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THE 'PLACE' OF INTERPRETATION:
An Evaluation of Provision, Use and Role of Interpretation at
Mount Cook National Park,
New Zealand

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the Degree
of
Master of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management
at Lincoln University
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By
Emma J Stewart

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Abstract of a thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Masters of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management.

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The qualitative research reported in this study draws on sense of place theory to develop a new approach to evaluating interpretation. In this thesis I argue that interpretation, either explicitly or implicitly, aims to stimulate, facilitate and extend people's understanding of place so that empathy towards heritage, conservation, culture and landscape can be developed. A new approach is used to explore how effectively interpretation influences people's understanding of place at Mount Cook National Park, New Zealand.

A typology of interpretive provision is developed which identifies three forms of interpretation - primary, secondary and tertiary. Each form of interpretation reveals the place in a different form and manner. Visitors to the national park are classified into four groups depending on their use of this range of interpretation. These categories are termed; seekers, stumblers, shadowers and shunners. By moving the majority of these visitor groups (even short stay visitors) towards an appreciation of the place, the interpretation at Mount Cook is deemed effective in achieving its aims. A number of other tangible and intangible factors are also identified as contributing to the development of visitors' appreciation of place. The case is made for a more theory driven approach to the evaluation of interpretation.

Key Words: Interpretation, evaluation, place, visitors, sense of place, appreciation of place, conservation, qualitative research, Mount Cook National Park, New Zealand.
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‘Beauty, of and for itself, needs no interpretation. Later questions will come... Then the interpreter’s moment has arrived’

Freeman Tilden (1957: 80).
FOREWORD

My particular interest in the interpretive field arose from employment prior to my arrival in New Zealand. Working as an interpretive assistant for Touchstone, a heritage and tourism consultancy in Scotland we advised our clients on the most appropriate ways to present (or interpret) their places of natural, cultural or historic significance to their visiting publics. Projects included for example: the design of an information and interpretation scheme for St Andrews; the redevelopment of a visitor centre for a Shetland National Nature Reserve; and the implementation of an interpretive strategy for the West Highland Line Railway. Involved in a variety of projects, I became aware that little was known about how people experience the places we interpreted - we did not know how effective our efforts had been. Since departing Scotland I have developed a general interest in studies that attempt to evaluate interpretation and a particular interest in the New Zealand approach to interpretation and evaluation.
CHAPTER ONE

'There is little doubt that interpretation can play an important role in enhancing people’s awareness, understanding and appreciation of place. If this is to occur, the interpretation needs to be planned with that outcome in mind. This will only be achieved if it is informed by sound theory.'


INTRODUCTION

Introductory Context

This thesis is about interpretation, evaluation and place. There are many special places throughout the world, and regardless of whether these are national monuments, protected natural areas or historic sites there is a responsibility to make these places accessible to those public audiences that may visit. The provision of this access for visitors has become known, in a general sense, as interpretation. More explicitly interpretation aims to stimulate, facilitate and extend people’s understanding of a place so that empathy towards conservation, heritage, culture and landscapes is developed (Prince, 1982a; Aldridge, 1989; Light, 1992; Prentice, 1996; Uzzell, 1996).

It is because this obligation to interpret these places exists that it is necessary to find out how effectively interpretation achieves its aims of taking visitors ‘one step beyond’ wherever they happen to be when they arrive in a place (Devlin, 1987). What is of concern in this study, is that interpretation may not have been evaluated in the most appropriate ways in the past. It is argued that interpretive planners and providers know very little about the effectiveness of their interpretive investment. Based on the theories of place, this study develops a new approach to the evaluation of interpretation. This approach, used at Mount Cook National Park, New Zealand enables an exploration of the relatively unexplored relationships between people, place and interpretation.

The terms interpretation and evaluation are defined in this chapter. Three research issues are briefly discussed and problem statements are presented. A brief overview of the thesis outlines the way in which these problems are addressed in this study.

---

1 The correct spelling of interpretive is ‘interpretative’ (see Thompson (1995) Oxford English Dictionary). However, most British, American and New Zealand research has adopted the American spelling, ‘interpretive’. This spelling is used throughout this thesis to be consistent with the existing literature (see Piersenne, 1993; Light, 1995b).
What is Interpretation?

The task of defining interpretation is not made easy by the variety of ways interpretation is presented. As the examples in Plate 2 reveal, interpretation can involve a range of media (Sharpe, 1976; Bromley, 1990). The Latin roots of the term interpretation; *interpretari* - to explain, translate - help explain what interpretation aims to achieve. The assumption that interpreters translate words from one language to another, in doing so making something foreign into something familiar, is in essence the aim of interpretation.

Interpretation using guides
*Guided tour of cultural/orchid centre [Coral Coast - Fiji]*

Interpretation via personal services
*On site presentation [Lady Knox Geyser - Rotorua -New Zealand]*

Interpretation through drama
*Site of open air drama [Dion - Greece]*

Interpretation using static displays
*On site interpretive panels [St Andrews - Scotland]*

Plate 2: Photographic Montage of Interpretive Media.
Freeman Tilden was the first to provide a formal definition of interpretation. Born in 1884, he wrote several books, among them *The National Parks, The Fifth Essence, and Interpreting Our Heritage*. The latter, first published in 1957 remains the classic work on interpretation (Machlis & Field, 1992). It was here that he defined interpretation as;

‘An educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by first hand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information’ (Tilden, 1957:8).

Tilden supported this definition with six guiding principles. ‘I believe that interpretive effort, whether written or oral or projected by means of mechanical devices, if based on these six principles, will be correctly directed’ (Tilden, 1957:9). See Figure 1 below.

---

I. Any interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile.

II. Information, as such, is not interpretation. Interpretation is revelation based upon information. But they are entirely different things. However, all interpretation includes information.

III. Interpretation is an art, which combines many arts, whether the materials are scientific, historical or architectural. Any art is in some degree teachable.

IV. The chief aim of interpretation is not instruction, but provocation.

V. Interpretation should aim to present the whole rather than a part, and must address itself to the whole man [sic.] rather than any phase.

VI. Interpretation addressed to children (say up to the age of twelve) should not be a dilution of the presentation to adults, but should follow a fundamentally different approach. To be at its best it will require a separate program.

Figure 1: The Guiding Principles of Interpretation (Tilden, 1957:9).

Tilden’s work established interpretation as a responsibility of the US national park service. He believed that visitor understanding and site conservation were connected.

‘Not the least of the fruits of adequate interpretation is the certainty that it leads directly toward the preservation of the treasure itself, whether it be a national park, a prehistoric ruin, an historic battlefield or a precious monument of our wise and heroic ancestors...my heartiest thanks go to whoever it was that phrased: through interpretation, understanding, through understanding, appreciation; through appreciation, protection.’ (Tilden, 1957:38).
Since Tilden outlined this philosophy in the 1950s a substantive body of literature has developed (Herbert, 1995). Many authors have tried to define and redefine interpretation, but such definitions only seem to echo the sentiment of Tilden (eg: Field & Wager, 1973; Aldridge, 1975; Veverka, 1994; Hammit, 1984; Devlin, 1987; Glen, 1995; Light, 1995a; Moscardo, 1995b; Moscardo, 1996).

'Interpretation explains the significance of things (as well as the things themselves). Interpretation reveals to visitors why and how a place, a building, an artefact or a topic is important and doesn't just simply tell them that it is. It provokes people into thinking about the subject, to finding out more for themselves and to 'making connections' with their own general experience. It adds enjoyment and satisfaction to their visit' (Glen, 1995:1) [Emphasis mine].

Revealing, provoking and finding out more have been aptly coined by Devlin (1987) as taking visitors 'one step beyond'; that is growing intellectually, physically, socially or emotionally beyond wherever visitors happen to be before their interpretive experience.

**Interpretation and Place**

The relationship between place and interpretation can be traced back to Ancient Greek times when almost every town had its own periegete; an expert local guide who led people around, pointed out notable sights, described the local rituals, explained the customs, and told traditional stories of historical and mythical events associated with the place (Walter, 1988).

'The best guides represented the whole integrity of the places. They would describe a place not objectively but holistically in a pattern that included the elements that Plato identified as shapes, powers and feelings. They did not discard subjective collective experience' (Walter, 1988: 18) [Emphasis mine].

A written commentary describing a place, a travel guide, was known as periegesis (Walter, ibid). No periegesis have survived, but the sentiment of this time has, and is echoed in the modern day definitions of interpretation (eg: Tilden, 1957; Hammit, 1984; Van Matre, 1989; Glen, 1995; Prentice, 1996). These authors have indicated that interpretation is a process which aims to reveal meanings of places, to provoke thought about places and to essentially to make the link between places and people. The following definition outlines what is meant by interpretation in this thesis.

'Interpretation is a process of communicating to people the significance of a place so that they can enjoy it more, understand its importance, and develop a
positive attitude towards conservation. Interpretation is used to enhance the enjoyment of place, to convey symbolic meanings, and to facilitate attitudinal or behavioural change' (Prentice, 1996:55) [emphasis mine].

It is this belief that interpretation can instil a change in visitors in some way, be it to challenge their behaviour, to question their conservation ethic, or to add to their understanding of place that has frustrated researchers who have been interested in evaluating interpretation. However if effective interpretation is to be achieved this frustration has to be overcome by developing creative, insightful and systematic evaluation (Knapp, 1995; Vander Stoep, 1995; Vander Stoep & Christensen, 1995).

Evaluation of Interpretation

The evaluation of interpretation is the most pertinent issue associated with interpretive research (Uzzell, 1985; Prentice & Light, 1994; Light, 1995b) Evaluation is required to establish whether or not interpretation has achieved its aims (Prentice & Light, 1994).

Most observers now recognise and stress the importance of evaluating interpretive programmes (Herbert, Prentice & Thomas, 1989). This is because;

'...Good practice has tended to be assumed, often on the basis of very little evidence, rather than demonstrated by formal assessment. There is no reason why interpretation should not be held up to rigorous scrutiny. This should be the pre-eminent contemporary issue in the presentation of tourist attractions' (Prentice & Light, 1994:205).

Paradoxically, despite the importance of evaluation, in practice evaluation exercises have been considered indulgent due to the costs, time and skills required (Binks & Uzzell, 1990; Uzzell, 1985). Although interpreters are supposedly experienced at effective communication, they have had limited success convincing senior management of the value and importance of evaluation (Roggenbuck & Propst, 1981). Several authors however have noted a number of persuasive and compelling arguments in support of evaluating interpretation. These authors point to the cost effectiveness of interpretation, the efficiency of interpretation to meet objectives, the need to reflect on interpretation given its rapid development and the need to identify new questions about interpretation as arguments in support of evaluation (Prince, 1984b; Uzzell, 1985, 1988; 1989a, 1989b; Marsh, 1986; Herbert et al., 1989; Light, 1995b; Prentice & Light, 1994).
The need to demonstrate the cost-effectiveness of interpretation has been the most frequent justification for evaluation (Roggenbuck & Propst, 1981; Griggs, 1984; Marsh, 1986; Stevens, 1989).

‘...it is not uncommon to find some heritage attractions spending millions of pounds on interpretation. The sheer amount spent on interpretation demands that the cost effectiveness of such investment should be demonstrated through evaluative research’ (Prentice & Light, 1994:206).

Because much interpretation is publicly funded, agencies have a responsibility to demonstrate a return on public expenditure (Marsh, 1986). However, Uzzell (1985) has outlined some important non economic arguments for evaluation. In recent decades interpretation has developed over a relatively short period into a profession with its own skills, societies, journals and publications, conferences, training courses and standards of excellence. It is due to this speed of development, particularly in interpretive thinking and technique that some interpreters recognise the need to simply evaluate what they are doing. This process of evaluation may involve stepping back and asking apparently basic questions such as ‘what is going on here?’ and ‘what else can be done?’ It is difficult to improve present facilities and plan future interpretive services in the absence of answers to these questions (Uzzell, ibid). Given this range of arguments, evaluation of interpretation should be prioritised on the research agenda (Prince, 1982b; Prentice, 1993; Light, 1988). In New Zealand the need to place the evaluation of interpretation on the research agenda has been highlighted by a number of key commentators (Devlin, 1987; Molloy & Parrott, 1995).

‘While constant ‘new’ ideas and innovative methods have ensured the evolution of interpretation programmes in New Zealand I suspect we are at the point where changing events require us to re-evaluate where we are with our current efforts; where we are heading to; and why and how these programmes should continue to be a feature and responsibility of our land management agencies’ (Devlin, 1987:2).

Research Problems

The crux of the research problem that this thesis addresses is that although interpretation may be developed to enhance and enrich people’s experiences of place, we know little

---

2 In the UK for example, the Society for the Interpretation of Britain’s Heritage (SIBH), Centre for Environmental Interpretation (CEI) and Association of Scottish Visitor Attractions (ASVA) provide fora for interpretive discussion and their associated journals, conferences and training courses provide outlet for these developments. In USA, the National Association of Interpreters (NAI) provides a similar but all encompassing interpretive body.
about how effectively this is done. The objectives of interpretation have appeared to have been overlooked in studies that have attempted to evaluate the effectiveness of interpretation. Past attempts to evaluate interpretation have been typically atheoretical and have focused almost entirely on the amount visitors learn from interpretation (Knapp, 1995; Uzzell, 1996).

‘Evaluators monitor only that which can be measured, such as factual recall. The real tragedy is that evaluators are now designing evaluation around what is easy to evaluate when the whole point of evaluation for the interpreter is to encourage more creative interpretation’ (Aldridge, 1989:85).

One consequence of this lack of appropriate evaluation is that interpretive planners, providers and researchers know very little about interpretation and its critical relationship with place. This situation is epitomised at Mount Cook National Park where interpretive providers know little about how effective their efforts have been and do not have an adequate understanding of whether the desired interpretive messages are filtered to the visiting publics (Corbett, pers. comm., 1995). Mount Cook is unquestionably one of the most dramatic and spectacular national parks in the World; and is significant in cultural, natural and recreational terms for many New Zealanders - both for Pakeha and Maori and for overseas visitors; yet despite this the interpretation of Mount Cook National Park has in recent years been identified as problematic - outdated, inadequate and maybe failing to meet the needs of some visitors and the expectations of some professionals (Findlay, 1994; Eden, 1995). It is because the interpretation at Mount Cook is in line for review that this site has been chosen as the case study for this thesis.

The issues identified here will be addressed in more detail in the subsequent chapters. However, it is useful to note the following theoretical, methodological and practical research problem statements which inform this study.

---

3 See Glossary (after reference list) for an interpretation of these and other Maori terms used in this thesis.
Research Problem Issues

- **Theoretical Issues**
  Past evaluation studies have focused almost entirely on the amount visitors can recall from interpretation. This approach, while interesting, is inadequate because it overlooks one of the principal aims of interpretation, which is to enhance visitor’s experience of place. A new approach informed by the theories of place may be useful to help us understand precisely how interpretation aids people to understand place.

- **Methodological Issues**
  The lack of an explicit theoretical basis to past evaluative research has furthermore limited the methods that have been used in evaluation. Quantitative methods have often been assumed as *the* tools of evaluative research while there has been very little discussion about the contribution qualitative measures may make to evaluation. Qualitative methods, including semi-structured interviews and observations may be useful techniques to explore the connections between interpretation and place.

- **Practical Issues**
  Interpretation at Mount Cook National Park is currently considered, by DOC management and other providers to be inadequate, outdated and in need of urgent evaluation. A study of the interpretation at Mount Cook may help providers, here and at other places, to understand more fully about their investment in interpretation.

Research Aims

This study tackles these fundamental research issues by addressing the following overarching research aims:

| 1. Theory: | to reconsider past approaches to the evaluation of interpretation by reviewing studies that have been undertaken in the past. |
| 2. Methods: | to develop an approach to the evaluation of interpretation informed by the theories of place which can be used at Mount Cook. |
| 3. Practice: | to use the above approach to evaluate interpretation at Mount Cook using interview and observation techniques. |
Thesis Organisation

Each of the research problems are discussed further in the following chapters. Chapter two provides some contextual background by highlighting the events in the history of interpretation in New Zealand that are relevant to this study.

Chapter three examines the way in which interpretation has been evaluated to date. The studies are arranged within an organisational framework which allows a discussion of the main contributions and the main omissions of past evaluation work. In doing so this chapter points towards the development of an alternative, more insightful evaluative approach informed by the theories of place. Chapter four focuses on the theories of place as the theoretical basis to this thesis. It is argued that the theories of place appear to capture the connections between visitors and their experience of the site.

Chapter five moves towards an understanding of Mount Cook National Park, by providing a brief introductory overview of the place itself and by reviewing past and current policies which guide the provision of interpretation in the park. The research aims are revisited and specific research questions are presented. Chapter six introduces the qualitative methods that are used to further understanding of place, interpretation and the connections between them. These methods form the approach to the evaluation of interpretation that is tested at Mount Cook.

Chapter seven presents the findings of the fieldwork to see if in any way typologies of interpretive provision and its use by those who visit the place can be developed so that the results can be tested elsewhere. The question of whether interpretation enhances visitors’ sense(s) of place is addressed by developing a typology of visitor use of interpretation. This question is further discussed in chapter eight. Concluding remarks are made by reflecting on the problems of practice, theory and methodology which were established at the outset of the study. The thesis is drawn to a close by making suggestions for further research.
CHAPTER TWO

'The issues surrounding just what visitors want from our national parks are more than just academic questions for the Department of Conservation. They are vital, cutting right to the fundamental matters of the role of the Department and how it can balance its wider conservation mandate with the Government's desire that visitors (both domestic and international) have satisfying and enriching experiences of their natural and cultural heritage'


INTERPRETATION IN NEW ZEALAND

Chapter Outline

Chapter two provides some background information on the development and provision of interpretation in New Zealand. A brief historical review of the principal land management agencies responsible for interpretation (Department of Lands and Survey, New Zealand Forest Service and Department of Conservation) is presented. Legislation, policies and reviews which are particularly relevant to this study are discussed. This chapter provides the historical context for the case study which is explored in this thesis.

Interpretation in New Zealand

There has been a commitment to interpret the landscapes of New Zealand for many years. The provision of interpretation in New Zealand emerged directly from the US context (Harper, 1991). The philosophy outlined by Tilden in the 1950s had, and continues to have, substantial influence on the development of interpretation in New Zealand. It is not surprising therefore that protected natural areas, particularly state forest parks and national parks have traditionally been important homes to interpretation in New Zealand (Molloy, 1993). A number of key actors in the field of interpretation have suggested that the thirteen national parks represent the 'crown jewels' of the New Zealand landscape (see Plate 3) (Devlin, Dingwall & Lucas, 1990; Molloy, 1993).

In the South Island these national parks include amongst others, Arthur's Pass, Paparoa and Mount Cook National Parks and in the North Island these include amongst others, Tongariro, Whanganui River and Te Urewera National Parks. Collectively the parks represent some of the finest and most diverse places in the world (Devlin et al., 1990).
Plate 3: National Parks of Aotearoa/New Zealand.
Individually these parks boast without exception considerable scenic value and although
the natural qualities may be most obvious, all of these places have significant cultural
value for local Maori\(^1\) or in terms of post-colonial activity. Inevitably these parks have
become the focus of attention for the visiting public - both domestic and international. In
1992/3 over half of all international tourists to New Zealand visited a national park
during their stay and this trend is set to continue (Booth & Peebles, 1995).

Interpretation in parks in New Zealand is often traced to 1887, the year in which the first
national park, the mountain peaks of Tongariro in the centre of the North Island were
gifted by the Maori owners, the Ngati Tuwharetoa tribe to the people of Aotearoa/New
Zealand (Devlin \textit{et al.}, 1990; Harper, 1991; Molloy, 1993). However, as Molloy (ibid)
has suggested the tradition of interpretation was already established by the time
Tongariro was designated a National Park. For example in the mid 1870s, the Rotorua
and Whakarewarewa geyserfields and the Waitomo Caves were established tourist
destinations with Maori guides interpreting these places for visitors. Other examples of
eyearly interpretation include; tourist guiding on the Franz Josef and Fox Glaciers from the
turn of the century; cruising the fiords of Fiordland; walking the Milford track which was
opened in 1890 and alpine guiding from the Hermitage Hotel at Mount Cook from 1884.
These guides were New Zealand’s first interpreters.

‘A guide is much to be desired, and his services are worth substantial numeration,
for he explains as he goes, passes by nothing worth inspecting, and plays a
valuable intermediate part between tourist and the lords of the soil’ (Bracken in

By 1920, The Department of Lands and Survey (DLS) and the New Zealand Forest
Service (NZFS) had emerged as the principal land management agencies of Crown land
in New Zealand. From 1876 DLS coordinated the land surveys previously undertaken by
provincial governments and administered Crown lands. The responsibility for national
park administration had been in the domain of the Tourist and Health Resorts
Department until it came to the DLS in 1908. Park interpretation was administered by
the national parks and reserves arm of this department (Harper, 1991).

\(^1\) See Glossary (after reference list) for an interpretation of these and other Maori terms used in this thesis.
The other principal land management agency was the NZFS which was formed in 1919 to ensure the ‘orderly working of indigenous forests and the development of new exotic forests and management of watershed protection’ (Harper, 1991:59). As with the DLS there emerged a conservation and a production wing to NZFS and it was through the work in the conservation wing that some interpretation was implemented. In these early days of park interpretation however, only minimal information and interpretation was provided, unless it was specifically requested by the visitor (Devlin, pers. comm, 1997).

The passing of the first National Parks Act in 1952 was a watershed in the development of interpretation in New Zealand. This act consolidated previous park legislation and established a coordinated national park system which was to be administered under the auspices of DLS. There was a keen interest in the department to develop specialist skills in the field of interpretation (Molloy, 1993). From the late 1950s, DLS actively encouraged the establishment of an interpretive infrastructure including buildings and the provision of signs and literature. At about this time (late 1950s/early 1960s) many Park Boards employed seasonal interpreters, often nature study specialists or science advisers on vacation from their work with Education Boards. An outcome of this was a rapid increase in the enthusiasm of park staff to become involved in interpretation and it literally ‘took off’ in the 1960s (Devlin, pers. comm, 1997). Many of the key figures involved in these early developments were influenced by the American approach to interpretation, either by literature or by staff going on overseas study tours (Harper, 1991). The influence of the American National Parks Service in stimulating this interest was paramount and by the mid 1960s, most parks ran a summer visitor programme including activities like the American style ‘campfire’ talks and nature walks.

Throughout the 1970s, the interpretive services within the national parks grew impressively and by 1976 all parks had a visitor centre (Molloy, op cit). The introduction of a diploma in Parks and Recreation (which catered for park rangers) at Lincoln College in 1976 allowed most park rangers exposure to contemporary interpretive techniques and developments (Molloy, ibid). In 1978, the DLS established a specialist interpretation design and production unit, with this new unit in place and staff available with skills, interpretive practices concentrated on a refinement of both the interpretive media and of
the interpretive message. In terms of effort, interpretation reached a peak in the 1970s/early 1980s when holiday programmes were widespread with DLS and NZFS trying to 'out do' each other with the level of opportunities for the public to have access to guided walks and interpretive talks. This was a boom period that has never been repeated in New Zealand (Devlin, pers. comm., 1997).

**Department of Conservation**

The year 1987 was a landmark not only for interpretation, but for the whole future of the management of New Zealand's heritage. Through the 1987 Conservation Act, the Government instituted the most far reaching departmental reorganisation in New Zealand conservation history. The Act amalgamated the conservation functions of DLS and NZFS and established the Department of Conservation (DOC). DOC became responsible for providing interpretation on the conservation estate. The interpretive functions of DOC are outlined in section 6 (b) - (d) of the Conservation Act 1987;

- To advocate the conservation of natural and historic resources.
- To promote the benefits to present and future generations.
- To prepare, provide, disseminate, promote and publicise educational and promotional material relating to conservation.

In addition to the responsibility for the management of the national parks, the new Department inherited management responsibility previously undertaken by a variety of public agencies for reserves, forest parks, wildlife and native plants, historic places and marine reserves which translated into responsibility for the management of 30 per cent of New Zealand (Molloy, op cit). DOC inherited a diverse range of interpretive infrastructure from these agencies, and in 1986 the role of interpretation under the new Department was outlined by the incoming Director-General;

'To develop keener awareness, appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of New Zealand's natural and cultural heritage. To encourage responsible attitudes and behaviour towards conserving New Zealand's natural and cultural heritage, and to promote the functions and responsibilities entrusted to the Department of Conservation' (Jacobsen, 1986 in Harper, 1991:83).

Furthermore, interpretation is important as national park policy is to be conducted within the spirit of the Treaty of Waitangi; 'by forging partnerships with the iwi of Aotearoa' (Molloy, 1993:61).
Review of Interpretation

The interpretive infrastructure inherited by DOC proved difficult to coordinate with the uncertainties of reorganisation in the late 1980s. These problems were heightened in the short term under DOC because of more urgent corporate priorities (Molloy, ibid). However a further departmental restructure in 1989 launched a comprehensive review of all interpretive facilities and services in New Zealand. The review highlighted a number of strengths and weaknesses of the interpretive work (Molloy, ibid). The strengths of the interpretation were impressive - DOC had inherited, or developed interpretation at many key heritage sites; two World Heritage Sites\(^2\) had been secured in addition to many other smaller sites of international importance; some places were already thought to be well interpreted; the summer visitor programmes were established and well received and there was an increasing public interest in conservation.

However the review revealed a list of weaknesses - interpretation had traditionally focused on the national parks of the New Zealand, with little interpretive effort at other conservation sites; there had been minimal interpretation from a Maori perspective; there had been little interpretive provision for non-English speakers and children; much of the interpretive material had over emphasised past exploitation and settlement, with little recognition of agents of change, processes and communities; there had been a lack of interpretation along the major highways which passed through significant places and there had been little work to coordinate with the interpretive efforts made in the tourist industry (Harper, 1991; Molloy, 1993). Lack of evaluation can also be added to this list.

Many of these weaknesses were not surprising given the historically fragmented nature of the institutional framework and the lack of national coordination (Molloy, ibid). It was also evident that DOC did not have the resources required to cope with the interpretive role which it had inherited. In response to the review DOC proposed the development of a National Heritage Interpretation Plan which aimed to produce a national interpretation strategy to guide future priorities for interpretive development. More specifically the plan questioned what to interpret and where, how to interpret most effectively and how to incorporate Maori perspectives into natural heritage interpretation (the plan has yet to be

\(^2\) For a discussion of the two World Heritage Sites (Tongariro and Te Waahipounamu) in New Zealand see Department of Conservation, 1989b; Molloy, 1991; Moore, 1992.
published). The Department is currently reviewing these issues at a time of uncertainty for the future of interpretation in New Zealand. This uncertainty relates to the pressure that has been placed on the interpretive facilities of the national parks by the target set by the New Zealand Tourism Board to increase the current annual number of overseas visitors by the year 2000. There is also uncertainty as to the development and nature of partnerships with iwi as Treaty of Waitangi claims are settled (Molloy, 1993). It is in this climate of uncertainty that the need for evaluation takes on greater urgency.

Visitor Strategy

The DOC Visitor Strategy published in 1996, redresses some of the issues that were previously identified in the 1989 review of interpretation. The strategy outlines the principles that guide the provision of DOC interpretation (see Figure 2).

- the department will share with visitors its knowledge of New Zealand's natural and historic heritage and explain its work towards the conservation of this heritage;
- visitors will be provided with a range of information and interpretation services which will increase their knowledge, enjoyment, understanding and concern for areas managed by the department;
- the department recognises the importance of visitors becoming more aware of the natural and historic values of the places they visit and adopting patterns of behaviour which respect these values, as well as respecting the recreational experiences of other visitors;
- in giving effect to the partnership of Waitangi, the department will encourage iwi to interpret their kaupapa, where they consider this appropriate, on department managed lands;
- visitor information and information services provided by departmental staff (and concessionaire-managed staff, when appropriate), will be accurate and of a high quality;
- the department recognises the importance of providing information which can raise visitors' awareness of the risks present in department-managed areas and the skills and competence they will require to cope with these risks.
- use of the most effective communication media for information delivery and interpretation to visitors will be encouraged.

Figure 2: Principles of Department of Conservation Interpretation (DOC, 1996:47-8).
Arising from these guiding principles are four key questions which are addressed in the strategy - all of them are pertinent to the current study.

- **What should the department be advocating?**
  The strategy identifies that the general issue of what level of information DOC should be providing requires more research. The challenge is how to strike the right balance between the delivery of information and advocacy messages.

- **Where are the key places where the department should try and inform and educate visitors?**
  The strategy highlights locations in need of urgent review. Mount Cook National Park visitor centre is ranked among those locations considered to be of the highest priority for the department.

- **Which are the most important visitor groups that the department should try to communicate and interact with?**
  The strategy identifies seven different visitor groups and outlines the main information and interpretation requirements of each group.

- **What techniques are most effective?**
  The strategy reviews the ways in which information and interpretation services are currently provided for visitors (signs, visitor centres, visitor publications, visitor programmes and concessionaires and other organisations).

  DOC (1996)

The report ‘Visitor Management Information Needs: Scoping the State of Knowledge’ was published shortly after the Visitor Strategy and refers to some key research areas for DOC (Devlin, Espiner, Hutchings & Parkin, 1996). The authors reviewed a variety of potential research issues, including a section addressing the ‘ways of increasing visitor understanding of conservation objectives’. In this section, the evaluation of interpretation was noted as being the main research focus in the study of interpretation. A number of issues were identified as being pertinent to future research in this area;

- to recognise that visitors are not a homogeneous group and that different visitor types will have different interpretive needs and will be receptive to different media;
- to understand trends and changes of visitor groups to remain responsive;
- to assess all forms of interpretation and their interrelationships;
- to understand how and if DOC can communicate to current non users;
- to experiment with longitudinal studies of the effect of interpretation; and
- to use both quantitative and qualitative research methods.

(Devlin, et al., 1996:82-3)
Chapter Summary

Interpretation in New Zealand can be traced back to the mid 1870s when Maori began guiding visitors around places such as the Rotorua geyserfields and the Waitomo Caves. Since this time, interpretation has become an established feature of protected natural areas administered under the auspices of the Department of Lands and Survey and New Zealand Forest Service and since 1987, by the Department of Conservation. When the latter was formed a review of interpretation was instigated. The review revealed a number of strengths and weaknesses, including the lack of evaluating New Zealand interpretive projects. Recently published documents and strategies point towards the need to evaluate interpretation so that DOC can determine ways of increasing visitor understanding of their conservation objectives. The following chapter reviews studies undertaken in New Zealand and overseas which have attempted to evaluate interpretation.
CHAPTER THREE

'Research without general theory is fragmentary and has a hit-or-miss quality to it...to continue in the same atheoretical way is to risk loss...'


REVIEW OF EVALUATION STUDIES

Chapter Outline

This chapter examines the way in which interpretation has been evaluated in the past. A diverse range of studies are identified. These studies are organised and discussed within a framework derived from a classification system originally developed by Zube, Sell and Taylor (1982). Discussion also considers the main contributions and omissions of previous evaluation work and suggests an alternative approach to evaluation informed by theories of place.

Evaluation Studies

Some authors have suggested that formal evaluations are elusive in the interpretive world (Binks & Uzzell, 1990; Prentice, 1993).

'Heritage presentation at attractions, and in particular the interpretation of their meaning to visiting tourists, has to date been largely reliant on intuition and experience; formal evaluation has been generally lacking...' Prentice (1993:199).

A review of literature however reveals that a considerable and diverse range of work that evaluates interpretation has already been undertaken (eg: Wager, 1972; Hammit, 1984; Moscardo & Pearce, 1986; Meylan & Frimmel, 1993). The diversity of work reflects the inter-disciplinary nature of interpretation with research interest from a wide range of academic disciplines, including psychology, sociology and geography published in a range of academic and non academic journals\(^1\).

Despite the fact that interpretation has been studied from a variety of disciplines the majority of the research concerns itself with the informal learning that is presumed to take place in the interpretive setting. Learning is generally determined in these studies by

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how much factual information visitors can recall about the interpretation (eg: Shettel, 1973; Screven, 1974). This focus on learning, which is itself of doubtful significance has had the effect of overlooking other important aspects of interpretation. Typically educational attainment is only one of a host of interpretive objectives, yet visitor recall of display content has been it appears, almost without exception the major determinant of the effectiveness of interpretation. This approach ignores for example, the scope of interpretation to provoke thought about places, to reveal meanings of places and to relate to individual experience of place.

‘Many recent writers have emphasised the need to evaluate the effectiveness of interpretation and work along these lines is now well in hand. Whereas, however it is relatively easy to measure effectiveness in more general terms - increased enjoyment, more awareness, more sympathy - more detailed probes have yet to be attempted...' (Herbert et al., 1989:228).

If evaluation continues to amass without critical reflection, and without ‘developing detailed probes' more interpretation will be put in place without a sufficient understanding of what it achieves. The remainder of this chapter therefore explores in more detail the way interpretation has been evaluated in the past.

Reviewing Studies

A number of authors have reviewed the literature on the evaluation of interpretation and have commonly organised the studies according to the method which was used during the evaluation, for example file reviews, unobtrusive observation, survey research, in depth interviews, focus groups, peer group review, longitudinal and comparative studies (Light, 1992b; Meylan & Frimmel, 1993).

This form of categorisation however does not reflect the interdisciplinary and wide ranging nature of studies which concern themselves with the evaluation of interpretation. The focus on evaluative method (such as observation or interview), does not help us understand what theories underpin the research. This is frustrating because many evaluations contain either an implicit or explicit reference to theory. As the chapter quote implies, it is the theoretical basis of these studies which should be critically examined.
In this chapter evaluation studies are categorised using a framework originally developed by Zube, Sell and Taylor (1982) to review literature in the field of landscape perception. The framework categories research into four paradigms depending on the theoretical basis of the study².

1. Expert paradigm
2. Psycho-Social paradigm
3. Cognitive paradigm
4. Experiential paradigm

This sequence of paradigms as discussed by Zube et al., (ibid) is particularly useful because it enables us to relate each interpretive evaluation study to broad trends in social science research. The psycho-social, cognitive and experiential paradigms of this classification system are briefly summarised in Figure 3³. These three paradigms have influenced interpretive studies and are discussed in turn in the remainder of the chapter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paradigm</th>
<th>Key Features</th>
<th>Era</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psycho-Social</td>
<td>• A sample of users provides the data for evaluation.</td>
<td>1960s - early 1980s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Stimulus-response model.</td>
<td>Examples include Washbourne &amp; Wager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Quantitative.</td>
<td>(1972) and Wager (1972).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>• A sample of users provides the data for evaluation.</td>
<td>Late 1970s - early 1980s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Cognitive theories.</td>
<td>There are a few examples of this work in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Quantitative/Qualitative.</td>
<td>the late 1980s. Examples include DART</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1978) and Prince (1982b).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential</td>
<td>• Small number of users make assessment based on individual experience.</td>
<td>1980s - present day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Qualitative.</td>
<td>Although this form of research can also</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>be identified as far back as the mid</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3: Chronology of Interpretive Research (After Zube et al., op cit).

² For further discussion of these paradigms refer to; Saarinen, Seamon and Sell (eds.) (1984); Kirby and Stuart-Jones (1990); Carlsson, (1993).
³ The expert paradigm, which focuses on expert opinion is interesting but it is omitted as it is not absolutely relevant to this particular review of literature.
Psycho-Social Paradigm

The psycho-social paradigm involves evaluation through the questioning of the general public or a sample population. A key assumption of the psycho-social approach is that a combination of many subjective views produces an acceptable and objective evaluation (Zube, et al., 1982).

Traditionally research in the psycho-social paradigm in the social sciences is underpinned by stimulus-response (S-R) models. The S-R model views behaviour as a response to an environmental stimulus. (Prince, 1982b). This approach was adopted by interpretive researchers who argue behaviour or response is influenced by the interpretive medium or stimulus. Interpretive researchers believed that the effectiveness of selected media could be measured (using mostly quantitative methods) by the visitor’s response to the stimuli. Most of this work was completed in the 1970s and early 1980s (Mahaffey, 1970; Washbourne & Wager, 1972; Wager, 1972; Hunt & Brown, 1971; Clifton, 1981; Olson, Bowman & Roth, 1984; Prince, 1982b; Gerritsen, 1984; Davies, 1988) although some work has come in the 1990s (Prentice, 1991; Meylan & Frimmel, 1993).

The effect of the S-R research approach on the evaluation of interpretation was to direct effort towards ways of assessing the effect of interpretive stimulus (eg labels or audio-visuals). This approach to evaluation had already been established in the museum setting and, in effect, museum research acted as the forerunner to interpretive research (Shettel, 1989). It is not surprising that early evaluative studies of interpretation (for example of visitor centres) borrowed the methods that had already been established by museums researchers because these approaches could easily be applied to the interpretive setting. The approach to evaluation in museum settings focused on;

- the ability of visitors to recall the content of the display material (Shettel, 1973);
- the design considerations of the display material and exhibition area (Melton, 1972);
- the patterns of visitor movement in exhibition areas; (Weiss and Bouterline, 1963);
- the time visitors spend looking at the display material and; (Shiner and Shafer, 1975);
- the effectiveness of different display media at conveying messages (Screven, 1974).
Developing from the museums approach to evaluation, the early evaluation studies of interpretation in the psycho-social paradigm tended to focus almost without exception on:

- visitor preference for selected interpretive media;
- educational effectiveness of different interpretive media.

**Visitor Preference**


The research by Mahaffey (1970) at Fort Parker Historic Site, Texas serves to illustrate the nature of such studies. A self guided tour was designed so that visitors would be exposed to three media on three different occasions. The recorded message was the most preferred medium, although a combination of media was most desirable. Similarly, Washbourne & Wager (1972) examined visitor preference for interpretive media from visitor responses to exhibits at four Pacific North West States and, Prince (1982a) studied two visitor centres in the North York Moors to ascertain which displays were the most interesting for visitors. The preference for active and dynamic rather than static and passive forms of interpretation was a common conclusion of studies at this time (Hunt & Brown, 1971).

**Educational Effectiveness**

The examination of visitors most preferred interpretive media laid the foundation upon which researchers then began to evaluate, through questioning visitors about the display content, the 'educational effectiveness' of interpretation. The early evaluative research in this area tended to assume that the variance in visitor learning was attributable to the stimulus, the interpretive medium itself. Most of the research therefore, focused on the efficiency of certain medium to convey the desired interpretive message. For example, the educational effectiveness of brochures, signs and staff presentations were evaluated at four Ohio nature reserves. The latter was found to be the most effective means of visitor education (Olson, et al., 1984).
In New Zealand, three evaluation studies were undertaken in the 1980s (Clifton, 1981; Gerritsen, 1984; Davies, 1988). Clifton (op cit) sought to evaluate whether interpretive talks instilled ‘park sympathetic’ behaviour. The results are ‘ambiguous with respect to the ability of interpretation to achieve a change in attitude, however there was some indication that teaching instilled an attitude in favour of wilderness preservation’ (Harper, 1991:33). The other two studies evaluated summer nature programmes and both Gerritsen (op cit) and Davies (op cit) reported that summer programmes were effective interpretive tools;

‘..it may be fairly concluded that the summer nature programme leaves many participants in a positive frame of mind, ready to do it again, having gained much enjoyment through the experience’ (Gerritsen, 1984 in Harper, 1993:34).

In New Zealand five visitor centres were evaluated for their effectiveness4 (Meylan & Frimmel, 1993). However because the research findings were specific to the visitor centres under examination, to the extent that suggestions were made to improve the detail of individual displays, the results of the study have little general application. The value of this study however, is that it formed the basis of a subsequent Department wide evaluation guide (Meylan, 1995a; 1995b). The guide suggested a variety of evaluative methods and provided advice on data analysis. This guide aimed to formalise evaluation across DOC visitor centres in New Zealand. Forthcoming work also examines the effectiveness of visitor centres (Johnston, forthcoming; Westerbecke, forthcoming). As Figure 4 illustrates however, most of the international evaluation studies based on the psycho-social paradigm were completed in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

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4 The five visitor centres included; three in the South Island - Haast Visitor Centre (Westland National Park), Fox Visitor Centre (Westland National Park), and Punakaiki Visitor Centre (Paparoa National Park) and two in the North Island - Whakapapa Visitor Centre (Tongariro National Park) and North Egmont Visitor Centre (Taranaki National Park).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Author</strong></th>
<th><strong>Date</strong></th>
<th><strong>Interpretive media</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brooks and Vernon</td>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Exhibits in British Science Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goins and Griffenhagen</td>
<td>1957</td>
<td>Exhibits in the US National Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dewaard <em>et al.</em></td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Programmed quiz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eason and Linn</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Two participatory exhibits on optics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borun</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Question and Answer Games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serrell</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Fish tanks in John G Shedd Aquarium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cone and Kendall</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Exhibits in Science Museum, Minnesota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zube, Crystal and Palmer</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Visitor Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Van Rennes</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Enquiry Game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sneider, Eason and Friedman</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Participatory astronomy exhibits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borun and Miller</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Exhibits in Franklin Science Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thom</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Two Scottish Interpretive Centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herbert</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Animated model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gillies and Wilson</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Participatory exhibits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roggenbuck and Berrier</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Brochures and personal contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosenfield and Turkel</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Interactive exhibits in mini zoos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olson, Bowman and Roth</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Brochures, signs and staff presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prentice</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>On site interpretation at Kidwelly Castle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4: Evaluation of Interpretation based on the Psycho-Social Paradigm.

**Discussion**

The methods used in these psycho-social research studies were, and still continue to be almost entirely quantitative, the tool nearly always a questionnaire. Sample sizes are generally high reflecting the assumptions that a combination of many subjective accounts produces an objective account; for example Olson *et al*., (1984) interviewed 1141 visitors; Zube *et al*., (1978) interviewed 3000 visitors; Prince (1982a) and Washbourne & Wager (1972) interviewed approximately 550 visitors. The results from each of these evaluative studies has made a considerable contribution to the overall development of interpretive planning and design. The recurrent research findings can be summarised as:

- **visitors pay very little attention or none at all to exhibits**;
- **interactive exhibits are relatively successful in holding visitor attention**;
- **visitors do not appear to learn or remember a great deal from their visits**.
The majority of research based on the psycho-social paradigm has been concerned with the informal learning that is presumed to take place in the interpretive setting (Screven, 1976; Falk, 1982). This seems to have blinkered researchers from investigating other equally significant aspects of interpretation. For example the focus of evaluation on the transfer of information from display to visitor fails to capture the wider principles of interpretation. This point is particularly relevant to my study because this approach ignores the way interpretation can provoke thought about places and make places meaningful for those who visit.

The focus on educational attainment in this paradigm echoes the comments made by Zube et al., (op cit) who indicated that the psycho-social paradigm is more directed to resolving specific planning or design problems. The evaluation studies that have been reviewed here focus on what works best in certain interpretive situations.

'The research tends to be prompted by individual problems in specific settings and is rarely guided by a theoretical framework' (Moscardo & Pearce, 1986:92).

A number of authors have suggested that the narrow range of objectives tackled in the early psycho-social studies should be broadened by adopting a more cognitive approach (Gottendiener, 1988; Pearce, 1988; Uzzell, 1989b). For example, in his review of early evaluative studies Pearce (op cit) suggested that the problems levéed at evaluation stem from the lack of an appropriate cognitive model of visitors and that these particular models were valuable in illuminating many tourist problems and phenomena. The cognitive approach would, it was claimed, avoid the fallacy of being overly focused on displays for their own sakes (Uzzell, op cit). The cognitive paradigm is discussed next.

**Cognitive Paradigm**

The cognitive paradigm takes perception as the core process in the evaluation of social phenomena. Perception is the way an individual relates to the world constructed through experience (Prince, 1982a; 1982b). This advances the view that although all objects are potentially meaningful, it is the perceiver who imposes meaning on them, and that this is done with reference to either direct past experience with the object or the opinions of valued others (Prince, 1982a).
Theories of Learning

In terms of interpretive evaluation studies this critical emphasis on cognition shifted interest away from evaluating the media itself to an examination of the interaction between the media and the user. Through this realisation a more explicit theoretical basis for the evaluation was established. The cognitive approach was informed by theories of psychology and in particular from theories of learning (Ausubel, 1968; Gibson, 1969). The cognitive approach to evaluation represents a significant development in the study of interpretation because the research was now ‘theory led’.

The first interpretive study to use a cognitive inspired approach was the Dartington Amenity Research Trust (DART, 1978) report on ‘Interpretation in Visitor Centres’. The study represented an important watershed in the development of evaluative studies of interpretation;

‘This British study occupies a special role in this context...it is an important piece of work because it recognises that the true product of the national park and tourism world is ‘experience’ (Pearce, 1988:105).

The report argued that although early studies of interpretation provided valuable results, none tackled the basic underlying issue of the users experience of visitor centres (DART, 1978). To address this researchers drew on the idea of schemata from the field of cognitive psychology (Neisser, 1967; Gibson, 1969 in DART, 1978). These authors suggested;

‘...that individuals construct functional systems called schemata, that allow them to store information about the environment. As the individual moves in the environment these schemata are constantly being changed and added to in order to accommodate new material. In the visitor centre the individual should be changing the structure of their schemata by active scanning of the display material’ (DART, 1978:8).

It is this recognition of schemata and a grounding in a cognitive approach which sets the DART study apart from the previous display oriented research (Stewart, 1993). The study examined a range of visitor centres across Britain, chosen to vary by size, geographic location, visitor type, organisation and interpretive content of the centre. The pre and post test questionnaire looked at visitor information recall, enjoyment and motivation, and attempted to relate these factors to display variables and visitor
characteristics. Generally the conclusions from the study were vague, but the important finding was that understanding was unrelated to enjoyment since the ranking of the visitor centres for enjoyment was in marked contrast to their ranking for understanding (Pearce, 1988). The authors conceded that;

‘...this does not disprove the theory of the link between learning and enjoyment, but it does suggest that learning and enjoyment do not necessarily go wholly together’ (DART, 1978:44).

A number of subsequent studies investigated interaction between visitors and interpretation looking at how visitors became ‘familiar’ with or were ‘persuaded’ by exhibits (Hammitt, 1981; 1984; Prince, 1982a; Manfredo & Bright, 1991). All of these research approaches (eg schemata, familiarisation and persuasion) tended to assume that visitors were in a constant state of learning. However, not all social and cognitive psychologists assumed this, Pearce (1988) for example, claimed that it was not possible for visitors to process all the information in any environment, instead visitors develop techniques for dealing with complex situations. Moscardo in a number of papers drew on the work of Langer (1987) to suggest that visitors have two modes of dealing with complex social situations - visitors can be ‘mindful’ or ‘mindless’ (Moscardo, 1995a; Moscardo, Ditcham, Huf, Warnett, MacKenzie, 1995; Verbeek & Moscardo, 1996; Moscardo, 1996). A ‘mindless’ state was characterised by mental passivity and behaviour which involved little questioning or processing of new information, while in contrast, a ‘mindful’ state was marked by active mental processing which involved the creation of new cognitive categories. Interpretation, it was argued should aim for the attainment of ‘mindful’ visitor behaviour (Moscardo and Pearce, 1986; Pearce, 1988).

Discussion
The use of cognitive psychology had a number of significant effects on the development of the evaluation of interpretation. The application of psychological concepts has had the effect of broadening the scope of the evaluative research, both in terms of the questions which are posed and the tools which are used to address those questions.

The research questions focus (almost without exception) on the process of learning. It is the recognition of the interaction between visitor and interpretive medium that is the
important direction of the research in this paradigm. The methodological tools of
cognitive evaluative studies remain quantitative but unlike most of the psycho-social
research the cognitive studies are tempered by the occasional use of qualitative measures.
DART (1978) for example used applied observation and Prince (1982a) used participant
observation in a study of visitor centres in the North York Moors.

With these developments in theory and method however, came a raft of other problems.
First, there was an assumption that all visitors learn in the same manner. To treat visitors
as a homogeneous group ignores their diverse backgrounds, values, attitudes and
perceptions. Visitors are likely to have differing learning capabilities, expectations and

Second, the research in this paradigm usually related to a particular interpretive medium,
often resulting in the assessment of the most obvious form of interpretation - the visitor
centre. This approach has therefore failed to assess adequately other forms of
interpretation such as guided walks and trail guides. Equally the approach fails to
acknowledge that interpretive encounters may accrue as the visitor continues to interact
with the interpretation present in the setting. There was no assessment of the combined
effects of site interpretation.

Third, the strong psychological emphasis in cognitive evaluation tends to ignore the
sociological aspects of visitor behaviour in interpretive settings. These aspects may
include for example the influence of socio-demographic variables (such as age and
nationality) and the nature of symbolic interaction⁵ (Blumer, 1969; Wilson, 1980). This
prompted David Uzzell, himself a psychologist, to concede;

‘the emphasis must now be on establishing a social psychological framework for
evaluating informal learning, so that the focus is shifted from individual cognitive
processes to the social and interpersonal aspects of learning’ (Uzzell, 1989b:11).

A theoretical foundation for interpretation based on cognitive psychology addresses
some but not all of the issues which need to be confronted in a meaningful evaluation of

⁵ Symbolic Interaction is a theory of human behaviour developed out of sociology and social psychology. The
underlying premise is that human actions are in part based on things that have shared meaning. Variations in the
spatial behaviour of individuals is thought to be a function of the interaction as members in specific groups (See
Blumer, 1969; Wilson, 1980).
interpretation. The cognitive paradigm does not go far enough. The experiential paradigm discussed next goes beyond the narrow focus of the cognitive paradigm and views interpretation as an experience in the wider tourist setting.

**Experiential Paradigm**

The experiential paradigm is the final category identified by Zube *et al.*, (op cit). In its original context this research paradigm assumed values are based on the experience of the human-environment interaction, whereby both are shaping and being shaped in the interactive process (Kirby & Stuart-Jones, op cit).

Interpretive research influenced by the experiential paradigm emerged initially in the mid-1970s and later in the 1990s (Canter, 1975; MacCannell, 1976; Urry, 1990, 1995; Shields, 1991; Saunders, 1992; Rojek, 1993; Gunn, 1994; Tiley, 1994). The experiential approach to the evaluation of interpretation characteristically involves an in depth study of a small number of individuals to obtain more information on an individual's experience than on general interpretive experiences. The experiential studies place the individual experience above everything else and the interpretive media, which has been the focus of research in the other paradigms, is a secondary consideration. The phenomenological nature of these studies moves the focus of evaluation away from the educational and design features of interpretation and moves into the realms of individual experience of the interpretation. As the focus of the studies shifted to the individual and their experiences, interpretation increasingly became viewed as part of a wider context of a site, of an activity or of a landscape.

Canter (1975) for example, combined theoretical contributions from geography and psychology to develop a model summarising the components necessary for visitors to gain a sense of place for the destination. Interpretation was viewed as integral to the activity component of the model. Similarly MacCannell (1976) argued interpretation, which he termed a 'marker' was an integral feature of the 'structure of the attraction'. This suggestion that visitors experience a site through 'markers' was further discussed by Shields (1991). He argued that interpretation (that he refers to as public discourse) plays
a fundamental role in the ‘obstacle course around which the visitor must circulate’ (Shields, ibid:126).

'Tourists are rarely left to draw their own conclusions about the objects of places before them. Instead they are confronted by a body of public discourse - signs, maps, guides and guidebooks - that repeatably mark the boundaries of significance and value at tourist sites' (Newman, 1988 in Shields, 1991:126).

Later, Saunders (1992) adapted work from communication studies to develop the visitor experience sequence model. He argued that the visitors experience a park through a sequence of experiences, from pre-trip arrival through to post-trip reflections. At each stage specific interpretive needs of visitors were identified. The Concentric Ring Model devised by Gunn (1994) suggested that interpretation was a necessary part of a well planned tourist attraction but was experienced by visitors outside of the core features of the attraction.

Tiley (1994) who referred to interpretation as a form of ‘narrative’ suggested that; 'narratives establish bonds between people and features of the landscape such as mountains, creating guidance for activity.' Narratives in their simplest form involve a story and a storyteller.

'Stories organise walks, making a journey as the feet perform it, organising places by means of the displacements that are described. They are part of a human labour that transforms an abstract homogenous space into place - 'you go round the corner, turn left and you'll see...’ In other words the story is a discursive articulation of a spatialising practice' (Tiley, 1994:34) [emphasis mine].

Collectively, although somewhat diverse, these examples of an experiential approach to evaluation takes the research beyond the S-R and models of learning that were previously discussed and addresses basic questions about interpretation.

- Where is interpretation found?
- What form does interpretation take?
- What role does interpretation perform?
- How is interpretation experienced?
- What does interpretation do to people and place?


Discussion

The research in the experiential paradigm is important because it focuses on the setting and the visitor experience of that setting, rather than on the interpretive media (psychosocial paradigm) or learning processes (cognitive paradigm). This means that the phenomenon of interpretation is studied within the context of the very place which it interprets and from the experience of the individual user of interpretation. It is this infinitely variable, individual experience of place which, as will be discussed shortly, is particularly pertinent to the current study.

Explicit reference is made to theory in the experiential paradigm. As Zube et al., (op cit) pointed out both the cognitive and experiential paradigms tend to contain more explicit theoretical links than the psycho-social paradigm. This reference to theory raises questions that have been omitted by other research paradigms, such as;

- What role does interpretation play in the context of the place?
- How does interpretation exist beyond the visitor centre?
- How and why does interpretation depict the place in a particular form and in a particular manner?

Despite these many contributions there are a number of reservations about the studies reviewed in the experiential paradigm. Although the experiential studies incorporate interpretation, they seem only to provide commentary on it, rarely do they go one step further and analyse the particular role interpretation plays either in the setting or for the visitor. Interpretation is marginalised in these studies as their authors focus on other questions.

Another frustrating aspect of these studies is the issue of methodology, it seems that those studies which provide the most insightful commentary on the role of interpretation do little to advance methods, as in these studies there are no explanations of the methods used (eg: Shields, 1991; Tiley, 1994). The reader is left questioning how to approach the research as none of the studies suggest appropriate ways to evaluate interpretation from an experiential perspective.
Synthesis of the Paradigms

The Zube et al., (op cit) framework has been particularly useful to review both the collective contributions and the collective omissions of the research in the field of interpretive evaluation. The review of research in the psycho-social, cognitive and experiential paradigm has illustrated that interpretation has been evaluated from an array of research perspectives. The psycho-social paradigm has evaluated interpretation as a stimulus - ie as a medium to present information; the cognitive paradigm has evaluated interpretation as an individual cognitive learning process; and the experiential paradigm has evaluated interpretation as a feature of the setting. The evaluation research, as is shown in Figure 5 has contributed to our current understanding of the theory, method and practice of interpretation.

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Figure 5: Summary of Collective Contributions to Interpretation by Paradigms.

The synthesis of the literature suggests that despite twenty years of research little is known about interpretation. Even in areas where research has been the strongest - such as testing the educational effectiveness of interpretation - we are not much further on than knowing that people don’t learn a great deal from interpretation. At present the
interpretive evaluation research appears to be based on the psycho-social and cognitive paradigms, only occasionally are interpretive studies based on the experiential paradigm and these, it appears, are only incidental. Through this synthesis of research paradigms a number of omissions in the existing evaluative research can be identified.

- The focus of the evaluation of interpretation is on the transfer of information from the display to the visitor and this fails to capture the wider principles of interpretation. Typically educational attainment is only one of a host of interpretive objectives, yet visitor recall of display content has been, almost without exception the major determinant of the effectiveness of interpretation. This approach ignores the scope of interpretation to provoke thought, to reveal meanings, to relate experience, to make places meaningful, to create place identity and to provide an enjoyable learning environment.

- The focus of the evaluation on the effectiveness of individual displays usually results in the assessment of the most obvious form of interpretation - the visitor centre. This approach often fails therefore to assess other forms of interpretation such as guided walks.

- The existing evaluative research fails to acknowledge that interpretive encounters may accrue as the visitor continues to interact with the interpretation present in the setting. There appears to be no assessment of the combined effects of site interpretation.

- Most of the interpretation that has been evaluated is provided by organisations similar to DOC in New Zealand and the National Park Service in the US. This tends to ignore how interpretive encounters are present in a much wider form. Visitors are likely to pick up information and interpretation about the site in different ways, from interpretation yielded through activity in other recreational pursuits such as guided climbs and through participation in commercial activities such as scenic flights.

- Equally visitors may pick up information and interpretation about the site at different times. These times are not necessarily limited to the periods spent at the site, but may
occur prior to arrival, on departure or even later once the visitors’ journey has ended. For example this may include commentary offered on coach journeys to and from the site or post trip reflections on photographs and guide books, all of which may fulfil important interpretive needs of visitors. The evaluation approaches have yet to view the experience of interpretation in these wider terms.

- Most evaluation tends to treat ‘visitors’ as a homogeneous group and generally ignores visitors’ diverse backgrounds, values, attitudes and perceptions. This means that visitors will have differing interpretive needs, differing expectations and differing perceptions of the subject of interpretation.

- The traditional approach focuses on those visitors who experience the interpretation, in doing so this often ignores the non-users of interpretation. The evaluation therefore does not provide insight as to why interpretation fails to meet the needs of some visitor groups.

The collective shortcomings of the evaluation studies to date can be summarised as:
1. Failing to capture the wider principles of interpretation.
2. Failing to evaluate all forms of interpretation.
3. Failing to acknowledge that visitors learn about the place in different ways and times.
4. Failing to recognise that visitors have diverse backgrounds.
5. Failing to identify the non-users of interpretation.

Chapter Summary
This chapter has reviewed studies which have attempted to evaluate interpretation by using an organisational framework developed by Zube et al., (1982). The nature of these studies varied between and within each paradigm.

It is clear that interpretation is not fully understood or explored - the evaluation of interpretation is complex and inchoate. It is also clear that the field is open to the development of new approaches to the evaluation of interpretation. The experiential paradigm, which focuses on the actual site that is being interpreted and the people who
experience that site, appears to provide a rich theoretical direction for the evaluation of interpretation. The site or place could be the critical, all encompassing, notion which may help us understand the relationship between the site that is interpreted and those who visit it. The following chapter therefore, building on the experiential paradigm, explores the idea that theories of place may be useful to help us understand more fully the relationship between visitors, interpretation and the site. The theories of place are reviewed before presenting the approach to evaluation used in this study.
CHAPTER FOUR

'The things of the World cannot be known except through a knowledge of the places in which they are contained.'


PLACE - A THEORETICAL DIRECTION FOR EVALUATION

Chapter Outline

Place is argued to be a critical theoretical dimension in the evaluation of interpretation because it captures, in a holistic way, the inter-relationships, complexities and variabilities between visitors, their experience and the site that is being interpreted. This chapter reviews the theories of place and makes explicit the connections between people, place and interpretation.

Place and Interpretation

A meaningful, practical and purposeful evaluation of interpretation which explores the connections between place and interpretation has yet to be devised. The previous chapter suggested that studies based on the psycho-social paradigm have attempted to evaluate the educational effectiveness of interpretation, while studies based on the cognitive paradigm have focused on visitor's learning processes. Some recent work however in the experiential paradigm has connected place and interpretation (eg: Shields, 1991; Tiley, 1994; Prentice 1996, Uzzell, 1996).

The work by Prentice (1996) used the notion of insight to connect interpretation and place. He referred to insight - a perception into the character of a thing - as the learning experience received by most visitors when they visit a place. The facilitation of insight is usually attempted through the explicit interpretation of aspects of the place to the visitor.

'As a tourism product, interpretation may be defined as the facilitation of insight through the identification and explanation of what may be seen or imagined at a place. In shorthand, tourism interpretation, is the interpretation of place' (Prentice, 1996:55) [emphasis mine].
Prentice (ibid) identified that interpretation can take place at different levels;

'interpretation] most simply is pointing out what may be significant in that which is being viewed. More elaborately, interpretation may enhance the experience of a place, and may prompt wonder. More elaborately still, interpretation can facilitate the understanding of the social, economic and physical environmental systems inherent in place. Interpretation should provide as a minimum a metaphorical window on the world present, past or imagined futures, through which the visitor may at least gaze, and hopefully, think about what is presented at or of a place' (Prentice, 1996:55) [emphasis mine].

The proposition that interpretation might give insight to place is an exciting one, suggesting opportunities for a fuller, richer understanding of what interpretation can and cannot achieve.

Uzzell (1996) has undertaken what appears to be the first evaluation of museum interpretation in the context of place. Drawing on social identity theory, he attempted to assess the effectiveness of a museum in contributing to visitors' sense of place and awareness of a town's heritage. The results from this quantitative study in Guildford (UK) have illustrated that only certain aspects of the displays were responsible for this effect - in particular those displays concentrating on the people and activities of the town rather than displays on the built heritage.

'If museums and interpretive centres see their role as one of telling people about place, the past and their position in both, then they should also be about enhancing people's sense of identity with place and the past. Museums have an important role to play in this process and...can help people to acquire a sense of identity and a sense of place' (Uzzell, 1996:228).

Uzzell (ibid) makes the case for a more theory driven and place oriented approach to research in heritage interpretation. Although this empirical study was undertaken in a museum setting rather than in a field setting, this work suggests place should drive the theoretical approach to evaluation. The following section of this chapter explores place in the context of this thesis and by doing so provides the theoretical direction and guides the specific research questions for the subsequent evaluation of interpretation at Mount Cook National Park.
A Place Perspective

The disciplines of geography, psychology and sociology have been the traditional home for the study of place (eg: Lynch, 1960; Tuan, 1971, 1974, 1975, 1980; Relph, 1976, 1985; Pred, 1983; Eyles, 1985; Seamon & Mugeraurer, 1985; Violich, 1985; Walter, 1988; Agnew and Duncan, 1989). The work of Tuan in the 1970s is considered to form the foundations of our current understanding of place. He stated that ‘place’ is ‘a unique ensemble of traits that merits study in its own right’ (Tuan, 1974:234).

‘Place may be said to have a spirit or a personality, but only human beings can have a sense of place. People demonstrate their sense of place when they apply their moral and aesthetic discernment to sites and locations’ (Tuan, 1974:241).

Place has an extraordinary range of meanings (Entrikin, 1991; Harvey, 1993). There are all sorts of words and phrases associated with place; words such as: location and landscape; neighbourhood and national park; town and territory; and phrases such as: our place in the world; the place of religion in society; the place we call home; and the place we have in the affections of others.

‘...land isn’t a static thing that I can happily describe as ‘slightly weathered glacial outwash gravel till, quaternary formation’... (Though those quotations do hold a strange fascination: they say so much - age and structure and process - yet so little about what each place really is)’ (Hulme, 1987a:1 cited in Kirby, 1993: 119) [emphasis mine].

Entrikin (op cit) has suggested that this range of meanings can be reconciled by weaving them into a continuum where place can be both objectively knowable (from its features and climate) and subjectively knowable (from the senses it provokes) at the same time.

‘Place is neither totally objective nor totally subjective but as consisting of two irreducible parts - place as the relative location of objects in the world and place as a meaningful context of human action’ (Entrikin, 1991:10) [emphasis mine].

This complexity has lead Harvey (op cit: 4) to suggest that, ‘place has to be one of the most multi-layered words in our language.’ It is because place is multi-faceted and complex in its application that it promises a wealth of rich theoretical ideas and directions to help us understand more substantially what interpretation can and cannot achieve for people who visit a place and what interpretation does or does not do in a place.
In recent years interest in place has increased in areas other than in its traditional disciplinary homes of sociology, psychology and geography. Other social sciences have developed a substantive body of literature utilising a place approach, for example, within the study of parks, recreation and tourism increasing use has been made of a place approach since the mid 1980s. A number of studies from outdoor recreation research (McCool, Stankey & Clarke, 1985; Fishwick and Vining, 1992; Williams, Patterson, Roggenbuck & Watson, 1992; Sutton, 1992; Smeaton, 1993; Horn, 1994) and heritage management research (Datel and Dingemans, 1984; Pearce, 1988, 1986, 1991; Hall and McArthur, 1993; Kirby, 1993, 1996; Quidding, 1995; Quigg, 1993; Whittle, 1993) illustrate the diverse application of a place approach in the field of parks, recreation and tourism.

Outdoor recreation research has used a place approach to examine attachment to outdoor recreation settings (eg: McCool et al., 1985; Williams et al., 1992; Fishwick and Vining, 1991).

‘The setting is the context within which recreation takes place and it can facilitate or hinder not only the activities that occur but also the quality of the recreation experience’ (McCool et al., 1985:1).

Williams et al., (op cit) suggested that a place approach captures the connections between people and geographic areas directly rather than establishing such connections indirectly in the form of use and user characteristics. They highlighted that a place perspective reminds us that recreation planning tends to emphasise the economic and ecological values of place while the emotional, symbolic values of place are often ignored. Williams et al., (ibid) concluded that a place approach;

‘...demonstrates that places are not just the sum of interchangeable attributes, but whole entities valued in their entirety. Sense of place recognises that resources are not only raw materials, but places with histories, places that people care about, places that for many embody a sense of belonging and purpose that gives meaning to life...’ (Williams et al., 1992:43).
Similarly, Fishwick and Vining (1992) used place to examine the intentions of visitors to outdoor recreation sites. Recreation places they concluded are experienced as a combination of setting, routine, personal experience and in context with other places.

A place perspective has also been used in heritage management research (Datel and Dingemans, 1984; Pearce, 1988; Hall and McArthur, 1993; Kirby, 1993, 1996; Quigg, 1993; Whittle, 1993). Datel and Dingemans (op cit) have suggested that those interested in understanding place do well to investigate historic preservation, a process whose self stated goal is maintaining a traditional sense of place, while on the other hand, those who wish to understand why and what people preserve need to elucidate the sense of place that inspires their subject.

'Sense of place refers to a complex bundle of meanings, symbols and qualities that a person or group associates (consciously or unconsciously) with a particular locality or region. This bundle derives not only from direct contact with the place, but from many other experiences and from literary and artistic portrayals' (Datel and Dingemans, 1984:135).

The maintenance of a particular sense of place was also the focus of the study by Quigg (1993) who examined the meanings of back country huts on the West Coast of New Zealand. In her analysis she drew on the place literature, noting that huts instilled a sense of place because visitors associated emotions, experiences and events with their location. Similarly, Whittle (1993) used the ideas of place to inform her study of heritage management with case studies in Christchurch and Auckland, New Zealand.

Given the burgeoning interest in place in the social sciences, and in particular in the study of parks, recreation and tourism it is surprising that only in very recent years have commentators in the interpretive field started to acknowledge the relationship between place and interpretation (eg: Glen, 1995; Prentice, 1996, Uzzell, 1996). I want to explore the theoretical contributions of place perspectives further to make the connections between place and interpretation explicit. However because the study of place is now so large it is necessary to identify those particular perspectives of place that are pertinent to this study. The space-place relationship, the influences on sense of place and the variance of place have been selected. The reasons for this selection and the contributions
they make to this evaluation of interpretation are discussed in the remainder of the chapter.

**Space - Place Relationship**

A number of authors have suggested that a setting is not just a space, a static backdrop in front of which people recreate, but is a place, a meaningful dynamic context within which human action unfolds (Tuan, 1971; 1974; 1975; Altmann & Wohllwill, 1977; Cosgrove, 1984; Relph, 1985; Perkins, 1988c; Williams & Carr, 1993). The distinction made in this study between *space* and *place* is important. Mowl and Towner (1995) have made this distinction explicit by suggesting that *space* has distinct, physical and real dimensions which are measurable, have clear boundaries and can be identified on a map, while *place* on the other hand, has dimensions which are perceptually and socially produced. As Relph (1985:26) has confirmed;

> ‘space and landscape are seen by everyone, no matter what the purpose. Places, on the other hand, ...are constructed in our memories and affections through repeated encounters and complex associations’.

The literature has suggested that a *space* becomes *place* for people when it is enriched with meaning (Tuan, 1971; 1974; 1975; Altmann & Wohllwill, 1977; Cosgrove, 1984; Relph, 1985; Perkins, 1988c).

> ‘Space and landscape features are considered to become meaningful and made into places as a result of individual human activity associated with them’ (Perkins, 1988c:62).

Spaces become ‘centres of felt meaning’ when what begins as undifferentiated space becomes place (Tuan, 1975). A space therefore is not a place until we make it one. The relationship between space and place varies according to different individuals and as a consequence the same space can be different places to different people at the same time (Perkins, 1988c; Mowl & Towner, 1995). In this study I have termed this the space-place relationship. It is the process of transforming *space into place* which has a clear connection with interpretation. It is one of the principle aims of interpretation to transform a *space* so that it becomes a *place* of meaning for visitors. ‘The goal of transforming space into place through interpretation is imperative’ (Prentice, pers comm., 1996).
It seems important therefore to evaluate interpretation with an understanding of the way interpretation might transform a space into a place. Only when this aim of transformation is acknowledged can we begin to evaluate the place related aspects of interpretation and evaluate the potential of interpretation to:

- *bridge from a space to a place;*
- *enhance the enjoyment of a place;*
- *contribute to an understanding of the importance of place;*
- *convey the meanings of place and;*
- *facilitate attitudinal or behavioural change towards a place.*

**Influences on Sense of Place**

The transformation of undifferentiated space into meaningful place is thought to be derived from a unique set of factors (Pred, 1983; Eyles, 1985; Violich, 1985; Sutton, 1992).

'Sense of place if taken to mean more than the (positive or negative) 'feel' for a place or places which is based on the individual's experiences of those places is also seen as being derived from the totality of an individual's life' (Eyles, 1985:2).

A synthesis of this work has indicated that there are five main areas which influence people's sense of place. The combination of these factors is thought to form the basis of an individual's sense of place. These influences are summarised as:

1. **Natural Influences**

   Sense of place is thought to be influenced by a variety of natural sources, amongst others these may include; topography such as mountains, lowland or coast; physical features such as glaciers, waterfalls or coves; vegetation type such as rainforest, deciduous woodland or scrub. Other natural factors may include; climatic conditions, presence of wildlife, soil types, land use and geology (Violich, 1985; Sutton, 1992).
2. **Built Influences**

Sense of place is thought to be influenced by a range of built sources, amongst others these may include; built features such as bridges, churches or dams; heritage sites such as monuments, stone circles or castles; and amongst others features of the vernacular landscape such as housing style, road layout and building materials (Violich, 1985).

3. **Cultural Influences**

Sense of place is thought to be influenced by a variety of cultural sources, amongst others these may include; nationality, language, cultural upbringing, place of residency, customs, cultural norms and expectations and nature of society (ie collective or individual) (Violich, 1985; Sutton, 1992).

4. **Individual Influences**

Sense of place is thought to be influenced by a variety of individual sources, amongst others these may include; biological characteristics such as age and gender; lifestyle characteristics such as socio-economic status and stage in life cycle; psychological factors such as perception, attitude, values and beliefs; and personal interests such as employment, field of study and leisure activities (Pred, 1983; Eyles, 1985).

5. **Interpretive Influences**

Sense of place is suggested to be influenced by a variety of interpretive sources, amongst others these include; interpretive infrastructure such as information centres, publications and on site panels (Uzzell, 1996).

This synthesis of place studies has indicated that ‘...places derive human meanings from more than the conditions of the physical environment; such meanings arise through the social groups present and the myriad of behavioural settings superimposed upon the physical terrain’ (Cheek, Field & Burdge, 1978:13).
Variance in Sense of Place

A number of authors have developed typologies which categorised different senses of place (Tuan, 1974; Eyles, 1985; Perkins, 1988a; Sutton, 1992; Smeaton, 1993). These authors have suggested that sense of place varies for each individual and also that the same person may have a different sense for a place at a different time.

‘Different life style and different life cycle groups and social classes may have differing senses of place for the same location’ (Perkins, 1988a:286).

For example Tuan (1974) has coined two terms to describe how people sense or perceive a place - a ‘public symbol’ and a ‘field of care’ sense of place. A public symbol sense of place can be seen and known from the outside, commanding attention and even awe. The meaning is visual or aesthetic, discerning the perceived beauty of places. The public symbol is relatively easy to identify by external criteria, such as their structure. Sacred places, formal gardens and monuments as examples of places which provoke a public symbol sense of place (Tuan, 1974).

In contrast to a public symbol sense of place, people can also develop what Tuan (ibid) has termed a field of care sense of place. A field of care sense of place carries few signs that declares its nature; it can be known in essence only from within, it utilises senses such as hearing, smelling, tasting and touching, which require contact with a place for a considerable time. Due to the infinite variability of place the nature of the field of care sense of place is far from simple and is not easily identified by external criteria. However, Tuan (ibid) exemplified a field of care sense of place by reference to the sense arising from places such as the home and the neighbourhood.

This distinction between the public symbol and the field of care sense of place usefully highlights the difference between visiting a place briefly and appreciating its beauty, as opposed to living in a place and getting to know its characteristics through prolonged association, which leads to a feeling of care towards that place.

‘It is possible to appreciate the visual qualities of a town in an afternoon’s tour (ie public symbol sense of place) but to know the town’s characteristic odours and sounds, the textures of its pavements and walls, requires a far longer period of contact (ie field of care sense of place)’ (Tuan, 1974:235) [Emphasis Mine].
There are some important connections to interpretation that can be drawn from this work by Tuan (ibid). It appears that interpretation, acting as a vehicle, aims to move visitors from a public symbol sense of place (i.e., the visual qualities of a place) towards a field of care sense of place. The field of care sense of place appears to equate in essence, to what interpretation aims to achieve. Interpretation aims to take visitors one step beyond wherever they happen to be when they arrive in a place so that empathy or ‘care’ is developed towards the conservation of that place, and sequentially to other places throughout the world.

Later, Eyles (1985) described nine dominant senses of place which he identified from a study of residents in a small English Town. These senses are summarised in Figure 6.

1. **Social Sense of Place**
   Social ties and interactions have place significance and place on the other hand has social significance. Place is seen in terms of family, neighbours and friends.

2. **Apathetic/Acquisitive Sense of Place**
   This group includes those people who don’t appear to have a sense about a place.

3. **Nostalgic Sense of Place**
   These people are oriented to the past. Feelings about past people or events are the main factors determining their feelings about the present place.

4. **Commodity Sense of Place**
   People treat places like any other commodity which can be traded or exchanged for a more ideal place. These people search for a good place to live in.

5. **Platform Sense of Place**
   These people see place as a stage upon which they act out their lives. They seek out people like themselves to form social relationships with place as a backdrop.

6. **Family Sense of Place**
   Family relationships and connections are most important to these people.

7. **Way of Life Sense of Place**
   The place holds the person’s whole way of life; their jobs, friends and associational life.

8. **Roots Sense of Place**
   Family ties to the place provide a sense of continuity or tradition.

9. **Environmental Sense of Place**
   Aesthetic experience of the countryside determines their feelings about a place.

Figure 6: Sense of Place Typology (Adapted from Eyles, 1985).
The work by Eyles (ibid) is important because it identifies distinction between individual senses of place and indicates that experiences of place vary. However, this typology was generated from research into peoples sense for their place of residence. It has been only recently that this typology has been modified and applied to the tourist setting (Sutton, 1992; Smeaton, 1993).

The work by Sutton (1992) is pertinent to the current study because he drew on the work of Eyles (op cit) to devise his own sense of place typology based on interviews with visitors to Kapiti Island, New Zealand.¹ This typology can be seen in diagrammatic form in Figure 7 below.

![Figure 7: Kapiti Island Sense of Place Typology - Adapted from Sutton, 1992.](image)

The contribution made by Sutton (ibid) and his Kapiti Island sense of place typology is significant to the current study in a number of ways; first, the typology has been generated from a New Zealand case study; second, the typology is derived from a tourist setting; and third, the typology recognised that individual senses of place are not absolute, rather the boundaries between the sense of place categorises are viewed as being blurred.

¹ Kapiti is an Island off the South-West coast of New Zealand's North Island. Wellington is the nearest main centre.
Visitors will not be confined in their understanding of Kapiti to simply one of these categories. A mix of these categories would be expected. An individual may possess varying degrees of each major type. A sense of place for each individual will be a unique mix of such senses of place’ (Sutton, 1992:73).

A synthesis of literature on the variance of place (Tuan, 1974; Eyles, 1985; Perkins, 1988a; 1988c; Sutton, 1992; Smeaton, 1993) has yielded a number of important connections for the current study. These authors have indicated that visitors are not a homogeneous group and come with a range of senses about a place and that these can range from those who have no or a limited sense about a place to those who have considered the aesthetic qualities of the place. It is more likely visitors will exhibit a composite sense of place. The variance in sense of place raises possible questions for this study;

- Does interpretation contribute to a sense of place for short stay first time visitors?
- Does interpretation consolidate or modify a particular sense of place?
- Does interpretation enhance particular sense(s) of place?
- Does interpretation move visitors towards a field of care sense of place?

Chapter Summary

The theories of place provide a compelling direction for the evaluation of interpretation. The discussion in this chapter about the space-place relationship, the sources of sense of place and the variance in sense of place have all made some connection to the study of interpretation. These connections have rarely been made explicit either in the place literature or the interpretation literature. These connections can be summarised as;

- Interpretation is thought to mediate the relationship between space and place.
- Sense of place is derived from a variety of sources. The components of sense of place may be influenced by; natural; built; cultural; individual and interpretive sources.
- Sense of place may vary for each individual, at different times and in different places.
- Interpretation may give insight to place on a number of levels; interpretation may point to the significance of place; enhance the experience of place; facilitate understanding of place conservation.
The concept of 'place' appears to usefully express the complex relationships between people, interpretation and the sites they visit in a holistic and integrative way. Place appears to emerge at a number of critical stages of the current study; place is sometimes used to look at the characteristics of the interpretive media itself, the filter between the people and the setting; and place is sometimes used to examine how visitors experience the place which is the focus of the interpretation at Mount Cook National Park. It is this experiential focus of place, that is how people articulate, express and give meaning to the places they visit which is seen as being the key to this evaluation of interpretation.
CHAPTER FIVE

'Mehemea ka tuoho ahau me maunga tei -
If I should bow my head let it be to a high mountain'

Maori Proverb

Plate 4: Aoraki/Mount Cook (by the Author).

CASE STUDY - MOUNT COOK NATIONAL PARK

Chapter Outline

This chapter moves towards an understanding of the place, Mount Cook National Park, which is at the focus of the evaluation of interpretation of this study. Mount Cook is described as a significant place with many meanings which range from the objective to the subjective. Legislation, policy directives and management plans are briefly discussed to illustrate the obligation DOC has to interpret this significant place. Because DOC and other interpretive providers often have public responsibility to interpret (Conservation Act, 1987), it is necessary to know how interpretation has enhanced visitors’ senses of place. This overarching question forms the platform upon which the specific research questions are developed.

Mount Cook National Park

Mount Cook National Park can be described as many different places, both objectively, through for example its physical features and subjectively, through for example the experiential meanings it holds (see Entrikin, 1991). This section introduces some of these aspects.
The location maps (see Plates 5 & 6) outline the objective boundaries of the park; 700sq km bounded for 65km along the Southern Alps from the Butler to the Ben Ohau Range. The maps also provide a flavour of the topographical features of the park. More than a third of the park is covered in permanent snow and glacial ice and out of the 27 mountains in New Zealand over 3050m (10,000ft) 22 are in the national park, Aoraki/Mount Cook being the highest at 3755m. From these mountains flow five major glaciers, the Tasman Glacier (which is the longest at 29km), the Murchison, the Mueller, the Godley, and the Hooker Glaciers (Kerr, Sharpe & Gough, 1986).

This objective description of the place however excludes important and multiple subjective meanings associated with Mount Cook National Park. Both the natural and the cultural landscapes of the park have significant value to Maori and Pakeha¹, and to overseas visitors.

'The mountain, Aoraki, is valued spiritually by Kai Tahu, the indigenous Maori people who live under its mantle. Visitors to the South Island and recreationists value the same mountain, they refer to as Mount Cook, for scenic reasons or as a climbing and skiing challenge. The tourist industry values the mountain commercially as a vital national tourist attraction' (Hayward, 1993:224).

The landscapes of the national park have high cultural significance for Maori, and in particular for the Kai Tahu² people, for whom the mountains of the park are seen as their ancestors, with Aoraki/Mount Cook holding particular significance (see Anderson, 1983; Brailsford, 1984 for a fuller discussion). In the whakapapa that Kai Tahu inherited from the Waitaha people, who first settled Te Waipounamu, Aoraki is not just the highest mountain in New Zealand/Aotearoa, but a God, the first born son of Raiki the sky parent. The Kai Tahu Te Whakatau Kaupapa (Resource Management Strategy for the Canterbury Region) has stated;

'In a modern context, Aoraki has become the unifying symbol of Kai Tahu Whanau and is the one paramount image which signifies the tribe as a whole' (Tau, Goodall, Palmer & Tau, 1990: 4-36).

¹ See Glossary (after reference list) for definitions and interpretations of these and the following Maori terms.
² Kai Tahu dialect 'K' is used in place of North Island 'Ng' throughout this thesis.
Plate 5: Location Map of Mount Cook National Park (Source: DLS, 1991).
Plate 6: Map of Mount Cook Village (reproduced with permission by the Hermitage).
Plate 7: Map of Walks in Mount Cook National Park.
Equally, the recreational, scenic and mountain adventure opportunities associated with the park have significance to Pakeha and international visitors. The mountain, Aoraki/Mount Cook has become an icon for these opportunities and activities in New Zealand/Aotearoa (see Plate 7). The number of both domestic and international visitors to the park is disputed, but the total number of visits per year is thought to exceed 200,000 (Kerr, et al., 1986; DOC, 1992; Eden, 1995). It has been estimated that 30 per cent of visitors are domestic who visit as families, couples or school trips over the summer months, (notably in January) and throughout the year for trampers and climbers (Contours, 1992). The remaining 70 per cent of visitors are from overseas, principally from USA, Japan, Germany and Australia (Kerr, et al., 1986).

Mount Cook National Park can be described as a significant place, which in addition to its dramatic alpine landscapes has deep meaning for the people of Aotearoa/New Zealand and for those who visit from overseas. Under the 1952 National Parks Act these outstanding scenic, conservation and recreation values were recognised and designated in 1953 as Mount Cook National Park. Worldwide recognition of the park came in 1985 when there were two separate World Heritage Area designations - Westland/Mount Cook National Parks and Fiordland National Park - which were later approved in 1986. In 1989, there was a new nomination - Te Waahipounamu or South Westland New Zealand World Heritage Area which also included Mount Aspiring National Park and more than one million hectares of other conservation land - which was accepted in 1990. Te Waahipounamu joined 300 other places on the World Heritage list as significant in terms of its contribution to the global natural and cultural heritage (DOC, 1989b).

**Interpretation at Mount Cook**

Interpretation at Mount Cook has a long history and can be traced to the completion of the first Hermitage hotel in 1885. This simple cob building spawned a tourist package including transport, accommodation, information and mountain guiding. These mountain guides were probably among the first interpreters in New Zealand. By the time the Hermitage hotel was rebuilt in 1914, the provision of information and interpretation was integral to visitors’ experiences of Mount Cook, be it a guided walk on the Mueller Glacier or a bus trip to the Tasman Valley (see Hilgendorf, 1932;
Pascoe, 1957; Wilson, 1968; Green, 1976; Pearce, 1980; Stevenson, 1984; Temple, 1985; Holm, 1992 as texts on the history of the Aoraki/Mount Cook region).

In more recent times Government commitment to interpretation has been formalised though legislation, policy directives and management plans. With reference to such policies the following section briefly traces the history of interpretation at Mount Cook. The first formal, although ambiguous recognition that interpretation was, at this time a Department of Lands and Survey (DLS) responsibility came with the 1952 National Parks Act. The act enunciated the twin responsibilities to fulfil a conservation and a recreational role (Harper, 1991). At Mount Cook work began by building the park headquarters which was opened in 1961 (see Plate 8). At the opening the Minister of Lands, Hon. Gerard commented;

‘the new building has a vital part to play in the educational process as it is designed to function as a centre where visitors can see displays, hear talks, and generally obtain information from park rangers about the park and its features. In national park circles this is aptly called park interpretation’ [MCB 6/14 - Vol.1 - 1961-63] (Report on the Official Opening of Mount Cook Park Headquarters - 28/10/61 - Tourist and Publicity Department).

In 1963 staff from the Canterbury Museum planned the display cabinets and displays. A variety of artefacts including, ice axes, journals and rock, mammal and bird specimens were collected. A number of other interpretive projects were also established; a park handbook, a range of leaflets and a summer nature programme were developed.

1 Major alterations to the building came in 1973 and 1975 and at the current time of writing a further alteration is being made to the visitor centre.

4 This reference is an accession code used by the National Archive Library and is adopted in this thesis to identify the source files from which material is located. For a full description of the source file see accession list in the reference section.
‘Right from the inception of the Board in 1955, members have been conscious of the need for a handbook to inform the public of the attractions of the park. The Board is publishing this small volume for popular use from script supplied by its own members and officers. Although Mount Cook is essentially a park of mountains and glaciers, national parks are for all the people and the Board is concerned to cater for the average citizen with his wife and children as well as for climbers, skiers and visitors from overseas. This handbook may help to interpret the park to people and increase their enjoyment of the mountain features’ [MCB 16/2](Forward to 1959 edition of Mount Cook Handbook by T.W. Preston - Chairman of Mount Cook Park Board).

In 1964 a holiday programme was devised, including guided walks and evening slide shows. By the end of 1967 the walks were attracting on average 20 visitors while the slide shows had an average audience of 50.

‘The emphasis was on half-day walks. These were informally run. People met in the park headquarters. I told them I would point out the things of particular interest while they should feel free to ask questions. On most of the walks those attending showed great interest in the natural features and asked intelligent questions, though many of the people did not notice things until shown. Some were rather disinterested, but these were in the minority. The slide shows stimulated many questions on the walks’ [MCB 16/6] (Report by H. Wilson on the Holiday Programme - 1966-7).

Essentially these projects developed in the 1960s form the basis of the interpretation we still see, and in some cases, such as for the summer programmes (which ended in 1995-1996) are superior to the interpretive provision at Mount Cook today. When this early interpretation was designed by DLS it was done so with the implicit belief that it would give meaning to the place and enhance visitors enjoyment and experience of Mount Cook National Park (see MCB 1 - 19 park files). Epitomised by the collection of specimens for the first display panels in the park headquarters the emphasis was to interpret the natural history of the park.

The explicit role of interpretation at this time therefore was to enhance, what Eyles (1985) has termed an environmental sense of place. As the interpretation was developed in subsequent years other senses of place have appeared to be enhanced; including a nostalgic sense of place (Eyles, ibid) through reference to the efforts of early mountaineers and a cultural/ancestral sense of place (Sutton, 1993) through reference to
Maori mythology. Both senses are, and have been, evident in displays, guide books and audio visuals.

The first time that interpretation was subject to formal planning at Mount Cook was in the 1970s, when shortly after the park headquarters had been expanded, the Assistant Supervisor of National Parks (Interpretation) decided that...‘to help get the utmost out of the new building I would like to visit the park to prepare and discuss an interpretation brief’ (MCB6/14/1). However despite this, the specific role of interpretation was not outlined until the draft national park management plan was produced in 1978, where it was finally proclaimed that;

‘Interpretation of scenic, scientific and historic features assists a visitor to benefit from a visit to the park. Interpretive services will include conducted walks and trips, publications, nature walks, visual aids and displays’ (DOC, 1978).

Interpretation was viewed as consistent with the mandate established in the strengthened 1980 National Parks Act (Harper, 1991) which stated that the public shall have freedom of access to the parks; ‘so that they may receive in full measure the inspiration, enjoyment, recreation and other benefits that may be derived from mountains, forests, sounds, seacoasts, lakes, rivers and other natural features’ (NP 1980 4.(2) (e)). Public use was conditional on maintaining the preservation of the park (NP 1980 S4.(2) (e)).

The Policy Statements issued by the National Park Authority in 1964, 1978 and by the National Parks and Reserves Authority in 1983 made specific reference to the provision of interpretation (NPA, 1978 in Harper, 1991:76). The 1964 policy statement encouraged the use of visitors centres as the focus of park interpretation (exemplified at Mount Cook). However, although the statement recognised interpretation as a park role it gave no indication of how to go about this or maintain this role (Harper, 1991). This was redressed in the 1978 Policy Statement which encouraged the development of individual interpretive plans. Although an effort was made to do this at Mount Cook as early as 1972 a more substantial document was not written until 1991.

The 1983 Policy Directive placed responsibly for interpretive decisions with individual park managers and its role, significance and implementation was encouraged to be
included into individual Park Management Plans. The Mount Cook Management Plan (1981) similar to the previous plan of 1978 stated the need of an Interpretation Plan to guide provision but this did not materialise until 1991. The 1989 Park Management Plan was the first document which made specific reference to interpretation under DOC, the new Department which had been created from a merger of the NZFS and DLS in 1987. DOC viewed interpretation at this time as a tool to advocate the conservation message and this was enshrined in its functions outlined in the 1987 Conservation Act. Under this guise, interpretation was discussed in the 1989 Mount Cook Management Plan with far more detail and direction that had previously been the case:

- the bulk of the interpretation will take place in the visitor centre. All published information on the park will be dispensed from the visitor centre or from concessionaire buildings;
- interpretive activities will primarily be signposting of roads and tracks, erection of display boards at points of interest, guided tours as part of holiday programmes, concessionaire operations and educational visits;
- outdoor displays will be eye catching and informative in their design, yet not too intrusive on the landscape in their location. As far as possible they will be able to withstand the rigours of the climate, and be difficult to vandalise;
- guiding of visitors around the park on interpretive tours can be by park staff or by concessionaires, provided that where a concessionaire is providing an adequate service, park staff will not seek to duplicate that service. DOC may charge a fee or seek donations for tours led by park staff;
- advertising and promotional signs outside a concessionaire area will not be permitted. The cooperation of the National Roads Board, Ministry of Transport and Automobile association will be sought to position interpretive signs giving information about the village and other park facilities, on the side of State Highway 80;
- the cooperation of concessionaires will be sought to use the opportunities available to them during their approved activities to promote the safe and enjoyable use of the park, and the purpose of national parks and reserves generally;
- education groups will, to the extent that resources permit, be assisted by the allocation of staff time, and where appropriate the special development of publications directed at such groups.

(DOC, 1989a)

This was the first time that the specific management objectives for interpretation had been made explicit. It is not surprising therefore that in 1991 the Field Centre produced the first Mount Cook Interpretation Plan (DOC, 1991b) and the Conservancy published the Canterbury Conservancy Interpretation Strategy (DOC, 1991a).

'Mount Cook National Park staff have had long and enthusiastic links with interpretation. We have produced our own pamphlets, posters, booklets, handbook, audio visual...But although there have been many attempts, an interpretation plan has never been produced. This is the first' (DOC, 1991b).
The document reviewed the existing interpretive services and facilities such as the visitor centre, on site interpretation and holiday nature programmes and examined the interpretive potential of the park, commenting on the 'themes, myths and legends'; the concept of an Alpine Museum; and the interpretive potential of certain sites and the role played (and potentially played) by park concessionaires. Tasks were prioritised as;

*High priority*
- continue to develop high quality information publications;
- reduce number of guided walks and talks and instigate a system of roving interpreters;
- continue to develop on site interpretive signs;
- maintain the existing interpretation at mountain huts.

*Medium priority*
- develop a design brief for a redeveloped visitor centre incorporating a new alpine museum.

*Low priority*
- develop the interpretive opportunities at Birch Hill Homestead.

(1991b)

To date, only a limited number of these priorities have been achieved, these include; the reduction in the number of events and activities in the summer nature programme, (although this has not been replaced by the roving interpreters system); during the summer 1995/6 season five on site interpretive panels for key sites were delivered although not installed; and a scoping paper proposing the development of an alpine museum was prepared for DOC in 1992 (Contours, 1992). Despite these achievements little has changed in terms of interpretation at Mount Cook since the headquarters were extended in the mid 1970s. The limited nature of interpretation has been acknowledged in the 1995 Draft Canterbury Conservation Management Strategy (CMS)\(^5\);

'Mount Cook village and facilities are considered substandard and need upgrading. The current visitor centre does not adequately provide interpretive information and retailing services expected of such a premier location. Alpine and climbing history and archives are poorly protected and interpreted for New Zealanders and overseas tourists' (DOC, 1995:133).

The Canterbury CMS identified this problem as a primary conservancy objective;

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\(^5\) Conservation Management Strategies (CMS) are a statutory requirement of the 1987 Conservation Act. The purpose of the CMS is to implement general policies and establish objectives for the integrated management of natural and historic resources and each conservancy has to prepare a CMS.
‘The primary visitor centre priority for Canterbury will be the upgrading of the Mount Cook/Aoraki Visitor Centre. The existing facilities are dated and this is a high user facility’ (DOC, 1995:249).

In addition to the visitor centre upgrade, interpretation at Mount Cook also featured in other key conservancy priorities, these included;

- **Kai Tahu Interpretation**
  The CMS identified the need to incorporate a Kai Tahu perspective in interpretation. This was planned to be done by employing Kai Tahu interpreters at key locations (eg: Aoraki/ Mount Cook and Arthur's Pass).

- **State Highway Signage**
  The CMS identified the need to interpret three key aranui (path or highways) in Canterbury. These included SH7, SH8, SH73 and SH80 (Pukaki to Mount Cook).

- **Interpretation on Walking Tracks**
  The CMS identified that high use walking tracks at Mount Cook needed improved interpretation.

(DOC, 1995)

The priorities that have been established for interpretation in the CMS appear to indicate a new commitment to interpretation at Mount Cook. This commitment is furthered by the recent appointment of a Visitor Centre Manager and the allocation of funds to allow the new manager to attempt to remedy some of the most pressing interpretive problems. This obligation to interpretation is not dissimilar from the commitment to interpret Mount Cook established by the first mountain guides and is based on the belief that interpretation can give visitors insight into the meaning and significance of *place*. Given this climate of renewed enthusiasm and resources it seems therefore a particularly appropriate time and site to evaluate how effective interpretation has been in achieving this by enriching visitors sense(s) of place.
Case Study Research Aims and Overarching Questions

The work presented in the first five chapters of this thesis are now brought together in the form of revisited research aims and the specific research questions of the evaluation at Mount Cook National Park.

Theory: to explore the connections between people, place and interpretation:
- to examine what sense(s) of place are enhanced by interpretation;
- to explore whether interpretation has instilled, initiated or extended visitors sense of place;
- to develop existing sense of place typologies;
- to pose future research questions.

Methods: to use methods which enable an exploration of the connections between people, place and interpretation:
- to reconsider and advance past evaluations of interpretation;
- to develop a theoretically rich evaluation approach;
- to develop an appropriate research strategy to examine visitors’ sense(s) of place;
- to evaluate the methods used and make recommendations for future studies.

Practice: to evaluate interpretation at Mount Cook in light of the connections between people, place and interpretation:
- to uncover the sense(s) of place enhanced by interpretation at Mount Cook;
- to investigate the form and manner of interpretation at Mount Cook;
- to examine the variability of visitor use of interpretation at Mount Cook.

Specific Research Questions

The specific research questions fall into three sections:

1. Provision of Interpretation.
2. Visitor Use of Interpretation.
3. Role of Interpretation.

1. Provision of Interpretation

- **Form of current interpretive provision**
  What DOC and other interpretive facilities are currently provided?

- **Manner of current interpretive provision**
  What manner do these interpretive facilities take?
  What sense(s) of place does this interpretation enhance?
2. Visitor Use of Interpretation

- **Visitor use of interpretation before arriving**
  What are visitors existing sense of place prior to arrival?
  What sense of Mount Cook as place do visitors have before arrival in the park?

- **Visitor use of interpretation during the journey**
  What information and interpretation do visitors have and use when they journey to the park?
  How does the journey to Mount Cook influence visitors sense(s) of place?

- **Visitor use of interpretation on site**
  What activities and interpretive activities do visitors participate in at Mount Cook?
  To what extent does interpretation play a role in the visitor activities at Mount Cook?
  How have visitors sense(s) of place been initiated, enhanced and extended by interpretation?

- **Variability in visitor use of interpretation**
  How variable is the visitor use of interpretation?
  How do different visitors use interpretation to enhance their sense of place?

3. Role of Interpretation for the Visitor

- **Interpretation as a factor of place**
  In what ways are visitors using interpretation to help them understand Mount Cook?
  In what ways does interpretation fulfill, initiate and extend visitors sense of place?
  Does interpretation impact on visitors physical, social, emotional and intellectual state?

- **Other factors of place**
  In what other significant ways do visitors come to understand Mount Cook?
  How is that understanding gained and how important are these other factors?

Figure 8: Specific Case Study Research Questions.

**Chapter Summary**

There was a commitment to interpret the significant landscapes of Aoraki/Mount Cook long before it was designated a national park, however, with this designation came a formal commitment to interpretation. Interpretation remains today as an important way in which conservation estate officers and park concessionaires can share with their visitors some of the significance and meaning of the place. Because this obligation exists it is necessary to evaluate how interpretation may take visitors ‘one step beyond’ (Devlin, 1987) wherever they happen to be when they arrive in the park and to examine how their entire social, physical, intellectual and emotional sense about the place may have been enhanced as a result of their experience of interpretation. The way in which the questions that arise from this are tackled, is addressed in the following methods chapter.
CHAPTER SIX

'The people that come to see us bring us their stories. They hope they will tell them well enough so that we understand the truth of their lives. They hope we know how to interpret their stories correctly. We have to remember that what we hear is their story'


METHODOLOGY

Chapter Outline

The methods that are set out in this chapter aim to facilitate an exploration of the inter-relationships between place, interpretation and visitors. In order to examine the specific research questions this chapter outlines four inter-related stages of qualitative fieldwork which were devised and then undertaken at Mount Cook National Park.

Research Methods

Social science research methods help us understand the social world. They are an essential set of skills, insights, and tools needed to answer intelligently any but the simplest questions about the social world (Singleton, Straits and Straits, 1993). The aim of methods is to effect a link between the world and the theoretical conceptions of it (Ackroyd and Hughes, 1994). As a consequence research methods are dependent upon the researcher’s commitment to a particular theory (Espiner, 1995).

‘No method can be atheoretical, but involves the user in a nest of theoretical commitments, many of them implicit, which reach to the most fundamental questions and postulations of the discipline’ (Ackroyd and Hughes, 1994: 9).

In the past, most evaluations of interpretation have used quantitative tools, such as a questionnaire. In these studies the researcher seeks explanations and predictions that will enable generalisations to be made to other people and places. The researcher’s objectivity is of the utmost concern with sampling strategies designed to keep the researcher from ‘contaminating’ the data through personal involvement with the research objects. The report typically reduces data to numerical relationships and presents findings in a formal manner, while in contrast, qualitative reports are presented in a narrative form to make the researched phenomena accessible, tangible and imaginable. Narratives, usually interview or observation transcripts, form the data sources of qualitative research (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).
There are only a handful of studies that have attempted to evaluate interpretation using qualitative research methods - Clarke (1977) reviewed the use of observation and self reports for studying the behaviour of recreationists; Machlis (1983) reviewed the use of interviews, participant observation and photography as research tools in park management (this included interpretation); and Trotter (1989) used focus groups, observations and interviews to study visitor use of interpretation at Wupatki National Monument. These and other such methods are used in my evaluation of interpretation.

**Qualitative Research Methods**

One of the basic tenets of qualitative method is to attempt to understand the experience of the individual - to understand the meanings that activities and objects in settings have for individuals. This echoes the sentiment in the chapter quote, that in essence qualitative researchers aim to understand and interpret personal stories and the way they intersect with settings and with other personal stories. In order to do this the qualitative method 'stresses the diversity and variability of social life and is concerned to capture the myriad of perspectives of participants in the social world (Hammersley, 1989:2).

> 'at the core of fieldwork is not the collection of facts, or the controlled observation of objective facts but rather a deeper holistic experience of learning about the lives, behaviours and thoughts of others' (Emerson, 1983:15).

Qualitative research does not aim to quantify social phenomena, and therefore strict sampling procedures, statistical analyses and interpretations are not required (see Shaffir & Stebbins, 1991). Field research is one of the basic strategies of qualitative research which demands a number of data gathering tools. Document search, semi-structured interviews, participant observation, applied observation and semi-structured indepth interviews have been used in the current study, in addition to daily notes which were made in a field journal. These methods formed four inter-related stages of fieldwork.

**Research Strategy**

My version of evaluation developed during four inter-related stages of fieldwork. These four broad areas of research aim to address the specific research questions which were posed at the end of the previous chapter. The four stages of the research were;
Stage One - Setting the Interpretive Scene at Mount Cook
From November 1995, the range of interpretation in the national park was documented through an extensive desk based search of literature. Academic and library sources as well as tourist and national park material such as that provided by the Visitor Information Network (VIN) and DOC were consulted. From this research those organisations in the park that were providers of interpretation (eg: DOC, Alpine Recreation Canterbury, Alpine Guides, Hermitage, Mt Cook Airlines and other concessionaires) were identified. This collection of literature was an important stage of the fieldwork - to set the scene and to address the specific research questions concerning the provision of interpretation in place.

Stage Two - Investigating the Providers of Interpretation at Mount Cook
Once the providers of interpretation had been established data were gathered on each organisation. This data gathering exercise provided a base level of information about the range of interpretation currently provided at Mount Cook National Park. Gathering this form of data was accomplished using face to face interviews.

There are a variety of face to face interview forms from which to choose - highly structured, partially structured or unstructured interviews (Singleton et al., 1993). In an unstructured interview the objectives may be very general and the course of the interview is characterised by spontaneity. At the other end of the spectrum are structured interviews where the objectives of the research are specific. In this instance all questions are written beforehand and the interviewer is restricted to those questions. The goal of structured interviews is to elicit choices between alternative answers to preformed questions on a topic or situation (Lofland & Lofland, 1984). Between these extremes are partially structured interviews which have specific objectives but allow the interviewer some freedom in how these are met (Singleton et al., 1993). The latter partially
structured approach was used because it is flexible and the interview schedule could be limited to certain sub-topics (Becker, 1970).

During the 1996 Easter period [April], 18 indepth interviews were undertaken. Ten key informants were selected prior to my arrival in the field and were notified about the nature of the study. In addition to these key informants, the other eight interviewees were selected on a snowballing basis (Lofland & Lofland, 1984; Perkins, 1988a). The interviews were semi-structured and approximately one hour in length (with the exception of interviews with bus drivers, which were considerably shorter). A schedule of questions had been devised before the interview (see appendix one). The schedule was used in the interview but not adhered to in a strict fashion and can be summarised as addressing:

- background on the organisation’s involvement at Mount Cook;
- basic information on the types of visitor services provided by the organisation;
- information on the manner of interpretation that accompanies these services;
- information on the characteristics of visitors that use the services of the organisation.

It was my aim to interview representatives from the all the identified providers of interpretation at Mount Cook National Park. A total of 18 people were interviewed and included representatives from DOC; The Hermitage Hotel; Park Concessionaires and bus drivers. Pseudonyms have been assigned to all the participants’ names to protect their anonymity. All the interviews were recorded by audio tape and later transcribed.

**Stage Three - Surveying the Visitors to Mount Cook**

Partially-structured interviews were also used to survey visitor use of interpretation at Mount Cook National Park (see appendix two). These interviews addressed the specific research questions concerning the visitor use of interpretation which were outlined in the previous chapter. The survey combined both quantitative and qualitative questions. The quantitative questions were asked and answers were recorded in a standardised form. They included:

- **Visitor information** - socio-demographic, group composition and trip characteristics;
- **Facility information** - visitor use of interpretive facilities.
The qualitative questions were more open and responses were guided by the visitor’s own experiences. The question phrasing emerged as the interview progressed and conversation along certain avenues was encouraged, ‘to probe deeply, to uncover new clues, to open up new dimensions of a problem and to secure vivid, accurate, inclusive accounts from informants based on personal experience’ (Burgess, 1982, in Eyles & Smith, 1988:8). The qualitative questions gathered the following information:

- **Pre-trip information** - pre-trip expectations, experiences and sources of information;
- **Journey information** - places visitors had stopped and immediate impressions;
- **Experience information** - what was interesting and what prompted discussion.

During the summer of 1995/6 [November to January] in a total of four research periods 64 visitor interviews were completed. The surveys were administered by the researcher. Respondents were advised that the survey would take about 15 minutes to complete, although in many cases this was exceeded because the respondents elaborated on many of the questions. Before interviewing began the study was outlined and respondents were asked whether they minded the conversations being recorded on audio tape, once this had been decided the interview commenced. The recording of the interview, or the notes taken if recording was refused¹, was later transcribed. The transcription was written up verbatim for ease later analysis, and I have called the transcription a ‘visitor cameo’ (see appendix three). Pseudonyms have been assigned to all participants.

A random sampling strategy was not followed, however an attempt was made to sample the visitors in a systematic fashion. Five survey locations were selected and I moved through these in order, completing about 15 interviews in each (see appendix four).

These locations were:

1. DOC visitor centre;
2. The Hermitage Hotel;
3. The Youth Hostel;
4. White Horse Hill campground;
5. Tracks (a roaming research location).

¹ The refusal rate by visitors to be interviewed was low. Although those that did refuse were either in a hurry to escape the bad weather or in a hurry to enjoy the good weather. The acceptance by visitors to allow the recording of the interview was also generally high.
Although much of the fieldwork was weather dependent an attempt was made to survey on different days and in different conditions. On wet days visitors were interviewed inside, either at the DOC visitor centre, the Hermitage Hotel or the Youth Hostel. These sites were also sampled in fine weather. Interviews on the tracks and at the campground were mainly restricted to clear weather days.

The selection of respondents for the interviews was done on a convenient non probability approach (Singleton et al., 1993). I interviewed continuously at the outside locations because my time was limited, and further restricted by the bad weather, so once an interview had finished the next one was sought. The selection of respondents was done more systematically at the inside locations, for example in the visitor centre I located myself in the audio visual room and was able to select the fifth visitor after completing the last interview. However, on days when the weather was particularly bad, few visitors made it to the village in the first place and on these occasions I interviewed continuously.

At the Hermitage Hotel and the Youth Hostel an attempt was made to sample the population by selecting the fifth visitor. Overall, this sampling procedure does not therefore represent an absolute random sample of visitors to Mount Cook over this particular research period.

Although research budget limitations constrained the use of translators, I had no hesitation approaching people who did not appear to speak English. If it was obvious that the respondent or myself were struggling with the language the interview was stopped. But on many occasions we were able to communicate and the language difficulties were noted after the interview. This however was not always the case with Japanese visitors. As a way of overcoming this problem I teamed up with an Alpine Guide who was fluent in Japanese and who led Japanese trekking parties in the National Park. The guide was able to translate the questions on the survey, discuss with the respondents their response and then re-translate the answer in English. The problem of the guide’s influence, and the loss of richness of the language in the process of translation were outweighed by the access gained to such an important sector of the Mount Cook visitor population, which otherwise would have been impossible.

Alpine Guides are a commercial trekking company based in the national park. Guiding Japanese visitors on short tramps is one of their many services.
Stage Four - Observation of Visitors at Mount Cook

After the visitor interviews were completed key areas for observation in the national park were identified. These locations are marked on the map in the appendices. Three forms of observation were deployed over both the main summer research period and the Easter research period. These methods were general field observation, participant observation and applied observation.

Field Observation

From the outset of the research daily field notes were completed. These notes comprised; diary type entries, recording my activities; observation type entries, recording for example micro observation of visitors on the bus to Mount Cook from Christchurch; data type entries, recording for example quotations from literature sources; entries of a personal nature, recording for example how I felt about certain situations (Lofland and Lofland, 1984); and most important of all, analysis type data, this included logging conceptual material in order to create foundations for later lines of analysis.

These notes in themselves form a considerable volume of commentary about interpretation at Mount Cook. All the notes were entered into a computer and because of their substantive nature were used in the analysis, with the other qualitative data.

Participant Observation

Participant observation was used in the DOC visitor centre, the Hermitage Hotel and along tracks which radiate from the village. Participant observers gather data by participating in the daily life of the group or organisation they study. Observers watch the people they are studying to see what situations they ordinarily meet and how they behave in them. Observers also enter into conversation with all or some of them and uncover their interpretations of the events they have discovered (Trow, 1970; Becker & Geer, 1970). These notes were entered into a computer for ease of later analysis.
Applied Observation

During the main research period it was realised that the DOC visitor centre was the principal interpretive contact visitors experienced when they came into the park. As a way to try and understand this setting more fully, a modified version of tracking and behavioural mapping was used (Falk, Koran, Dierking & Dreblon, 1985; Birney, 1991).

A sketch map detailing the main features of the visitor centre, including display and merchandise areas, was used to track the path made by visitors as they moved around the building. A notice was posted on the front door of the visitor centre informing visitors that a study was being undertaken. Every fifth visitor was selected as they entered. If a group of visitors entered the building this was noted and one member of the group was selected. The route taken by the visitor was drawn onto the map, accompanying this were notes which recorded behaviour around and times spent at the various displays in the centre. The exit time was recorded and the cycle began again with the nth visitor to enter the building. To insure this research took place at different times of the day three sessions, one in the morning, one over lunchtime and one in the afternoon were chosen. The timetable of fieldwork is summarised in Figure 9 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Period</th>
<th>Research Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29 Nov 95 - 03 Dec 95</td>
<td>• Pilot work and field notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Development of research strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Dec 95 - 17 Dec 95</td>
<td>• Field notes and general site observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Visitor interviews and Observation work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Organisation of Japanese visitor interview translations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 Dec 95 - 30 Dec 95</td>
<td>• Field notes and general site observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Visitor interviews and Observation work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Jan 96 - 19 Jan 96</td>
<td>• Field notes and general site observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Visitor interviews and observation work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Concessionaire activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09 Apr 96 - 18 Apr 96</td>
<td>• Field notes and visitor interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• General observation work and applied observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Concessionaire activity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 9: Summer [1995/6] and Easter [1996] Research Periods.
Analysis of Data
Following the collection of the visitor interviews, the quantitative aspects of the interview were post coded, and the data entered into an EXCEL 5.0 spreadsheet. The majority of this data was of the nominal order so most of the analysis is descriptive utilising basic measures of frequencies and percentages. The qualitative aspects of the interview were transcribed verbatim to form a visitor cameo. A visitor cameo was produced for each interview. The cameo formed the basis of the later analysis of the data. The qualitative data was subsequently analysed using manual techniques. The indepth interviews with providers of interpretation and the observation notes were similarly transcribed verbatim and entered into the computer for ease of later analysis.

Limitations of the Fieldwork
The process of research in the field is never an easy one, and there are always factors which compromise the collection of data in some form or another, this is particularly the case when research is undertaken in mountainous regions (Espiner, 1995). A number of limiting factors at Mount Cook, particularly over the main visitor interview period of summer 1995/6, were experienced. The principal limiting factor was the weather. From the outset of the fieldwork it was assumed that there would be a continuous flow of visitors to the National Park. As the fieldwork progressed however, it was discovered that the weather had a dramatic effect on the visitation pattern at Mount Cook.

During November and December 1995, the South Island was hit by a succession of weather patterns bringing heavy and persistent rain and high winds, causing rivers to swell and roads to flood. During these times visitors simply did not arrive. The persistence of such weather was not ideal for research which fundamentally required the presence of visitors - but which also required those visitors to have had the chance to have experienced some of the place. This restricted the collection of the data considerably and led to what I have termed the ‘feast and famine’ style of data collection. When the weather was fine the number of visitors increased, which obviously mirrored an increase in visitor activity levels, allowing on these occasions as many as ten visitor interviews to be completed in one day. Conversely, on days hampered by bad weather, only a limited number of visitors, say two or three, could be interviewed.
A further place related factor which may have affected the data collection was the release in January 1996 of a report by the Institute of Geological and Nuclear Sciences and Lincoln Ventures about the geological stability of the Mount Cook Village. The report pointed to the unstable nature of the Glencoe alluvial fan upon which the Hermitage is built. The national press exposed the findings of the report;

| 'Mount Cook Village: 'Potential Disaster Site’ | 'The whole area up there...is doomed to suffer a major environmental disaster’ Allan Evans - FMC's Patron (The Press, 16/01/96). |
| 'Hazards put Hermitage Sale on Hold - Experts to Assess Dangers’ | 'Hermitage exposed to serious danger from debris flows, flooding and sediment accumulation’ (The Press, 15/01/96). |

Figure 10: National Press on Mount Cook.

It is difficult to assess how these events may have affected the visitation to the park, but they may have deterred people from visiting Mount Cook over the research period. The extent to which these factors compromised the collection of the data is unknown, but it is known that these conditions were not ideal for interviewing.

**Addressing the Collective Omissions of Past Research**

The combination of qualitative measures that have been used in this evaluation were devised to remedy the collective omissions which were identified in the studies which have attempted to evaluate interpretation in the past by exploring the connections between place, interpretation and visitors. This particular form of evaluation is thought to address the omissions of past research in the following manner;

1. The methodological approach of this study recognised that the education of visitors to the park is not the only aim of interpretation, rather interpretation is a means to help visitors understand a place a little more; to make the place meaningful in someway; and maybe to provoke thought about the place. The research questions probed into the role interpretation may play in the visitor experience of Mount Cook.
2. The methodological strategy of this study acknowledged that visitors may experience a variety of interpretive facilities in place, and that these are not simply limited to the visitor centre. The methods reflected this by attempting to assess the variety of interpretation that visitors are likely to experience.

3. This evaluation aimed to evaluate all forms of interpretation present in a place rather than concentrating solely on interpretation such as that provided by DOC.

4. The research approach acknowledged that visitor use of interpretation is not limited to the place itself, but also experienced prior to or after the visit to Mount Cook.

5. The evaluation approach of this study recognised that the visitors to Mount Cook are not a homogeneous group, but that their use of interpretation is differentiated.

6. The sampling procedure of this evaluation acknowledged that not all visitors will be users of interpretation. Non users of interpretation as well as users of interpretation were interviewed.

Chapter Summary
A combination of qualitative measures have been used in this evaluation. Despite a number of limiting factors of the research the data collected at Mount Cook National Park over the summer [1995/6] and Easter [1996] periods from both visitors and from providers was comprehensive enough to give insight into the current role interpretation is playing in the visitor experience of the place. This insight goes some way to address the collective omissions of past evaluations of interpretation. Results and analysis from the evaluation are presented in the next chapters; the most immediate analysis of the results are presented in the following penultimate chapter while further, wider analysis is discussed in the final chapter.
CHAPTER SEVEN

'Most visitors have a fundamental need for information about the places they want to visit. The nature of the information required tends to vary with the type of visitor and the activity or experience sought.'

Visitor Strategy - Department of Conservation (1996:43)

RESULTS: INTERPRETATION AT MOUNT COOK NATIONAL PARK

Chapter Outline
The results chapter addresses the specific research questions of the thesis. The first set of questions focus on the provision of interpretation at Mount Cook; the second on the use of this interpretation by those visiting and the third on the role interpretation may play in contributing to visitors' experiences of place. In accordance with the qualitative approach these research questions will be addressed by presenting accounts from providers of interpretation and visitors to the park. These data will be examined to see if in any way a typology of the interpretation itself and a typology of the way people use that interpretation at Mount Cook can be developed so that the specific results can be explored elsewhere. Analysis which is immediately related to the data is included and further discussed in the following final chapter.

Provision of Interpretation at Mount Cook
This section works towards an understanding of interpretive provision. Figure 11 outlines the interpretation which was present at Mount Cook during the research period.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department of Conservation</td>
<td>Visitor Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interpretive Display Panels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Topographical Model and Audio-Visual Presentation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Department Staff and Leaflets</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lands and Survey Panels and Plane Tables</td>
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<td></td>
<td>New Interpretive Panels</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southern Pacific Hotels</td>
<td>Activities Desk</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mount Cook Village Map</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Photographic Material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Hostel Association</td>
<td>Information Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hostel Warden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpine Guides Ltd</td>
<td>Activity Guides</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brochures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Typology of Interpretive Provision

Visitors to Mount Cook are presented with a range of interpretation, from display panels to guide books to commentaries on bus tours. As one provider commented;

‘Interpretation here is basically a jigsaw puzzle waiting for everybody to figure it out...So for the average visitor I would think Mount Cook is a jigsaw puzzle, it is just not well put together, it is a hotch potch of things. Its more a case of ‘oh that looks like a good place and we’ll do it that way’ (Int:5 - p8).

Despite the ‘jigsaw puzzle’ analogy of the interpretation at Mount Cook there does appear to be three distinct forms of interpretation. For ease of reference, these three forms of interpretation have been termed primary, secondary and tertiary. It is not the intention to imply that one category may be more effective than the next, rather, the aim is to generate a simple typology of interpretation at Mount Cook so that the results can be tested elsewhere.

Primary Interpretation

Primary interpretation is conspicuous, noticeable and is immediately recognised as interpretation. The specific purpose of the interpretation is to advocate the conservation message and disseminate information. Due to this precise role, primary interpretation is generally, although not necessarily, a Government requirement. At Mount Cook, primary interpretation took the form of; DOC interpretation including the visitor centre and its displays, audio visual, staff assistance, models, on-site panels, the Pukaki interpretive shelter and leaflets. Guide Books also fall into this category. These are each briefly
described below to give the reader a flavour of the form and manner of primary interpretation.

The Mount Cook National Park DOC Visitor Centre is a principal location for park interpretation and information (see Plate 9). A plan diagram of the present visitor centre can be seen in Plate 15. The visitor centre houses a range of interpretation, the most prevalent form of which are the interpretive display panels. There are eleven panels which interpret geology, climate, insects, plant life, predators, birds, early climbing, modern climbing, skiing, wilderness and mountain art in the style illustrated in Plate 10. In addition to these panels there are a number of other interpretive displays, including the Reconstructed Alpine Hut, the Century of Ascents display (see Plate 11) and the 1991 Mount Cook Avalanche display.

'Yes [the Century of Ascents Display] that has been extremely popular. Almost everyone goes round it and reads it. They read about 'so and so' going up here, they can look at all the different routes on it [Aoraki/Mount Cook]. It depicts the routes and is also put on the same plane as Mount Cook. People can try and get it in their minds exactly where things are' (Int:5 - p11).

The model which depicts the topographical features of the National Park (refer to the foreground of Plate 11) is located in the foyer and is widely regarded by DOC staff as the single greatest interpretive asset in the visitor centre. The audio-visual is an 18 minute slide and music presentation which aims to give visitors an introduction to the park. The presentation which is available in English and Japanese emphasises in particular, the climbing history of the Aoraki/Mount Cook area.

In addition to these forms of interpretation Department staff provide 'face to face' interpretation and information for park visitors. Staff also disseminate a range of leaflets about Mount Cook, the principal one being the walks leaflet which describes each of the half day and short village walks. (A charge of one dollar is made for this leaflet and it is dispensed at a number of outlets around the village and at other DOC facilities in New Zealand.) Other leaflets produced by DOC specifically about Mount Cook include: Governor's Bush; Copland Pass; Mueller Hut and Hooker Hut Route Guide; White Horse Hill Camping Area; Tasman Glacier; Geological History of the Southern Alps and Mount Cook National Park (general information).
Plate 9: Mount Cook Visitor Centre.

Plate 10: Interpretive Display Panels.

Plate 12: DLS Panel [Tasman Glacier].

Plate 11: Century of Ascents Display.

Plate 13: Glacier Explorers.

Plate 14: 4WD Experience.
Plate 15: Mount Cook National Park - DOC Visitor Centre (Drawn by S. Drake).
A number of interpretive facilities outside of the visitor centre have been provided formerly by the Department of Lands and Survey (pre 1987) and more recently by DOC.

‘Stuff on site is really valuable. People can really...click! If you are standing on top of that moraine wall at the Tasman Terminal and you have this sign that says... ‘where is the glacier?’ as the main title...which people are asking themselves...you crystallise that question and then answer it there. It’s like the teaching moment. You can just seize on them right away. Otherwise you’ve virtually got to have someone there 12 hours a day, so it is a brilliant way of getting through to people’ (Int:3 - p5).

There are a number of panels, engraved species plates and plane tables which were installed by the Department of Lands and Survey. The panels, similar to the one at the Tasman Glacier shown in Plate 12 are worn out and currently being removed. Five new on-site interpretive panels have been and are to be positioned at the Tasman Glacier Lookout, Red Tarns, Mueller Terminal, Kea Point and the Hooker Valley.

‘The new panel is not up yet but every time I go up there [Tasman Glacier Lookout] people are having arguments - what are we looking at? Is this a gravel pit or something? We heard someone saying to his son, ‘oh look that’s a big flood plain and in the springtime it is full of water’....we said ‘no its not that is a glacier’ ‘....no you have it all wrong!’ they replied. We didn’t argue but...that panel needs to go out there. Those panels will be really useful’ (Int:1 - p4).

Guide Books are also considered to be primary forms of interpretation because it is their explicit purpose to provide information and interpretation about the place. A number of guide books are used such as The New Zealand Lonely Planet Guide and its Tramping Guide companion, others included; the Foders Guide to New Zealand; the Rough Guide to New Zealand; Hertz Guide to New Zealand; and various versions in Japanese. All these guide books detail trip information such as where to stay and what to do in addition to more interpretive details such as the natural and cultural history of the area.

Other forms of primary interpretation identified at Mount Cook include; the display area at the airport; the information board at the Youth Hostel; and the activities desk, village map and photographic collection at the Hermitage Hotel. These are all primary forms of interpretation because the interpretation is the main focus, for example the leaflets and panels are provided principally to advocate the conservation message and to disseminate
information. These are obvious forms of interpretation to both users and providers and are readily acknowledged as such.

Secondary Interpretation
Secondary interpretation is typically auxiliary to a wider activity and as such is not readily identified as interpretation. However, although the interpretation is supplementary it is an integral feature of the activity. The specific purpose of the interpretation is to enhance visitor's experience of their chosen activity (for which visitors have usually paid). At Mount Cook, secondary interpretation took the form of; verbal and written commentary offered on concessionaire activities such Alpine Guides, Scenic Flights, Glacier Explorers and the 4WD Tour; commentary offered on transport to and from the site, including, buses, coaches, helicopters and planes. These forms of secondary interpretation are briefly described.

The concession activities operated by Alpine Guides Ltd include: guided ascents, climbing courses, heli and glacier skiing, trekking and bus tours. Interpretation in the guise of activity guides and brochures accompany all of these activities.

'Everything we do is brochured - its all done through the inhouse material...but that is just because it is the Japanese way of doing things. We have got videos, lots of background information for companies depending on what the activity is, climbing trips have extensive notes on everything we do because we are dealing with the individual clients. They will have an immense amount of information about the activity...down to what is in their lunch!' (Int: 13 - p7).

In addition to this the Alpine Guide building provides a further outlet for interpretation in the form of an information board and staff responding to questions from visitors.
Mount Cook Airlines are only one amongst a number of companies which operate scenic flights over Mount Cook National Park\(^1\). They operate from Mount Cook airport and are (at the time of the current study) the only operators permitted to land on the glaciers within the Mount Cook National Park boundary. They offer a variety of trips which are accompanied by interpretation.

>'It’s actually quite difficult [to give a commentary]... In the helicopters it is easier than in the ski planes. In the helicopters we have head sets for all the passengers so all can communicate with the pilot... and amongst themselves and the pilot gives a commentary...

>...In the fixed wing aircraft [ski planes] it is a bit more difficult because you don’t have the headphones. The aircraft are quite noisy. But what we do is on landing we explain where we have been and what we have been doing. The pilot is able to point out things along the way. They see that as part of their role. It is more difficult if you have Japanese on board because obviously the pilots can’t speak Japanese or Korean' (*Int:16 - p2*).

At the end of each flight the pilot gives each passenger, as a memento of their flight a presentation booklet, containing colour pictures and text describing their flight.

The Tasman Glacial Lake Tour takes about two and a half hours which includes transport from Mount Cook village to the Blue lakes, a walk to the lake, and an hours boat trip on the Tasman Terminal Glacial lake. Integral to the trip is a commentary (see Plate 13).

>‘We have picked up our spiel from living here, reading books, its always changing out there its an interesting place to work. Its also a potentially dangerous place to work so the more we know about it the better. We liaise with scientists who give us information about the lake, recent stuff’ (*Int:2:p1-2*).

The 4WD tour takes visitors on the road that runs alongside the Tasman Glacier. The tour leader/driver provides a commentary as the journey proceeds (see Plate 14).

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\(^1\) Other companies include: Air Safaris who operate scenic flights from Tekapo and Glentanner Park; Southern Lakes Helicopters who operate helicopter flights from Twizel over the Mount Cook and the Ben Ohau area; Helicopter Line who operate helicopter flights from Glentanner Park and Mt Cook Airlines who in addition to their flights from Mount Cook Airport operate flightseeing from Twizel and Omarama.
'There are a series of places along the way we stop and talk about. We stop off at the Hooker River - the first stop. The next stop is at the car park...we just explain about the moraine wall. Then the good road ends! Then a not so good road starts! We go past Celmisia Flat, we don't always stop, the flower called Celmisia is wildly growing there, it is really beautiful in the spring. When they are in flower we will stop. But there is no point in stopping when there is nothing there. Often we stop and tell them what it will look like - we have some photographs' (*Int:10:p1*).

Alpine Recreation Canterbury offer a high altitude guided crossing of the Ball Pass (2130m). The crossing from the Tasman Valley to the Hooker Valley takes 2-3 days and allows those visitors to get close to Aoraki/Mount Cook without requiring mountaineering experience. The guide gives a commentary as the crossing proceeds.

'It was the first time that I had got up to that sort of territory - you know I had been here for three years and I hadn't done it. I had never used crampons or an ice axe before. He told us about how the helicopters had affected the keas, history on the glacier, naming all the mountains, pointing out different ways of getting up Mount Cook' (*Int:10:p1*).

Other forms of secondary interpretation included the commentaries offered on buses, coaches and planes to and from the Park. These are all examples of secondary interpretation because the activity itself such as the Glacier Lake tour is the principal reason for the operation. The interpretation, although integral is auxiliary to the activity.

**Tertiary Interpretation**

The final form of interpretation identified at Mount Cook has been termed Tertiary interpretation. This is not always considered to be interpretation because it is often hidden, obscure and indistinct as an interpretive activity. Despite this however, tertiary interpretation may impact upon people's experience of place. Tertiary interpretation took many different and interesting forms such as; advertising media including posters on and off site, TV, radio, merchandise and pictorial books; and communications with other people including staff, other visitors, friends and family.

Due to its nature tertiary interpretation is difficult to exemplify, however, advertising media and merchandise are useful examples. Advertising media was evident both on and off site. For example at Tekapo in cafes and souvenir shops, posters and brochures were evident advertising activities at Mount Cook, particularly about scenic flights. Similar
advertisements were also prevalent at the Hermitage, Mount Cook village store and the pub. These advertisements may relay important visual images of the place to visitors.

Merchandise, such as postcards, teeshirts and souvenirs can also be termed tertiary interpretation because some may carry interpretive messages. These messages may be construed in a variety of ways. For example on a rainy day I noted in my field journal;

‘The [Hermitage] shop was busy - visitors seemed eager to consume something even if it wasn’t the elusive view of Aoraki/Mount Cook. For them their view of the mountain was packaged in postcards, scenic watercolours and pictorial placemats. A postcard of Aoraki/Mount Cook was stuck on the window with a big arrow pointing towards where the mountain is behind the rain. More than a few shoppers took great delight in this’ [Fieldnotes 12 - p1].

More explicit are the interpretive messages relayed through merchandise on sale at the DOC visitor centre.

‘Our primary aim is a visitor centre. But we do have a big retail turnover...we sell products which advocate, enhance visitors experience and educate the. We have really strict guidelines though’ (Int:14 - p3).

Summary of Interpretive Provision

The typology of primary, secondary and tertiary interpretation is useful because it allows an exploration of the sense of place, or the variety of senses of place, which this particular range of interpretation enhances. It appears that the particular form and manner of interpretation at Mount Cook enhances some of the senses of place already discussed in the literature while at the same time illustrates that further senses of place are present (see Figure 12). Those senses of place which are not shaded have been identified by either Eyles (1985) or Sutton (1992), while those which are shaded have been devised as a result of this study.
Primary interpretation appears to fulfil an important *orientation* sense of place, providing the initial briefing or introduction to the place necessary for visitors who are unfamiliar with the setting. The topographical model is a particularly good example of this, as visitors are able to place themselves within the context of the National Park. Maps, leaflets and guide books enhance an orientation sense of place in a similar way.

‘The first thing that everybody goes to is the model. That or the loos! They are pressing the buttons, they are looking round, they’re pointing things out. The kids always love it. Looking round asking where they are. Some will ask ‘where am I’ on the map - because it is not always obvious straight away’ (*Int: 11 - p3*).

Primary interpretation also aims to enhance what Eyles (1985) and later Sutton (1992) have termed an *environmental* sense of place. DOC have a statutory obligation to advocate the conservation message and this is filtered through primary interpretation in the form of display panels, staff and audio visual presentations which describe the conservation value of the National Park. A *nostalgic* sense of place, which Eyles (op cit) has identified can also be found. The audio visual, display panels and guide books exemplify this, by their reference to events in the past, such as the first attempts on
Aoraki/Mount Cook and the building and the rebuilding of the Hermitage Hotel in a nostalgic way. Similarly, primary interpretation such as walking guides enhance an activity and a safety sense of place. What is best identified by Sutton (op cit) as a cultural/ancestral sense of place is also apparent through the explanation of Maori mythology in the audio visual, guide books and some leaflets.

While enhancing many of the senses of place discussed above, secondary interpretation also enhances a geographic and an adventure sense of place. A geographic sense of place is enhanced because secondary interpretation often describes geographical features such as glaciers, lakes and mountains without necessarily extending this to an environmental sense of place that has already been discussed.

'The content of your ‘spiel’ is important...basically we cover certain aspects of the glaciation process, the geological history of the area and anything in between we say what we like...if we think they will find it interesting we will put it in otherwise we’ll leave it out' (Int:2:p1-2).

An adventure sense of place is also enhanced through secondary interpretation, where the adventure associated with the activity is explicit in the accompanying interpretation. Tertiary interpretation may contribute a way of life, commodity or possibly a social sense of place in the way Eyles (op cit) has implied, but these are unsubstantiated in the data. For example, staff at the Hermitage hotel may be asked about community life in Mount Cook Village.

In summary, primary, secondary and tertiary interpretation at Mount Cook appear to enhance a range of senses of place. Some of these have already been identified in the literature (such as environmental, nostalgic, cultural/ancestral, geographic and activity senses of place) while others senses arise from this study (such as orientation and adventure senses of place). Collectively this range of senses of place represent, what Tuan (1974) has termed a field of care sense of place. To reiterate, field of care refers to the development of ‘care’ towards a place. It is the belief that interpretation can achieve this, which in essence, drives the commitment to the provision of interpretation.
‘Through interpretation we can give visitors an understanding of what the conservation estate is about...and through this understanding people will develop an appreciation and a wish to conserve’ (Int:15:p2).

It is whether interpretation instils, initiates and extends this overarching field of care sense of place for visitors to Mount Cook which concerns the second set of specific research questions. The data are examined and qualitative account is extracted from the visitor interviews to see if there is any common use of interpretation so that a typology of users can be developed. If the use of interpretation can be presented in this way the question of whether a field of care sense of place is established through interpretation for visitors can be addressed.

Visitor Use of Interpretation at Mount Cook

Visitor Sample

Sixty four semi-structured interviews with visitor groups were conducted over the summer 1995/6 season. The interviews were conducted at a range of locations in the park; DOC Visitor Centre, The Hermitage; Youth Hostel; White Horse Hill Campground and on the park tracks. The demographic characteristics of this sample of visitors are briefly presented and reference can be made to the full tabulated results in appendix 5.

There was an even gender split of this particular sample of visitors. Almost one fifth (17.6%) of these visitors were domestic tourists while the remainder (82.4%) were from overseas. The majority of the overseas visitors were from the USA (22.5%); Japan (16.8%), and Australia (12.3%). The remainder were from Europe (48.4%). The ages of this particular sample of visitors were evenly spread over the age groups from 16 through to 75, although more of the sample fell into the 26-35 age bracket. The majority of the sample (29.7%) visited Mount Cook with friends, while 23.4 per cent visited with their partner, 18.7 per cent with their family and 17.2 per cent visited alone. Only a minority of this sample visited Mount Cook as part of a bus tour. For the majority (78.1%) of visitors in this sample this was their first trip (see Table 1). Of those that had

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2 Although 64 groups of visitors were interviewed some of these visitors were in groups - as a result of this effectively 108 visitors were interviewed in total. Individual level data such as age, gender and nationality has been calculated from the total visitor sample of 108 whilst group level data such as length of stay and mode of transport has been calculated from the number of visitor groups ie 64.
been before \((n=14)\) the majority \((71.4\%)\) had visited either once or twice while the remainder had been to Mount Cook at least five other times\(^3\).

**Table 1: First Time Visitors to Mount Cook National Park \((n=64)\).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Time</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>78.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The specific research questions which focus on interpretive use are addressed by examining visitor use of interpretation at various stages of their trip to Mount Cook - prior to their arrival; during their journey and while they were staying in the park.

**Use of Interpretation Prior to Arrival at Mount Cook**

For the majority of first time visitors to Mount Cook it appears that pre-trip expectations and motivations were inextricably linked to a variety of information and interpretation sources about Mount Cook; most notably from primary interpretation such as guide books and from Mount Cook National Park leaflets picked up elsewhere.

'We had a book - a general tourism book so we knew a little bit about what to expect about the treks. It was from the States. Also at the information centre in Christchurch we talked about Mount Cook and she told us a lot. So we decided on some day walks' [Josie & Karen - No.15].

It was interesting however, to find that the many visitors who said they had no information about the place did appear to have some idea about what to expect and what there was to do. For these visitors tertiary forms of interpretation were particularly influential prior to arrival - friends, family or other travellers had recommended a visit to Mount Cook and had passed on a little of what to expect. Due to this base level of information many of the sample were aware of the activities, most notably the walks and had expected and had planned to be able to walk, in particular the Hooker Track.

\(^3\) A non-probability method of sampling was not used, so these statistics cannot be generalised to represent the wider visitor population. However, by chance, the statistics presented here are not dissimilar to the findings of recent visitor surveys at Mount Cook (see Kerr, et al., 1986).
'No information - nothing really. We had heard about it. My sister had done some walks up here and she recommended some things to do' [Margaret - No.23].

'We had the Lonely Planet guide but nothing specific. We really like talking to other people in hostels to get an idea of where to go and what to look out for...Well we knew that there were some walks to do. We'd heard of the Hooker walk but didn't know much else' [Leanne - No.40].

For a minority of visitors however their visit to Mount Cook was spontaneous. The stumbling over of a sign or the possibility of good weather seemed more influential in these situations than the influence of interpretation. As Denise (No.20) commented;

'No information - Nothing at all. It was in the car at Tekapo when we said which way shall we head? Mount Cook has always intrigued me so this was probably the best opportunity I'd get to see it. The weather looked good. We had a road map that was all' [Denise & Graeme - No.20].

In contrast, those visitors who had a specific reason for coming to Mount Cook, such as to climb or to do one of the overnight tramps, were likely to have consulted a variety of primary forms of interpretation such as DOC staff and specific guide books.

'Oh heaps of information - 14 Great Peaks, previous experience, Mount Cook Guide, looking at maps, other peoples personal experience - I like talking to other people' [Martin - No.7].

'I had been in contact with the DOC office before I came down here. And they were quite good at providing detailed information. Helpful. And they answered all the questions quickly and provided information over and above what I asked - guide hires, hire fees, accommodation fees. They were our first and main source of information. And they came up with it and we didn't need any more' [Raewyn & Callum - No.5].

For those visitors (29.1%) who had been to Mount Cook in the past (n=64) the experience and information gained on their previous trip or trips seemed to have more influence on their plans than primary forms of interpretation.

'This is my second visit. I came here four years ago at this time of the year, the weather was absolutely incredible and this place basically blew me away...it blew me away so much I wanted to come back and sit in the mountains. I am intending to go up to Meuller as I didn't do that last time' [Alistair - No.38].
In summary, the majority of visitors in this sample had some form of information about the place albeit through word of mouth or from a guide book before arriving. A sense of Mount Cook had seemingly been established for most visitors in some form prior to their arrival. For the majority of this sample a little was known about what there was to expect and what there was to do and that visitors had planned their activities with these expectations in mind. The sense about the place that had been developed seemed inextricably linked to a variety of interpretive sources, both those that are primary and those that are tertiary. The extent to which visitors’ expectations of place were realised, appeared to be modified as the journey to Mount Cook proceeded.

Use of Interpretation during the Journey to Mount Cook

The journey to Mount Cook in whatever form, be it by car, motorbike or campervan was common to all the visitors in the sample, but the form in which the journey took place varied. A range of transportation was used, but the majority of visitors travelled by car (51.5%), to a lesser extent by bus (14.1%) while only a minority of this particular sample flew into Mount Cook (7.8%). See appendix 5 for a full tabulation of these results.

For 50.1 per cent of visitors this journey took over four hours with approximately half travelling for over six hours. Of those visitors who travelled by car approximately two-thirds passed through Tekapo (for example from Fairlie) and the remaining third passed through Twizel (for from example Wanaka and Dunedin). Depending on time constraints and on the weather most of these visitors stopped on their journey such as at Lake Tekapo or at the Clay Cliffs (just outside Omarama).

'We stopped twice at some of the lookouts to take photographs and to video-mountains, lakes and rivers - every part of the landscape. The natural beauty is something - how quickly the mountains rise out of the ground' [John - No.13].

This was a common response among those who had travelled to Mount Cook in good weather but in bad weather impressions of the place changed for some visitors, although in many instances there still seemed to be a genuine sense of appreciation;

'We stopped just along the road to Mount Cook to watch the mud... There was the lake and the little bridges, and there was no traffic so we just stopped around. It was pretty amazing. Just sat in the car. Could barely see the mountains. We couldn’t even see Mount Cook. But we had to come here to say that we had been here...it was disappointing that we can’t see anything...we have decided to appreciate the rain - we can’t change the weather' [Julie - No.6].
Only a handful of visitors mentioned a stop at the Pukaki Interpretive shelter while many more reported a stop at Peter's Point Lookout. Apart from opportunities to stop at places like these (primary interpretation), car borne travellers are required to generate, if desired, their own interpretation, for example through reading a guide book or a leaflet or from others. Secondary forms of interpretation are assured for the majority of those visitors travelling to Mount Cook by bus. These comments were made in my journal;

'I commented to the driver that I had enjoyed the stories he had been telling us on the way down. He said that 'it was expected by the company that as drivers, we should say something.' He added, 'You have to be a good ambassador don't you...with all these first time overseas visitors...you have got to be informative and it keeps me awake! 'People ask you questions and you want to know the answers. If I don't know I'll be quite honest and ask someone else... When I first started I used to scratch out rough notes the night before the trip, but now I tend to remember facts and figures, well I think I do! [Fieldnotes - 29/11/95].

For many of those who travelled to Mount Cook by bus the opportunity to hear a little about the places through which they were passing appeared to be welcome;

'I enjoyed everything about the journey here - we were told about the Power Station, the landscape and yes farming. It was not too much...it was ok...not like Milford' [Kirsten - No.2].

On organised coach tours it is probable that a commentary is provided for visitors in whatever language or languages are required. For example many of these companies will employ a guide specifically to do this commentary. One coach driver commented;

'I am just the driver. The guide does all the commentary. He tells them about the glaciers and the mountains and all that - also about the Maori stuff. I am not sure where he gets all his information from, but he is a local...They seem really interested. Well they have to be - he is always talking! And yes they'll ask questions' (Int11 - pl).

This form of interpretation seemed to be appreciated by the majority of those in the sample that travelled to Mount Cook as part of such a coach tour;
Charlie! He is a real character - Charlie was our bus driver. He has all sorts of geographic knowledge. He blends in the stories with the places. He is excellent - they should set a "Charlie School"! We have learnt some really good yarns - tales you know. About here and home about Australia. Charlie told us everything we needed to know. He answered all our questions" [Shelia et al., - No.50].

Only 7.8 per cent of this particular sample of visitors to Mount Cook arrived by plane. For some of these visitors secondary interpretation did play a part in their journey.

'We flew in from Christchurch - we were up above the clouds so we couldn't see anything. But we had a book...we looked through a book at the view - it was the airlines - Mount Cook Airlines. So when there's clouds they give you a book to look at! No commentary though' [Shelia et al., - No.50].

In summary, it appeared that whatever the means of transport, the sense about the place established by some visitors for Mount Cook before they had set out to visit was heightened as the journey to Mount Cook proceeded. For some visitors, the journey allowed a further gathering of information and interpretation from a variety of sources - including primary interpretation (eg: road side interpretive shelter and guide books); secondary interpretation (eg: commentaries offered by bus drivers and airline staff) and tertiary interpretation (eg: word of mouth). Guide books and commentaries were the main forms of interpretation experienced during the journey and these, it appears, served to augment the information visitors already had but also to prepare visitors for the place in which they were about to arrive.

**Use of Interpretation at Mount Cook**

A number of key trip characteristics are presented before the way in which visitors use interpretation in the park is discussed. For the majority of visitors their visit to Mount Cook was a short one with only 4.7 per cent staying more than a week and 12.5 per cent staying only a few hours, while in the middle of this range were the majority of visitors who stayed at Mount Cook between one and three days (34.4%). See Table 2.
Table 2: Length of Stay (n=64).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of Stay</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Few hours</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day trip</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overnight</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 day to 3 days</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>34.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 days to 1 week</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 1 week</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>64</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For this particular sample, the Youth Hostel was the favoured place to stay in Mount Cook, accommodating 15.6 per cent of visitors on their previous night and 23.4 per cent of visitors on their forthcoming night, while outside of the park, Twizel was the favoured place to stay accommodating 14.1 per cent of visitors on both their previous night and their forthcoming night. See appendix 5 for a full presentation of these results.

By the time visitors arrived in the park, it appeared that for many, they were differentiated not only in terms of where they were staying or how long they were staying for, but significantly differentiated in terms of the information and the interpretation that they had already experienced. The extent to which their expectations of place were realised were once again modified as visitors began to explore Mount Cook for themselves. Although the use of interpretation during this exploration of place varied greatly every visitor in this sample made at least some use of either primary, secondary or tertiary interpretation during their visit. This section of the results chapter describes how these forms of interpretation were used by visitors.

**Visitor Use of On Site Primary Interpretation**

For many visitors in this sample the DOC Visitor Centre was the main source of information and interpretation about Mount Cook. The following comment typified the response to questions that asked visitors to describe their movements around the park:

'First we go to the visitor centre for half an hour maybe... just looking - read all the stuff and look where the mountains were. Where different huts were - to find out if we could go there. This kind of information' [Anja & Stephan - No.1].
For many visitors the visitor centre provides initial orientation - to find out or to confirm what there is to do in the place. This can be illustrated by the high usage of the topographical model which provides valuable orientation for visitors. Once in the centre however, most visitors do not appear to resist the interpretation and a large majority appear to take more than a passing interest in the interpretive display panels. For other visitors however, it seems only by chance that the visitor centre was found and a minority of this particular sample did not make it to the visitor centre at all. In these instances, other forms of interpretation (such as Alpine Guides, the Village Store or the Hermitage) appeared to substitute the orientation role of the visitor centre;

'Ve go back to the village and we went straight to the Hermitage - no not the information place because we been to the Hermitage - looked at the souvenirs and spoke about the ski plane.' [Yoko et al., No.44].

The Lonely Planet Guide (or similar guide books) and the Mount Cook Walks leaflet were the other forms of primary interpretation that were used significantly by these visitors, acting as portable forms of interpretation while visitors explored the place.

'I had the leaflet as well. So I went on the Kea Track to the Point...I took photos and looked at the moraine and ice drops through my binoculars. I read my leaflet. What I miss - maybe some more information at the Point. To know what kind of flower it is at the moment because I don't know. When I read it in the visitor centre I forget it. Yes - at the Kea Point some information on which peaks and signs which explains the name of the glacier, how long it is, how deepening' [Kirsten & Stephan - No.2].

In these instances the visitors themselves take on the role of interpreter, using the information they do have, albeit limited as Kirsten & Stephan have pointed out, to reveal some of the places for themselves and others in the group. Because the planned on-site panels had not been installed at places such as Kea Point, the need for such self interpretation was inevitable.

Visitor Use of On Site Secondary Interpretation

A number of visitors commented on the interpretation they experienced as part of the Alpine Guides trekking programme and the Mount Cook scenic flights.
At 6pm we arrived and enquired about a flight with Mount Cook Airlines. The light was so great. We landed on the Tasman Glacier. It was scary and it wasn't too easy... During the journey the pilot gave us some information. More about the mountains names. We were up there for almost an hour. He took us on a special trip to the west side of the range because the weather was so good. We could see Fox and Franz Glaciers' [Christen & Andrea - No.59].

Interpretation it appeared was an integral part of these activities for which these visitors paid. Visitors appeared to expect the guide, be they an Alpine Guide, Pilot or driver to provide a commentary as part of the activity package - when this did not happen or was inadequate visitors appeared disappointed.

'My mother-in-law got a flight with helicopter lines and she said it was a great flight the 55 minute one with a landing, she said that the guy didn’t tell them anything. He told them very little. She was disappointed because she wanted to know what the mountains are called and where she was and what she was looking at... I am quite sure that after they have done 6 or 7 flights saying the same thing and doing the same route they feel like I can - we all get a bit burnt out... oh no not another loopy!' (Int:5 - p9).

On site secondary interpretation, although only reaching a minority of this sample (say 20%) had provided an insight into place which would otherwise have been missed for these 'privileged' visitors. The secondary interpreters have taken on a role that DOC have preformed well in the past but currently have found increasingly difficult to operate.

Visitor Use of On Site Tertiary Interpretation

Due to the nature of tertiary interpretation, that is, it is not immediately recognised as such, very few visitors reported its use. However, from observations and from fieldnotes it became apparent that such tertiary sources of interpretation were in many instances unavoidable, and in being so added to some visitor's understanding of place. Staff employed in the village, for example those by the Hermitage and those by DOC to maintain the village services, have become themselves providers of tertiary interpretation.

'Like this morning we were talking to the chap cleaning the toilets over there. He told us all about Mount Cook and Sefton. Really interesting. He said it would be a good idea to come down this way' [Norman & Edith - No.45].
Similarly the staff at the Hermitage are often quizzed about Aoraki/Mount Cook;

‘I was in the public eye a lot but I didn’t really speak to them. People still asked me questions.... whilst I was polishing the front door... because they didn’t know what Mount Cook was - others asked how long I had been here, how much snow do you get here in winter and general stuff really. What it was like when they weren’t here’ *(Int:5 - p1)*.

I too became a form of tertiary interpretation when I was interviewing particularly when I was out on the tracks - as I note in my field journal;

‘Spoke to a pair of Americans - again visitors seem to treat me as a source of information - questioning me not only on details of routes - but also on questions about the place. I in a sense became an interpreter. Many of the basic questions - such as how long is it to Hooker Hut, why was the glacier mucky and what are the icebergs doing in the middle of the lake - could be easily addressed through on site information and interpretation’ *(Fieldnotes - 30/11/95)*.

Summary of Visitor Use of Interpretation: A Multitude of Users

In summary the use of interpretation, be it primary, secondary or tertiary interpretation by this particular sample of visitors was widespread and was characterised by diversity. No one visitor appeared to use the range of interpretive opportunities available to them in exactly the same manner. The extent to which interpretation instilled, initiated or extended visitors sense(s) of place form the final specific research questions. In order to address these questions the visitor sample is further classified so that a fuller, more meaningful analysis of results can be presented.

I came to appreciate that visitors that I interviewed at Mount Cook National Park were not a homogeneous group and instead comprised of four main categories with accompanying sub categories. The four main overarching categories of visitors have been identified based on their use of interpretation at Mount Cook (see Figure 13).

- **Seekers** - those who actively seek out sources of information and interpretation;
- **Stumblers** - those that stumble across information and interpretation sources;
- **Shadowers** - those who were chaperoned by other people through interpretation;
- **Shunners** - those that shun sources of information and interpretation.

Figure 13: Interpretive Users at Mount Cook National Park.
Within each of these main categories I have identified a number of shades of difference;

**Seekers**
- *Learners* - those who seek interpretation specifically to learn about the place;
- *Gatherers* - those who seek information (as opposed to interpretation) about place;
- *Fillers* - those who seek information and interpretation to fill in time whilst in place.

**Stumblers**
- *Satisfied* - those who are satisfied to stumble over interpretation in the place;
- *Frustrated* - those who are frustrated to stumble over interpretation in place.

**Shadowers**
- *Formal* - those who are chaperoned by guides around interpretation in the place;
- *Informal* - those who are chaperoned informally around interpretation in the place.

**Shunners**
- *Avoiders* - those who purposely avoid interpretation in the place;
- *Passive* - those who are uninterested in interpretation in the place.

The number of visitors found to fit these categories specifically at Mount Cook are presented in tabular form below and the following discussion of each of the categories attempts to address the final set of specific research questions which focus on the role interpretation may play in visitor’s experience of place.

**Table 3: Users of Interpretation at Mount Cook by Category and Sub-Category.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Category</th>
<th>Sub Category</th>
<th>No. per sub Category</th>
<th>% per sub Category</th>
<th>Total no. per main Category</th>
<th>Total % per main Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seekers</td>
<td><em>Learners</em></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>46.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seekers</td>
<td><em>Gatherers</em></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seekers</td>
<td><em>Fillers</em></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stumblers</td>
<td><em>Satisfied</em></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>40.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stumblers</td>
<td><em>Frustrated</em></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadowers</td>
<td><em>Formal</em></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadowers</td>
<td><em>Informal</em></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shunners</td>
<td><em>Avoiders</em></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shunners</td>
<td><em>Seated</em></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Seekers**

Seekers accounted for almost a half of this particular sample of visitors to Mount Cook. As an overarching category seekers were in general characterised by their need to actively seek out sources of information and interpretation about Mount Cook. Seekers can be divided into three sub categories.
• Learners

Representing just over a quarter of visitors in this particular sample, seeker-learners were visitors who appeared to require information about the place at all stages of their trip to Mount Cook. The following comment typified 'seeker-learners';

'I like to pick up information as I go along, from friends and information centres. I read somewhere about the 1991 avalanche...Timaru or Twizel I think. I don’t have a book on New Zealand but it is on my list! ...First stop was the visitor centre. It was interesting. We looked at the displays and the pictures. The map in the middle was excellent. We have the pamphlet and I want to go to the Tasman Valley to look at the plane tables...are they still there?' [Clinton - No.48].

In pursuit of learning about a place, interpretation appeared to be an integral part of seeker-learners experience of place; be it prior to their journey where it is likely that use will be made of both primary and tertiary forms of interpretation; be it during their journey where it is likely that use will be made of both primary and tertiary interpretation and possibly secondary interpretation depending on their mode of transport; and once arrived seeker-learners appeared to go out of their way to seek out primary interpretation, were likely to encounter tertiary interpretation in some form or another and possibly they would seek out secondary forms of interpretation.

The impact of interpretation on the sense of place held by seeker-learners is difficult to establish. On the one hand, as this group actively seek out interpretation, they appear to represent a captive audience for providers, indicating that these visitors are the most likely group to be stimulated and extended by interpretation.

'I had read a book by Nick Pickering - 60 Short Walks. I saw the Tasman Valley in there. It looked pretty impressive. I had puzzled over the Tasman for a long time. I always wondered where it was. It looked like a tongue beyond the rocks. I was fascinated by it. I wanted to know where it was and how you could ski down it' [Angus & Debbie- No.54].

On the other hand however, these visitors are more likely to be aware of the place prior to arrival (about 60 per cent had visited before), attuned to conservation messages and have clear ideas about what they want to do at Mount Cook than do the other visitor groups. This suggests that interpretation may not extend them greatly beyond where they
happen to be when they arrive, but instead supplement or augment their understanding of place.

‘Well I do know quite a bit about the area. I have down the Ball Pass crossing last year and I know about the Copland Pass. I have done the Red Tarns and the Hooker Valley. We anticipated that we would do the Hooker Valley which we have done... We have picked up information in here [visitor centre]. Oh yes the model is superb. I love seeing the overall picture’ [Janet - No.24].

Before Kirsten arrived at Mount Cook she expected to tramp - and that is what she did. She mentioned that she had read about the walks at Mount Cook in her Lonely Planet Guide (in German) also from a book about the National Parks of New Zealand and from the Mount Cook National Parks leaflet that she had purchased for a dollar at the Christchurch Information Centre. She said that because she was a biologist that she hoped to enjoy the flowers, the birds and the snow. She described her time at Mount Cook: [commentary reconstructed from notes - tape recorder failure]

‘I was dropped off at the YHA and went to the DOC visitor centre. I wanted to find out about the short walks as it was a good afternoon. So I went on the Kea Track to the Point. I took photos and looked at the moraine and ice drops through my binoculars. I read my leaflet. Then I went back to the camping area to maybe go on the Hooker Track’ [Kirsten - No.2].

Given seeker-learners approach to interpretation it was found that they were more likely to be critical about the interpretation, particularly primary or secondary provision.

‘The sign posts are good but I remember when I was young I came down here and there was a sign about the state of the virgin forests. It was a good sign and I remember it, it has stayed with me all this time, but it appears to have gone. It is information like that which is really important’ [Lorna & Raymond - No.64].

‘We went straight to the DOC visitor centre. I was a little disappointed. Things seemed a little expensive - the user pays. Also there were no guided walks. I was once a part time ranger and we used to organise tours and holiday programmes. It would have been interesting to do something like that’ [Bruce et al - No.46].

• Gatherers
Seeker-gatherers represented just over 14 per cent of visitors in this particular sample, and were those visitors who collected information about the site to help them undertake their chosen activities. The following comment typified ‘seeker-gatherers’;

‘In the visitor centre - probably about 20 minutes yesterday and 30 minutes today. Information gathering and killing time. Checking out the weather and mountain conditions. Yep just looking around’ [Martin - No.7].
Similar to seeker-learner, seeker-gatherers appeared to make use of the range of interpretation available to them prior to and during their visit only differentiated by their motivation, which appeared to be driven by the need to collect information to enable them to do things (such as times, places and lengths of certain activities) as opposed to seek out interpretive material to enrich their understanding of place. However a significant number of gatherers did appear to take more than a passing interest in say, the interpretive panels or the audio visual once they had entered the visitor centre.

Because gatherers are likely to encounter a variety of interpretive facilities (notably the visitor centre, Alpine Guides and the Hermitage activities desk) in their pursuit of gathering information about activities that interpretation may capture their attention sufficiently enough to initiate interest and extend their understanding of Mount Cook.

'I had been in contact with the DOC and they were quite good at providing information. Helpful. I told them our experience level and asked whether we needed a guide, what were the conditions like, did we need a rope and a harness. And they answered all the questions quickly and provided information over and above. Extra information over what I asked... We went to the visitor centre - it was alright. We went into the backroom. That is where I showed you the stoat and the weasel' [Raewyn & Callum - No.5].

- **Fillers**

Seeker-fillers represented a small number (6.2%) of visitors in this particular sample. The use of interpretation by fillers prior to arrival mirrored the use by the other seeker categories, however the use of interpretation once they had arrived was significantly different. It appeared that fillers sought out interpretation, notably the visitor centre, to shelter from bad weather which was otherwise precluding them from activity. It seemed that for these visitors they were forced to take more than a passing interest in interpretation than would have otherwise been the case.

'In over trousers three non-English speakers (possibly French or Swiss) tentatively walked around the displays in the room. They started at the Mountain art display and walked slowly in an anticlockwise direction. At the ski-ing display they stopped for some minutes and talked intently. One appeared to point out to the other two elements of interest' [Fieldnotes - No.7].

Similar to the experience of seeker gatherers, fillers are likely to be stimulated by interpretation once they enter, for example, the visitor centre. But there is a sense that if
these visitors did not need to fill in time then this interest would have not been
stimulated. The impact of interpretation therefore on fillers sense of place appears to be
achieved only by default.

‘[It was raining] so we went straight to the visitor centre and had a look at some
of the walks. We bought some postcards. We watched the film which was very
good especially because we couldn’t see the mountains’ [Jacob et al., - No.26].

Stumblers
Stumblers as an overarching category represented 40.6 per cent of the total number of
visitors in this sample of visitors. These visitors who appeared to stumble across site
interpretation were more likely to be first time visitors than those visitors identified in the
seeker categories. Some stumblers may have come into contact with a range of
interpretation while others may have not and consequently for stumblers, interpretation
was only one of many chance encounters that may have occurred in place. Stumblers
have been divided into two sub categories:

• Satisfied
For just under a third of all visitors to Mount Cook in this particular sample, satisfied
stumblers were those visitors who although seemingly disoriented were content to
experience the place in that fashion. The exploration and discovery associated with
stumbling over interpretation appeared to add to these visitor’s experience of the place.
The following comments typified ‘satisfied - stumblers’;

‘They gave us a book all about New Zealand and Mount Cook was in there. And
that was basically what they provided. And just the fliers and literature that you
pick up. I figured they’d have some type of walking’ [Georgina - No.29].

‘We went to the village and talked to the guys at DOC. We picked up the map of
where to walk and where to see the most stuff. The map seemed to have it all.
The displays were interesting, particularly the little hut, the boots were cool! We
looked at the leaflet and stumbled our way through’ [Hank & Chunk - No.63].
Similar to visitors in the seeker categories, satisfied stumblers, when or if they eventually found interpretation, be it primary, secondary or tertiary interpretation, did not appear to resist it and took more than a passing interest. As a consequence, satisfied stumblers present providers of interpretation with perhaps the greatest potential for taking them ‘one step beyond’ wherever they happen to be when they first arrive at Mount Cook. Because they are at a different starting point to visitors in the seeker categories (they generally have less information), the interpretation that they may stumble over is likely to stimulate their understanding of Mount Cook and initiate activity in the park.

'I’m sure there was plenty [of information] available but we have very little. But we are lazy - we take one day at a time. The tour lady mentioned that there was a nice trail this way - we just ohhh and arhhh' [Rosanne & Bert - No. 37].

- **Frustrated**

Frustrated stumblers accounted for only 9.4 per cent of visitors in this sample. Frustrated stumblers were those who appeared to be disoriented which impeded a satisfactory experience of the place. Some stumblers found the information and interpretation sources they required. The following comments typified ‘frustrated - stumblers’;

'We wanted to find the visitor centre but there were no signs and couldn’t find it, until it was too late and then it was closed. We picked up the map from somewhere. But it is not detailed enough. There is something wrong about how it is laid out perhaps there is too much on one piece of paper' [Leanne - No.47].

Unlike satisfied stumblers, these stumblers appeared dissatisfied with the experience of stumbling over interpretation. If they eventually found interpretation this visitor group appeared to be critical about its provision. Because frustrated stumblers expectations of information provision had not been met, it is probable that if they do eventually stumble over interpretation that they will be less inclined to be interested or extended.

**Shadowers**

Shadowers as an overarching category represented by only 7.8 per cent of visitors in this particular sample. Shadowers were those visitors who were chaperoned through site interpretation by formal escorts such as Alpine Guides or by informal escorts such as friends and family. Shadowers can be split into two categories;
• **Formal**

These visitors represent 6.2 per cent of this sample and are those who were escorted formally through place and interpretation. This usually occurred when visitors had paid for an escort such as a guide on a glacier. The following typified 'formal - shadowers':

> 'Our driver, Denis was very informative. A great character and very funny. He really adds to it. He has a mountain of experience and doesn’t miss anything...It is all new to us. Dennis can tell you everything you need to know...He said you must go strolling and showed us a few places' [Helen & Alf - No.53].

Formal shadowers appeared to be the only visitor group likely to use the whole range of interpretation both prior to and during their visit to Mount Cook, with at least the secondary interpretation such as the guided walks organised prior to their arrival. Once at Mount Cook the majority of visitors in this particular category combined secondary interpretation, such as the 4WD tour with primary interpretation such as a visit to the DOC centre. The role of interpretation for this particular category of visitors appeared to be inextricably linked to their experience of place. As an Alpine Guide commented;

> 'They always seem very interested...they often bring along a note book and write down all the things we tell them. They often take pictures of flowers and write the name down in their note book. Some will even tape the whole trek - others do the video thing' (Int:6 - pl).

Similar to seeker-learners, formal-shadowers present a captive audience for providers and as such interpretation is likely to interest, stimulate and extend these visitors.

> 'Today we want to go up to the Tasman Glacier to see the Blue Lakes. A lady at Alpine Guides said it was a nice walk. I feel going with a guide would be better as they will know more about the region. She told a little bit about the flora and the fragility of the ecosystem' [Bob & Dawn - No.55].

It was interesting that all formal shadowers were first time visitors to Mount Cook and all fell into the eldest age bracket (66 - 75). These were the only visitor group in the whole sample to exhibit any common demographic feature. From observations I suspect that this particular category represented a significantly larger proportion of the visitor population than has been found in the current study.
Informal

Informal shadowers represented only 1.5 per cent of this sample but were found to be an interesting group as they are escorted informally through interpretation by friends or significant others. The following comment typified 'informal - shadowers';

'Yes we had some information. My friend, from Switzerland is climbing Mount Cook so he asked at the information centre about Mount Cook. But we have no written information about it. We didn't know about Mount Cook we just followed him here' [Seiko et al., - No.56].

Although informal shadowers have not themselves instigated contact with interpretation they appeared to accompany those visitors who might have fallen into the seeker category and as a result the informal shadowers seemed to take more than a passing interest, for example in the interpretation provided by DOC or Alpine Guides. As a consequence of this, informal - shadowers are likely to be influenced by interpretation, however the extent to which this happens depends on the quality of material presented by their informal guide. Despite this however, they may be stimulated sufficiently to be confident to seek their own discoveries about place for themselves in the future.

Shunners

Shunners as an overarching category represented only 4.7 per cent of this sample. These visitors appeared to shun site interpretation for one reason or another. It seemed that interpretation was marginal to their experience of place. They are split into two groups;

Passive

The seated shunners accounted for only 3.7 per cent of this sample. These shunners were those visitors that made little effort to experience interpretation - they were passive. This appeared to happen for a number of reasons; limited time, fatigue, lack of English or a lack of interest. The following comment typified 'passive - shunners';

'We have a tour guide to tell us things so I went up to my room and rested. I put on some jeans. I was going to go for a walk but decided I wouldn't' [Elizabeth et al., - No.28].

The use of interpretation at Mount Cook may have been limited for these visitors but during their journey to the place, secondary or tertiary interpretation such as a
commentary on a bus may not have been so easily avoided. The impact of interpretation at Mount Cook is therefore likely to be minimal for these visitors.

- **Avoiders**

The avoider shunners represented only 1.5 per cent of this sample. These shunners were those visitors that purposefully and actively avoided site interpretation. The following comment typified 'avoider - shunners';

'I thought that there would be a lift like the ones you have in Switzerland. Its good to get some height. [We had very little information] it seems that there is only information on these areas unless you want to pay for it and go on commercial activities. I didn't want to pay for it. Why should we? We devised our tour on the ones that the coach companies advertise' [Barbara & James - No.47].

The avoider shunners were active, for example walking in the Hooker Valley, but appeared for some reason or another to resist in particular interpretation present in the place. In addition to the 'user-pays' resistance, I suspect although it is unsubstantiated by this study, that resistance may also come from those visitors who wish to appreciate the park without interpretive 'clutter'. However, regardless of the reason why this resistance occurred such visitors were not likely to use primary or secondary interpretation while at Mount Cook, and therefore its impact on avoiders sense of place is likely to be minimal.

**Chapter Summary**

A range of interpretation was found to exist both on and off site at Mount Cook. This was developed into a typology of interpretive provision; primary interpretation, such as DOC; to secondary interpretation such as commentaries on guided walks and tertiary interpretation, such as conversations with staff members. Each type of interpretation revealed the place, Mount Cook in a particular form and a particular manner.

This range of interpretation was found to enhance a number of different senses of place; an activity, adventure, geographic, environmental and nostalgic sense of place have all been identified. Collectively this range of senses of place represent, what Tuan (1974, 1975, 1977) has termed a field of care sense of place. Whether or not visitors were moved towards a field of care sense of place as a result of viewing interpretation was
tackled by examining how different visitor groups, that were identified as seekers, stumblers, shadowers and shunners, used the interpretation available to them. (See Figure 14 which synthesises the provision of interpretation with its use by visitors.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Users</th>
<th>SEEKERS</th>
<th>STUMBLERS</th>
<th>SHADOWERS</th>
<th>SHUNNERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learners</td>
<td>Frustrated</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>Formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRIMARY</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>NL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECONDARY</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TERTIARY</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 14: Mount Cook Interpretation: A Matrix of Use and Provision.

Key

L = Use Likely
P = Use Possible
NL = Use Unlikely

For each visitor group it was speculated whether their use of interpretation may in some way initiate, stimulate or extend their sense of place. Despite the fact that the relationship between people, place and interpretation is complex and variable it was discovered that the majority of visitors (excluding those who had been identified as shunners) had been influenced by interpretation at Mount Cook. Whether visitors are moved towards a field of care sense of place is discussed in the following concluding chapter.
CHAPTER EIGHT

'At the heart of interpretation is the importance of place.'

Duncan Light (1992:179)

DISCUSSION

Chapter Outline

This thesis has been driven by the need to develop within the study of interpretation an evaluation approach which is practical, purposeful and theory driven. The theory used to inform this research seeks to link the place in which the interpretation occurs to the objectives of that interpretation. The three research areas identified as problematic in the first chapter of this thesis are addressed in this chapter by presenting:

• a reflection on practice;
• a reflection on theory;
• a reflection on methods.

A Reflection on Practice

'While most visitors do not come to learn about conservation per se, it is clear that many seek to improve their knowledge about the natural and historic values of the area. Generally they welcome being provided with insights into the conservation values of the ecosystems and historic heritage being protected by the department.'

Visitor Strategy - Department of Conservation (1996:43)

The experiential focus of place has been of particular interest, that is, how visitors experience both the place and the interpretation and the interaction between them. This experience is discussed in light of the fieldwork and aims to illustrate the broadness and complexity of the use of interpretation at Mount Cook, rather than to provide a panacea of how interpretation should be done.

The commitment to interpret the landscapes of Aoraki/Mount Cook can be traced to the mountain guides who in the 1880s were employed by the first Hermitage Hotel to add enjoyment to their visitors experience of the place. This commitment to interpretation has remained, and has become enshrined in recent legislation (such as the Conservation
Act 1987), directives (such as the 1983 policy directive) and strategies (such as the 1996 Visitor Strategy), so that interpretation has become a Government responsibility.

Today, interpretation is evident in many different forms at Mount Cook. These forms have been identified here as primary, secondary and tertiary interpretation. Collectively these forms enhance a number of different senses of place. The overriding objective of all forms of interpretation however, is to move visitors, by initiating, stimulating and extending their understanding of place towards a field of care sense of place. As the title suggests a field of care sense of place implies the development of a deep rooted sense of care for a place. This evaluation of interpretation sought to examine whether visitors did in fact move 'one step beyond' towards this field of care sense of place.

In addition to the development of this typology of interpretation, I have also developed a typology of visitors based on how they use interpretation. Discussion of this typology in the results chapter established that interpretation does appear to play an important role, by enhancing in some way the experience of place, for the majority of visitors to Mount Cook (excluding those identified as shunners).

A significant number of visitors were identified as seekers (46.9%), those visitors who actively sought out information and interpretation to help them understand and enrich their experience of place. It is speculated that although some seekers may not be extended greatly by interpretation, others, particularly those identified as seeker-gatherers and seeker-fillers, may be stimulated sufficiently by interpretation for it to enhance their sense of place. The following is a rare quote which illustrates that this relationship between interpretation and sense of place exists.

'When I first came to Mount Cook I found the place quite spectacular - moving, emotional and all those sorts of words. After playing with that thing out there (he pointed to the topographical model in the DOC visitor centre). I decided that I wanted to climb Mount Cook. Yeah of all the silly things it was the model. I was quite inspired. I hadn't done any alpine climbing at that stage but I wanted to do it for myself. I finally climbed Mount Cook last year' [Martin No8 - p2].

The number of stumbleurs identified in this particular sample of visitors (40.6%) indicates that for a large proportion of visitors to Mount Cook their experience of place is not as
positive as it might be. However, many stumblers seemed satisfied to experience the place in this manner. Because satisfied-stumblers appeared to be at a different starting point from seekers, this group have the potential to be taken 'one step beyond' wherever they happen to be when they first arrive at Mount Cook. This however, is not likely to be the case for those stumblers who have been identified as frustrated, who appear to be less inclined to be interested or extended by interpretation. The frustration experienced by these visitors appeared to arise from the lack of adequate orientation in the village. Further research is required to find out what proportion of the total visitor population might be classified as frustrated stumblers, to establish the reasons for this and whether or not this may seriously impede their experience of place.

**Shadowers** are thought to be under represented in this sample (because their stay is generally highly organised and within a short space of time) and were probably more significant in terms of numbers than this study suggests. Of the small number interviewed, shadowers, either those chaperoned by a formal or an informal guide appeared to be interested, stimulated and extended by interpretation.

Those that have been identified as **shunners** in this sample illustrate that not all visitors will be interested or receptive to interpretation that is provided in the place they visit. This however, may only represent a minority of visitors.

> 'Interpretation can facilitate learning among those visitors who want to learn, but it cannot compel visitors to learn' (Light, pers. comm., 1996).

There is very little providers can do to redress this because essentially interpretation is not something that can be easily done for visitors who are not receptive to it in the first place. Even the most sophisticated interpretation, if to be effective, needs an active commitment from the visitor. The impact of interpretation on non participatory visitors is likely to be minimal.

Collectively this sample of visitors was generally alert and open to receive conservation messages. If the development of a **field of care** sense of place could be enhanced for visitors by interpretation then interpretation, if executed well at this and other places could have a cumulative effect encouraging the desired development of empathy for
conservation, heritage, culture and landscapes. The following section makes a secondary analysis of the results by reflecting precisely upon what sense(s) of place were identified among visitors to Mount Cook National Park.

**A Reflection on Theory**

'Gaining a sense of place and its relation to interpretation is not a straightforward relationship'

Duncan Light (pers. comm., 1996).

Sense of place has been a valid conceptual tool in this thesis because it is the only term which adequately expresses the interrelationships between people and their experience of place, and services such as interpretation that enhance or impede those experiences. The term 'sense of place' is developed further in this discussion to take into account a critical finding of this study that people, who have short stay experiences at a place such as Mount Cook can develop an undifferentiated space into a meaningful, but as of yet under researched, appreciation of place.

The elements which characterise the traditional notion of sense of place (Tuan, 1974, 1975; Relph, 1976; Eyles, 1985) appear to be absent in the kind of interaction visitors have with a place such as Mount Cook. For example, according to Tuan (op cit) a 'Field of Care' sense of place, arises from a prolonged association with the place where people have been exposed to a variety of experiences. The majority of the visitors interviewed at Mount Cook were short stay visitors (82.8% of visitors were staying three days or less) and the majority (78.1%) were first time visitors, consequently, these visitors simply did not have the time or the opportunity to develop such associations and attachments to the place that would be predicted to be formed in places such as the home or places of employment or study.

The traditional notion of sense of place may be attained for climbers who return to the park year after year and in doing so develop for themselves a deep sense of association and attachment to the place. However, given that most visitors to Mount Cook National Park cannot be expected to develop this, it is not surprising that it was impossible to develop further theoretical understanding of the traditional notions of sense of place.
Appreciation of Place

However, although visitors may not have expressed a traditional notion of *sense of place*, it was apparent from interviews, that visitors were expressing to me a deep *appreciation* for the place, Mount Cook, which it appears they did not have prior to their arrival. The term an *appreciation of place* is used here, rather than a *field of care* sense of place, because it seems to reflect with more meaning the notion of place expressed by the visitors in this particular sample. *Appreciation of place* is defined in this context as going beyond understanding, to develop a concern for values, by determining the significance and meaning of the place. The following quote is indicative of this appreciation of place.

‘On the bus [Kiwi Experience bus] we drive and drive - it is like you are in a TV. You just don’t feel anything, don’t smell anything, you just sit and watch and I really don’t like that. So I decided to stay here for one whole day without moving. It is really great to get off the bus. These mountains, they are so powerful. Amazing. It is unbelievable to be here. They rule the country... I just wanted to enjoy nature. Which is just what I am doing! Fed up of sitting. There is a real feeling of nature, smelling’ [*Onkle No39* - *p1-2*].

Despite the fact that visitors used interpretation in a diverse manner, this *appreciation for the place* which was articulated by *all* visitor groups was remarkably similar. Most notably these visitors focused their expression of the place, on their experience of say, going or staying at the Hermitage, of walking down the Hooker Valley and particularly of seeing the mountains, specifically Aoraki/Mount Cook, for the first time (Plate 16).

‘Our impression of Mount Cook was that it was nice, very beautiful. We went straight to the Hermitage. We parked the car and took some pictures. Then we came down here and walked to the Hooker Glacier. We expected a nicer glacier, it is different to back home. Our highlight was to see Mount Cook from the Hermitage’ [*Frederich & Hans No16* - *p1*].

‘We went to the Hermitage. Here we took some important photographs - from inside looking out from the bar to the mountains. Then we walked down here. We are hoping that the Hooker will be our highlight’ [*Ellie & Millie No58* - *p1*].
'Well luckily the big white snowy things and the gravel pits largely speak for themselves. People come to see them primarily. Very few people come here to be educated. But unfortunately places like the Tasman need explaining, because the visitors don't see what is there, they can't see the glacier for the rocks (literally!)' *(Int 15 - p5)*.
These symbols of place such as the Hermitage, the Hooker Valley, Aoraki/Mount Cook and the Tasman Valley appear to act as repositories, or summaries of visitors' experiences of the whole place. This discussion implies that future theoretical investigations into sense of place should be widened to take into account people's experience of destinations such as Mount Cook, or indeed other places which tourists experience.

It is therefore apparent from this study that visitors can develop a rich and meaningful appreciation for a place, to develop care for a place, even when they have only been at that destination for a very short time. Although not a simple or straightforward relationship interpretation has an important role in this process. Interpretation is enmeshed in many different forms across the place. Variety is critical, given the need of the majority of visitors to seek out, to be chaperoned through or just to stumble across this range of interpretation as a way to understand the place and the symbols contained within it. Interpretation is seen to accelerate the process of visitors developing an appreciation for a place. Interpretation at Mount Cook, for the majority of visitors was effective in contributing to this process. However as Brown (1993:134) has pointed out; 'interpretation can be one of the tangible gestures which help create place'. Typically appreciation of place for all categories of visitors is yielded from a diverse combination of other tangible and intangible factors. Interpretation therefore can not take all the credit for the development of an appreciation of place among visitors.

These other tangible factors may include; the immensity of the whole place particularly the feeling of being in the mountains, the weather experienced at the place, the opportunity to take photographs or videos while in the place, activities undertaken in the place and the group composition and the length of stay in the place.

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1 I am grateful to Kirby (pers comm., 1986) for insight at this particular point of the discussion.
‘It was really pretty. It was just too bad that you couldn’t see...everything. Well actually you can use your imagination, look watch this [he holds up his recently purchased postcards] This is what I’d like, that is lovely, see all these wonderful mountains. The rain is all part of travelling. When you are in a rush you just do what you can do... The waterfall on the way in was the highlight. I think it is incredible. You know how it all happened. The ice age you know - years ago it was all frozen. Even when it is raining you can sense it around you’ [Trisha & Patrick No6 - p1].

Intangible factors may include; past experience of the particular place, familiarity with New Zealand and interest in conservation issues. It is likely that a combination of these factors and no doubt many others will coalesce with a range of interpretation to create place for visitors.

‘I have been twice before, but I can only remember one of the trips and that was about 18 years ago. So I had to come back to see what I could remember! It is magic but it has changed a lot. They were telling me all about the opportunities to heli ski, jet boat and kayaking. I have heard about the Hooker, perhaps when I come back. I must come back it is such a beautiful part of the country. It is divine. It always amazes me. I have been in the North Island for almost 12 years, but I am from Christchurch originally and I just love the mountains. Just the vastness of it all it is lovely...

...You know it is magic to come here to enjoy what it is - but they are going to have to improve things. You know basically that is why I came down here, I am interested about what happens in my country, I am living in Auckland and you sort of get involved with lots of things and you recommend to people what to see. I hope to come back to Mount Cook in the next five years. I have a plan to do more stuff in New Zealand rather than overseas’ [Kerry No27 - p1-3].

In summary, it appears that interpretation aims to take visitors beyond an understanding of the symbols of the place, such as Aoraki/Mount Cook, the Hermitage or the Tasman Glacier towards a field of care sense of place. This means that visitors develop a sense of care for this place and other places of conservation value in the world. What has been found to exist among visitors to Mount Cook is not precisely a field of care sense of place in the way Tuan (1974) implied (because simply visitors do not have the time to develop an intimate relationship with the place), nevertheless, a similar appreciation of place is developed for Mount Cook which visitors did not appear to have before they arrived. Other tangible and intangible factors may have also contributed to the development of this appreciation of place.
A Reflection on Methods

'As theory guides the questions asked, technique guides the way questions are phrased and shapes possible answers'

Machlis & Field (1992:10).

The methods were chosen for their appropriateness to the particular line of inquiry of this study. Reviews of past studies of interpretation identified a critical absence of a theory of, or understanding of place. In response to this lack the concept of place was positioned at the core of this evaluation. A combination of qualitative research methods were used to explore the existence of the connections between people, interpretation and place. The important question is then, how effective were the methods in allowing me to explore interpretation and its critical relationship with place.

Place and Interpretation and Qualitative Methods

A critical challenge during the design of the fieldwork was to encourage visitors to articulate what they felt about the place they were visiting. This was challenging because the respondents were at Mount Cook generally for only a short amount of time, in many instances were there for the first time and were usually busy. To overcome this situation a semi-structured interview was designed in such a way as to make the visitor feel at ease and as relaxed as possible while allowing them to dictate the time they wished to give to the interview.

The first questions, which were simple trip related questions such as length of stay, allowed the visitor to get used to me and the interview format. This appeared to make the later questions which probed into visitors experience of place much easier to answer. The map of Mount Cook National Park which was given to visitors to aid them in their response was particularly useful because it was something tangible around which visitors could (if they wanted) discuss place and their use of interpretation in place. The informal and participant observation techniques that were used were particularly useful, initially to check out the fieldwork setting and also to check out findings that were arising from the semi-structured interviews with visitors and providers. The applied observation techniques however did not sit happily with the evaluation approach. For example, the
timing and tracking of visitors around the visitor centre did not provide data which could contribute to the research questions.

This combination of qualitative research techniques has enabled an exploration of the connections between interpretation and place which may not have been achieved using a quantitative approach. The research questions probed into people’s experience of place and this cannot be easily quantified. This however, does not devalue the use of quantitative approaches to evaluation because these can be useful to determine whether or not the design of the interpretation is suitable. However what quantitative methods can not do to the same degree of insight is examine the wider, more complex, more involved question of the role interpretation plays in visitors experience of the place.

‘Insight related to place experiences may be revealed more readily by using qualitative research techniques’ (Brown, 1993:134).

*My ‘Place’ in the Interpretation*

The researcher, whatever his or her approach must reflect on the nature of his or her research, interpretation and role (Eyles & Smith, 1988). A reflection on my place in this interpretation is therefore critical to this discussion because the study’s particular line of inquiry was and continues to be fired by my specific personal interests and previous experience. It is important to acknowledge my particular stance - as someone who has; practiced for a number of years in the interpretive profession; personal interest in alpine places; creative interests and also as someone who is from a place that is on the other side of the world to New Zealand.

The inspiration for the research, the fieldwork approach, the choice of methods and the interpretation of the data were inextricably linked to my particular combination of personal and professional interests and those of my supervisors. Consequently this piece of research, like most pieces of qualitative research, can not be repeated absolutely. Even if another New Zealand alpine area was chosen, such as Taranaki or Tongariro and the same theoretical parameters were employed the researcher would have to reconsider the work at all levels (see Yin, 1984).
This does not imply that further research should not be undertaken. Emerging out of this study are a number of exciting propositions for future research. These propositions could act as benchmarks from which research can progress. For example, the typology of visitors that have been identified at Mount Cook has potential value because it enables a development of alternative links made between theory and data. It is not a matter of checking the validity of the typology, rather, finding out whether the inferences that are made exist elsewhere and if they do not, what is discovered instead. The following lines of inquiry have been opened by this study.

**Future lines of Inquiry**

**Practice**

- This study indicates that a range of visitors has been identified to exist at a place (specifically based on their use of interpretation) in addition to the shades of difference that exist within these groups. It is imperative that these visitor groups are examined again at Mount Cook and then again elsewhere to compare them and to find out more about them. It may be useful to examine these visitor groups using quantitative methods.
- Similarly, this study indicates that a range of interpretation is provided at Mount Cook. It is imperative that these groups are examined again at Mount Cook and then again elsewhere to compare them and to find out more about them.
- To calculate the number of frustrated stumblers in the total visiting population of Mount Cook to establish whether or not this is a serious problem.

**Theory**

- Sense of place theory should be further explored to take into account the type of interaction visitors have in destinations such as Mount Cook.
- The notion of an appreciation of place gained through interpretation also requires further fieldwork in this and other locations to check its existence.
- The role public symbols may play in the relationship between place and interpretation requires further investigation.
- The theory that particular versions of place are filtered through interpretation also needs to checked out at Mount Cook and elsewhere.
• Other factors which may be critical in the development of visitors' appreciation of place, such as length of stay and weather conditions require further exploration.

**Methods**

• This qualitative approach, particularly short interviews and participant observation should be used again elsewhere.

• Other qualitative methods may be of value such as focus groups to further investigate the findings of this study, for example, the characteristics of the visitor groups already identified.

This sort of research may assist in the development of more theory informed approaches to interpretive studies, which in turn would heighten our understanding of the connections between people, place and interpretation. Further work is critical to this relatively unexplored field of study. The differences that may be uncovered between the pieces of research may be just as illuminating as the similarities. I look forward to seeing what emerges as more creative, more probing qualitative evaluations are developed.

**Concluding Remarks: The ‘Place’ of Interpretation**

'Interpretation is about place and the concept of place, about putting people and things into their environmental context'  

Don Aldridge (1989:64).

Evaluating interpretation is without a doubt a perplexing and complex process. The qualitative methods that were used to tackle this evaluation at Mount Cook were chosen specifically to allow an exploration of the provision, use and role of interpretation in the place for the visiting population. By addressing the more intricate place related aspects of interpretation this approach moves beyond the simple questions that have typified this type of research in the past.

The consideration of place as an overarching notion has been significant in a number of areas of this thesis, including practice, theory and methods. The principal conclusion is that this study points the way to a theoretically driven and rich approach to the
evaluation of interpretation. The main practice finding of the work is that providers of interpretation must understand both the resources of the place and the behaviour of those visitors to whom the interpretation is directed sufficiently enough to enhance experiences for a diverse range of visitors. The main theory finding is that the theoretical perspectives of place should be further explored to include the valid experiences and appreciations visitors develop in places such as Mount Cook. The main method finding is that insight into place experiences may be revealed most readily by using qualitative methods.

Reflecting the Greek derivation of the word place, *plateia* - meaning 'broad', place has been used in this thesis as an all encompassing notion to evaluate interpretation at Mount Cook National Park. Place has spanned many aspects of this thesis and in doing so *place* has been an exploratory probe which has challenged the approaches taken in past. This research has only scratched the surface of this critical area of study, with reference to only one place. What is required is similar evaluative research in other places to uncover further intricacies between place, people and interpretation. This is imperative if interpretation’s aim, of sharing knowledge about natural and cultural landscapes with visitors, to satisfy their diverse requirements for information, to enrich their appreciation of place and to develop in them an empathy towards conservation, is to be achieved.
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- MCB 6/14/  Park HQ and Visitor Centre  Vol. 1 1961-1963
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- MCB 8/2  Holiday Programmes/Conducted Walks  1967-1978
- MCB 11/2  Park Publicity/PR  1965-1977
- MCB 14  Education Dept. (Educational use of the Park)  1972-1979
- MCB 16  Park Publications and Park Interpretation  Vol. 1 1962-1964
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                Vol. 3 1970-1978
- MCB 16/1  Information Leaflet  1966-1987
- MCB 16/3  Handbook  1956-1987
- MCB 16/5  Place Names  1967-1973
- MCB 16/6  Holiday Programmes  1964-1977
- MCB 16/7  Park Maps  1966-1980
- MCB 16/8  Easy Walks  1962-1979
- MCB 16/9  Tasman Ski Run Leaflet  1970-1975
- MCB 16/10  Information about Huts for Climbers  1972-1976
- MCB 16/12  Copland Pass Leaflet  1972-1976
- MCB 16/14  Help Preserve Leaflet  1973-1976
- MCB 19/3/1  Film - Tasman Ice  1977-1979
- The Hermitage  1925-1942
PERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Denis Canesen (1996) **Managing Director** - The Hermitage Hotel - Southern Pacific Hotels, New Zealand.


Pat Devlin (1995-7) **Reader** - Parks, Recreation and Tourism - Lincoln University, Canterbury, New Zealand.

Martin Heine (1996) **Design Centre Manager** - Conservation Design Centre - Department of Conservation, New Zealand.

Val Kirby (1995-7) **Head of Department** - Landscape Architecture - Lincoln University, Canterbury, New Zealand.

Duncan Light (1996) **Senior Lecturer in Leisure Studies** - Liverpool Hope University, UK.

Gianna Moscardo (1996) **Senior Lecturer in Tourism Studies** - James Cook University, Australia.

Richard Prentice (1996) **Professor of Tourism Studies** - Queen Margaret’s College, Edinburgh.

GLOSSARY

These terms are adapted from Ryan, P.M., (1995) with the kind help and assistance of Ailsa Smith of the Centre for Maori Studies, Lincoln University.

**Aoraki**
Mount Cook

**Aotearoa**
Maori name for New Zealand

**Aranui**
Great pathway or main highway

**Iwi**
Tribe or tribes, or people

**Kaupapa**
Topic, matter for discussion, policy

**Maori**
Indigenous people of Aotearoa

**Ngai (Kai) Tahu**
Tangata whenua of the South Island of Aotearoa

**Pakeha**
Non Maori of European or Caucasian descent

**Raki (Rangi)**
In Maori mythology - The Sky Father

**Waitaha**
First wave of Maori people to colonise the South Island

**Whakapapa**
Genealogy

**Whanau**
Family

**Tangata whenua**
People of the land

**Te Waahipounamu**
The place of the Greenstone

**Te Waipounamu**
Maori name for the South Island

**Treaty of Waitangi**
Covenant nature of the document that was signed between Maori heads of tribes and representatives of the British Crown, that gave Pakeha the right to settle in Aotearoa/New Zealand
APPENDIX ONE

- Schedule of Interview Questions for Providers of Interpretation at Mount Cook National Park.
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: PROVIDERS OF INTERPRETATION AT MOUNT COOK NATIONAL PARK

I am currently undertaking some research here at Mount Cook as part of my masters degree in parks, recreation and tourism at Lincoln University. In general, my research focuses on the interpretation of the national park, and in particular, on the role that interpretation plays in the visitor experience of the Mount Cook area.

The first phase of the research, which involved interviewing visitors to the park, was completed over the summer months. I am now undertaking the second phase of the research, which involves talking to the providers of interpretation and information in the park. This is why I am speaking to you today.

You may be assured that your name will remain anonymous in any written reports emerging out of this study and that your responses will be treated in strictest confidence.

Please feel free to interrupt, ask for clarification or challenge my questioning.

• Check that it is ok to record interview
• Introduce myself and background in interpretation
• Inform respondent of interview schedule

1. **Background information on the organisation**

   *History to involvement*
   *Why Mount Cook*
   *Aims and objectives of the organisation*

2. **Basic information on the types of visitor services provided by the organisation**

   *Activities and services provided*
   *How services have changed*
   *How are the services marketed*
   *Where are the services marketed - are you in the Lonely Planet*
3. Interpretive provision

Information on the form and manner of interpretation provided
Description of a typical visitor experience
What do you focus on in your interpretation
Who devised the interpretation
Interpretive aims and objectives
How does the organisation define interpretation
How much emphasis is placed on interpretation
Evaluation of interpretive provision
Why does the organisation provide interpretation
What function does it serve
How do their services fit into other providers on the site
Does the organisation do any evaluation

4. Information on the characteristics of visitors

Who are their visitors
How do your visitors find out about you
What do their visitors want
How do their visitors respond
What do visitors expect
How well are visitors informed
When do visitors decide to use the services of the organisation
How does the weather effect your service - are there any other factors which effect your service
I have found it interesting to look at a visitor trip as a series of experiences - pre-arrival, journey, arrival, exploration, activity, departure and post trip reflections - what role does your organisation play in each of these experiences.

5. Future

What do you think most people want from their visit to Mount Cook - do you think interpretation has a role to play
How well do you think the site is presented to the public at present
What is the future of interpretation at Mount Cook
What is their ideal for interpretation at Mount Cook

6. Personal background

How did you become involved with your current work
When did you first come to Mount Cook
When you first came to Mount Cook what was your impression
What does the place mean to you
APPENDIX TWO

- Proforma of Question Sheet for Visitors to Mount Cook National Park.
My name is Emma Stewart and I am a masters student in the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism at Lincoln University. This survey is part of my thesis research which looks at visitor information at Mount Cook National Park. The survey should take about 10 minutes to complete. Your help in this project is highly valued.

Your responses will be treated with confidence.

Date: __________________________
Time: __________________________
Place: __________________________

---

1. How long is your visit to Mount Cook?
   1. a few hours (please specify) ............
   2. day trip
   3. Overnight
   4. 1 day to 3 days
   5. 4 days to 1 week
   6. more than a week (please specify) ....

2. Who is accompanying you on your visit to Mount Cook today?
   1. self only
   2. couple
   3. family
   4. friends
   5. family and friends
   6. other (please specify) .................. [post-code]

3. Is this your first visit to Mount Cook?
   1. yes (go to question 5)
   2. no (go to question 4) -->

4. If no, on how many occasions in the last 2 years have you visited Mount Cook?
   1. 1
   2. 2
   3. 3
   4. 4 or more (please specify) ________________

5. Where was your accommodation last night?
   __________________________

6. Where is your accommodation tonight?
   __________________________
### Journey Profile - the following questions ask you to describe your journey

7. How did you travel to Mount Cook?

1. Car
2. Motor bike
3. Bike
4. Plane
5. Bus
6. Organised Coach Tour
7. Other (please specify) ..................................

8. How long was your journey to Mount Cook?

1. Under an hour
2. Between one and two hours
3. Between two and three hours
4. Between three and four hours
5. Between four and five hours
6. Between five and six hours
7. Over six hours (please specify) .......................

9. Where did you start your journey to Mt Cook and where did you stop on your journey? *What did you do there?*

   

10. What aspects of your journey to Mount Cook did you enjoy? *What was memorable/disappointing?*

   

11. What was your immediate impression of Mount Cook?

   

### Pre-trip profile - the following ask you about your plans to visit Mount Cook

12. Before you arrived here, what information did you have about Mount Cook National Park?

   

13. Before you arrived here, what did you expect to do at Mount Cook National Park?

   

14. How did you make up your mind to do these activities? *When? With whom? How?*

   

15. Which parts of your trip did you expect to enjoy most? *Why?*
16. Using this map of Mount Cook village and the surrounding area, can you describe to me
the things you have done or are going to do at Mount Cook? [Time? Comments?]

17. During your visit to Mount Cook what sort of information have you found?
[Did you use it? Was it useful? Why/ Why not? Did you expect to find it?]

18. What parts of your trip to Mount Cook would you consider to be the highlights?

19. If you were to sum up your experience, what does Mount Cook, the place, mean to you?

Visitor Profile

20. What is your nationality/ethnic background? [post-code]

21. What is your gender?
1 male
2 female

22. What is your age? [post-code]

Many thanks for your time and interest
APPENDIX THREE

- Visitor Cameo Exemplar.
**number: 01; name: Stephan and Anja; date: 29-11-95; location: Outside Hermitage.**

*Stephan and Anja*  

29 November 1995

On 29 November, Stephan and Anja, a young German couple (32 and 29 respectively) visited Mount Cook for the first time. Their journey by car from Christchurch took about four and a half hours travelling through Ashburton, Fairlie and Tekapo. At Tekapo they picked up some information about Mount Cook - specifically about the activities at Glentanner Park Centre. They spent the night in Twizel before making the journey to Mount Cook.

A: OK - I remember from Twizel, the blue of the lake...
E: Yes it is incredible...Pukaki...anything else?
S: We a little bit wonder, that so less people in this area. So spartan. Less people. Less traffic. It is lonesome.
E: Yes compared to back home [Europe] there is so little traffic on the roads. Do you remember anything else?
A: The shone view. The crown and then the sudden direct mountain. A big welly (valley). You know in Europe or in America there are trees - there is nothing like this. It is different - I like it.
E: You said welly?
A: Yes, ein Till.
E: Oh valley.
A: Yes welly.

Before Anja and Stephan arrived at Mount Cook they expected to hike - and that is what they did. They mentioned that they had information about the hikes from travel guides and from information brochures picked up from Tekapo. They also said that they had a book from Germany that detailed many of the walks in the area.

Together they described their day at Mount Cook:
A: First we go to the visitor centre.
E: Yep... How long were you at the visitor centre?
A: Half an hour maybe.
E: What did you do in their?
A: Oh just looking - read all the stuff and look where the mountains were. Where different huts were.
S: To find out if we could go there. This kind of information.
A: Then we changed our clothes and then we started. We started on the Kea Point.
E: How long did that take?
A: Maybe one hour. A rest of 45 minutes at Kea Point. Then we go back slowly because of the view was so very nice and we make many photos and to look through the binoculars.
E: What could you see at Kea Point?
A: Doch - Mount Cook a little - the view got better when we were coming back. But not like this.
E: Did you have any information about the track when you were walking?
A: No, nothing from DOC. Then we go to the cafe - um and now we are here. maybe for an hour.
E: What will you do now?
A: We will go back to Glentanner. Take a look maybe go horse riding or something like that. Then go back to the campsite [Twizel].

Anja and Stephan commented about the lack of information at Kea point.
A: What I miss - maybe some more information at the Point. To know what kind of flower it is at the moment because I don’t know. When I read it in the visitor centre I forget it.
E: Some more on-site panels?
S: Yes and in the bush. Yes - at the Kea Point some information on which peaks and signs which explains the name of the glacier, how long it is, how deepening.
Of their highlights of their trip to mount Cook, Stephan said;
S: Boy - definitely the view of the mountain. Now and on the way back because of the weather.
A: Yes - I like to go through the bush. OK, if I compare it to other hikes in Canada or Europe, this is a very lonesome place...um...ya.
APPENDIX FOUR

- Location of Visitor Interviews at Mount Cook National Park.
• Full tabulation of selected results.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
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<tr>
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<td>49.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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Gender (n=108).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>America</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK</td>
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<td>11.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
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<td>2.8%</td>
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<td>Danish</td>
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<tr>
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Nationality (n=108).

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<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
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<th>Percentage (%)</th>
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<tr>
<td>06 - 15</td>
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<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 - 25</td>
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<td>26 - 35</td>
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<td>36 - 45</td>
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<td>46 - 55</td>
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<td>56 - 65</td>
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Age Group (n=108).
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<th>Group Composition</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tr>
<td>Self only</td>
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<tr>
<td>Couple</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
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<td>Kiwi Experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bus Tour Groups</td>
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**Group Composition (n=64).**

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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>1.6%</td>
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<td>1.6%</td>
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<tr>
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**Mode of Transport (n=64).**
<table>
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<th>Accommodation</th>
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<th>Last Night - %</th>
<th>Tonight - No.</th>
<th>Tonight - %</th>
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<td>4.7%</td>
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<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>64</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Accommodation - Last Night and Tonight (n=64).