twentieth-century, and as well as several other essays on different parts of New Zealand, the department published Baughan's essay on the Milford Track with this title.

^{xiii} The tourism industry has unofficially named Fiordland the walking capital of the world. Most tourist websites and brochures about the Fiordland area or Fiordland National Park mention this title.

^{xiv} Georg Forster's journals were originally published in three volumes in 1777, six weeks before Cook's own journals of his second voyage were published, making Forster's journals the first, yet unofficial account of the voyage. English and German versions of Forster's journals titled, *A Voyage round the World in His Britannic Majesty's Sloop Resolution, Commanded by Capt. James Cook, during the Years, 1772, 3, 4, and 5*, were published between 1778 and 1780, followed by Spanish, Russian, Swedish, and French translations shortly after. The authorship of the journals is disputed and it is claimed that Georg Forster probably only wrote about 60 percent of the published material, as the rest of it was his father Johann Forster's work. The journals became popular in the Anglophone world after J.C. Beaglehole's English version was published in 1961, allowing further scholarship to be done on the topic. The journals differ slightly between the original English version from the eighteenth-century and later English versions from the nineteenth-century. Throughout this thesis Forster is quoted exclusively from the latest English version of his diaries published by Nicholas Thomas and Oliver Berghof in 2000.

^{xv} See: <http://wairakeiterraces.co.nz/index.php/terraces-walkway>

^{xvi} See the following website, for instance: <http://www.discoverycruise.co.nz>

^{xvii} For instance, see Richard Louv's (2005) idea of Nature Deficit Disorder from his book *Last Child in the Woods*.

^{xviii} Here I am thinking of Marian Maguire's (2015) exhibition *Titokowaru's Dilemma*, for instance, which includes several prints that resemble traditional New Zealand landscape paintings, but which feature Maori in the foreground. See: <http://ashburtonartgallery.org.nz/exhibition/titokowarus-dilemma/>

^{xix} While I am aware that, as Roger Robinson (2008) shows, *Erewhon* is a text that is perhaps most well known for its use of irony and satire, here I am reading it more literally. I take it at face value in order to focus on its representations of Canterbury's landscapes.

^{xx} This is seen, for example, in Henry Thoreau's (1854, p. 12) retreat to Walden in the Massachusetts Woods, in an attempt at minimalist, simple living among nature, for he rejects the notion of civilization and decides "that it would be some advantage to live a primitive and frontier life".

^{xxi} I mean this in the sense that what might be termed urban is highly limited in New Zealand. Besides Auckland, no other cities in New Zealand could be called global cities. Moreover, even in Auckland, the vast majority of the population lives in suburban rather than urban areas of the city.

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