

CLEAN AND GREEN BUT MESSY: THE CONTESTED LANDSCAPE OF NEW ZEALAND'S ORGANIC FARMS

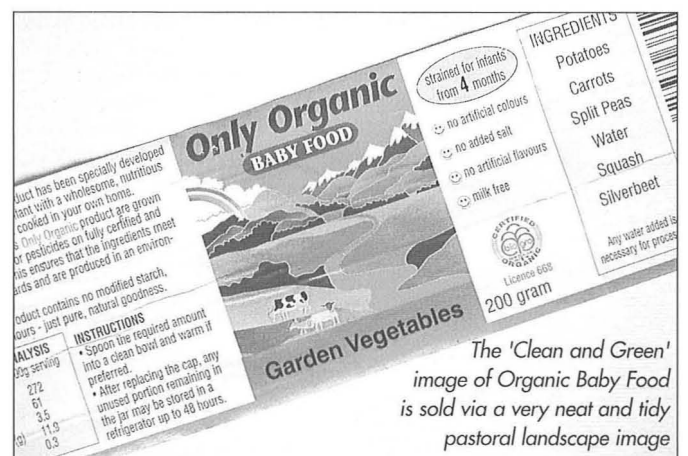
by Shelley Egoz

New Zealand's 'Clean and Green' image of nature and landscape has been naturalised into the collective psyche of New Zealanders, and is continually being promoted to tourists and visitors. There is, however, a tension in this vision in the farmed landscape. While 'Clean' refers to un-polluted, pure, pristine landscape, it also has connotations of tidiness. The increasing trend towards organic farming brings an apparent contradiction to this image, as the practices of organic farming do not conform to the general tidy appearance of cultivated landscapes in New Zealand. This paper argues that landscape tastes of New Zealand farmers are underpinned by ideologies, world views and social values and suggests a framework that could provide a context for interpreting some of the meanings embodied in the New Zealand farming landscape.

ABSTRACT

KEYWORDS:
New Zealand;
organic
farming;
cultivated
landscape

New Zealand's 'Clean and Green' image is central to New Zealanders' collective psyche and is continuously being promoted to tourists and visitors. 'Clean and Green' represents a belief in environmental soundness. This notion is expressed in the media and reflected in advertising and tourist information while at the same time being reinforced through official political institutions' statements.¹ A common tool used to portray this image is the concept of nature and landscape, and it is through visual representations in particular that the notion of Clean and Green is being reinforced (see right). In this paper, landscape is thus viewed as more than a physical expression of technologies but also as a cultural expression which carries multiple meanings and mirrors social ideologies.²



The 'Clean and Green' image of Organic Baby Food is sold via a very neat and tidy pastoral landscape image



An organic farming landscape does not conform to the general tidy appearance of cultivated landscapes.

'Clean and Green' may also be viewed as an expression of a pastoral and Arcadian predilection, an ideal which runs through Western culture. Pastoral sentiments derive from an Agrarian ideology 'the idea that agriculture is the basic industry and the idea that farming is the most natural and best life for people'.³ This belief is one of the underlying themes of *Pakeha* (European culture) New Zealand identity,⁴ and Arcadian ideals are reflected in a persistence of tendencies towards country living lifestyles.⁵

One example of the expression of a 'green lifestyle' in New Zealand is an increasing trend towards organic farming.⁶ Organically farmed landscapes by their nature do not conform to the general tidy appearance of cultivated landscapes in New Zealand (see above). Although the use of the word 'clean' refers to un-polluted, pure and pristine, the connotation of 'clean' with 'tidy' is inevitable, and as such 'messiness' in the landscape upsets this image. An apparent contradiction in the look of organically farmed landscapes versus the appearance of conventionally farmed landscapes reflects the different ideals, beliefs and environmental ethos of New Zealand farmers. Preliminary interviews with some organic and conventional Canterbury farmers reveal contention. The differences in landscape appreciation are underpinned by conflicting world views and interpretations of nature. This paper suggests a theoretical frame-

work that could provide a context for some of the meanings embodied in the New Zealand farming landscape.

RELATIONSHIPS TO LANDSCAPE IN NEW ZEALAND

Bell identifies two concepts of 'Beautiful Landscapes' in New Zealand.⁷ Both concepts may be viewed as representing the pastoral sentiment. The first is the sublime natural landscape which exists in the designated national park areas, and is a recreational or biological and ecological resource to be cared for (see right, top). In some cases it is a commodity to be enjoyed as scenery or active recreation by tourists and local visitors, and in others it is an asset in which landscape is interpreted as pristine nature. This relationship to the natural landscape manifests shared values of the significance of conserving a natural heritage of ecological richness in New Zealand. As such it is also an expression of a contemporary version of pastoral ideals, '...a yearning for an altered relation to the natural'.⁸

The second type of 'Beautiful Landscape' is the farmed cultivated and productive landscape (see right, bottom). Farmed landscapes represent pastoral ideals and have been referred to conceptually as 'gardens' or 'middle landscapes' positioned between the urban landscape and the wilderness.⁹ This landscape is also underpinned by the Western productionism paradigm. The



*Stewart Island,
New Zealand -
a 'Beautiful
Landscape' type
which represents
'Pristine Nature'.*



*A 'Beautiful
Landscape' type
which represents
the cultivated
landscape.*

productionism paradigm, the goal 'of making two blades of grass grow where one grew before', was empowered in the seventeenth century agricultural reform movement.¹⁰ Productionism is embedded in the idea of the moral virtue of assiduity along with Christian religious overtones of God's grace, and the merit of abundant yields.

NEW ZEALAND'S PRODUCTIVE LANDSCAPE

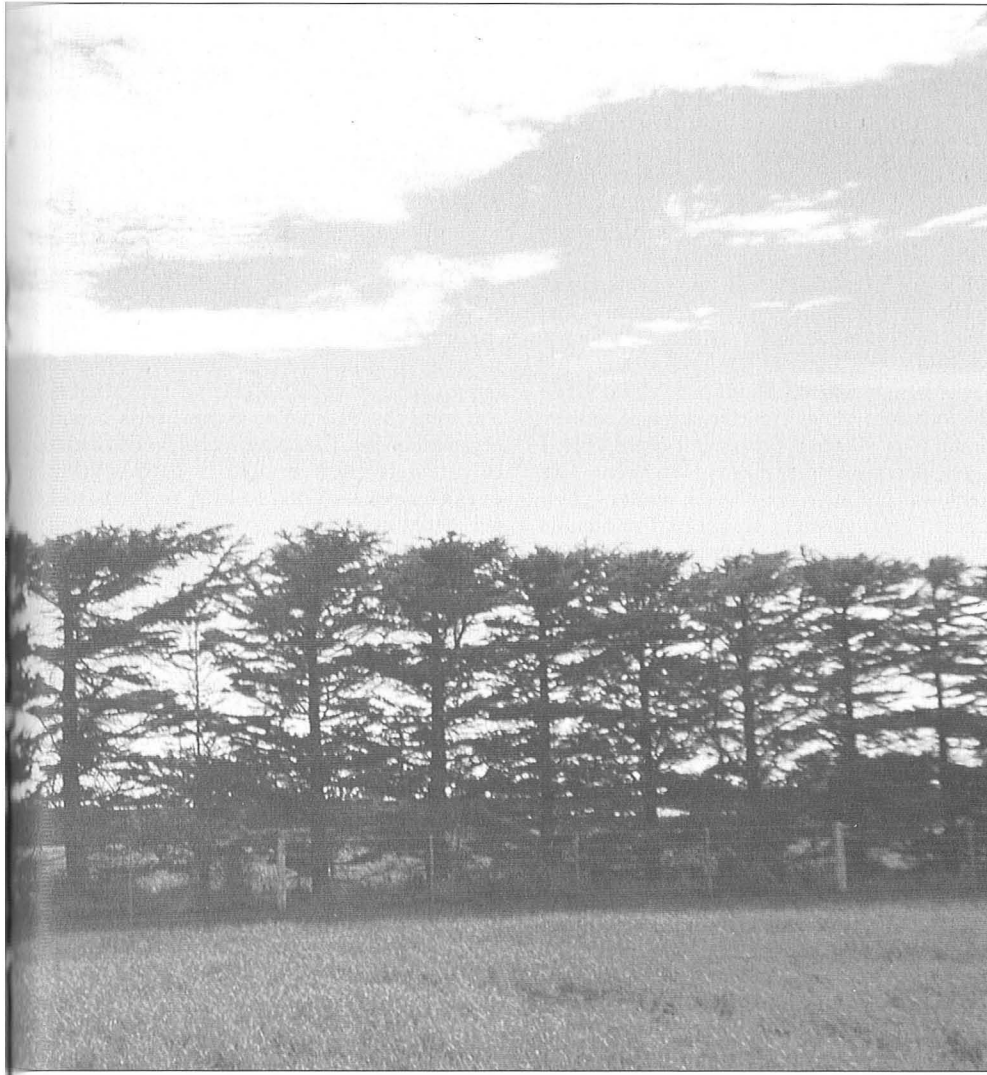
Underpinned by the Western productionist paradigm, the majority of the agricultural productive landscape in New Zealand reflects what Relph calls the 'rational landscape': '...the products of rational human intelligence doing its best to control uncertain environments, to guarantee a food supply...'.¹¹ The form of the 'rational' farming landscape in New Zealand expresses a mechanistic order (see right). A dramatic example of a geometrically ordered landscape is that of the Canterbury region of the South Island of New Zealand in which many of the wind break shelterbelts are trimmed as if they were topiary. The shelterbelts, hedges and angular paddocks create a landscape that is distinct to that region. This landscape embodies social values of pride in a national success: 'the land developed to the point that New Zealand is acknowledged as one of the richest agricultural countries in the world'.¹² The merit of the productive landscape is influenced by values of the white middle-class Victorian work ethic, a belief in the moral wholesomeness of hard labour. There are further historical reasons for the orderly form of this landscape. Both Pawson and Philips argue that the order imposed on the landscape is typical of a settler society who confronted a harsh and adverse environment and strove to survive.¹⁴ The response was an effort to create a landscape reminiscent of 'home' in an exaggerated manner. This taming of the wilderness is ingrained in Christian values of human mastery over nature and extended by colonists also to the goal of 'civilising' the native inhabitants as Pawson concludes: 'The imposition of order was thus central to the colonial enterprise'.¹⁵

Prior to the operation of organised settlement of British citizens in New Zealand in the mid nineteenth century, Christian missionaries strove to 'tidy up' the landscape cultivated by the indigenous Maori tribes. Led by Samuel Marsden whose principle was 'civilisation (including the art of agriculture) before conversion' the missionaries ordered the local cultivated landscape to emulate the English-looking farm landscape. In 1835, when Charles Darwin visited a mission farm during a sojourn to New Zealand he commented that it was 'the one



bright spot in a gloomy and disordered landscape'.¹⁶ A disorderly landscape is directly connected with ideas of laziness and thus is looked down on by *Pakeha*, those New Zealanders of European descent.

Arcadian ideals reflected in a pastoral sentiment, although altered from their classical mode, were also one of the underpinning themes in the ideology of European colonisation of New Zealand.¹⁷ During the mid-nineteenth century the literature in Britain which advocated settlement in New Zealand conveyed a belief that New Zealand was a country of natural wealth, an Arcadian promised land of milk and honey. The social ideal that was portrayed was that in New Zealand working-class people would have an opportunity to liberate themselves from the burden of social status constraints in their country of origin. While the idea of natural



The 'tidy' clipped landscape represents a mechanistic order.

abundance meets the classical Arcadian ideal, in the New Zealand account the relationship to the landscape is dynamic rather than passive. It is no longer the Garden of Eden, a place of leisure rather than toil, but a place to be transformed by human labour. This difference is a manifestation of values argues Fairburn: '[a reflection]...of the Victorian imperative of material progress, the belief that material betterment stimulates moral growth which in its turn produces more material growth and so on in an everlasting upward spiral'.¹⁸ Fairburn's interpretation sheds some light on contemporary relationships to the productive landscape and the meanings of moral wholesomeness that a tidy and controlled landscape convey. I would go further and suggest that in New Zealand, the ultra-geometric rational productive landscape, is a form representative of another version of

'complex pastoral'.¹⁹ A pastoral that embodies ambiguities in the relationship to nature and to the landscape: a settler society's fear and loathing along with 'dominance and affection' expressed in care for the neat and tidy look of this landscape.²⁰

These values of an orderly landscape as an expression of morality are still apparent in the *Pakeha* New Zealand mentality and express a deeply rooted colonial society's racist attitudes towards the indigenous culture. An interesting example is the use of the term 'Maori Hay' to describe deferred grazing. Deferred grazing is a pastoral land management technique in which the hay is left on the ground rather than being piled into bales. This technique was not historically practiced by the Maori hence the term 'Maori Hay' implies that the passiveness of this practice and the untidy look of the landscape

represents laziness. This derogatory evaluation is associated according to *Pakeha* work ethic values, with the Maori way of life which *Pakeha* would prefer not to be allied with.

Thus, it is not surprising that one of the concerns that New Zealand farmers have when adopting organic agriculture methods is the untidiness of organic farms.²¹ Organic farming practices have a different tangible expression in the landscape. Constrained by the lack of chemical sprays to control weeds, and mulching and composting practices, their appearance in the landscape represents an 'untidy and messy' aesthetic. Messiness in the landscape carries social signals embedded in moral values. While this 'organic order' is disturbing to some conventional New Zealand farmers, it represents, I argue, another kind of pastoral sentiment. This particular bearing is not only the result of physical land management practices. The organic productive landscape represents a different world view than that represented by the rational productive landscape. Historically, those who practiced alternative agriculture were inspired by a holistic ideal and a different view of nature to that which prevailed in the modern era and underlined modern agriculture.²² Organic farming emerged as a reaction to nineteenth century industrial society, and as an ideological movement, it can thus be seen as a counter-culture within agrarianism, as an expression of a romantic radical pastoral sentiment. Thus I argue that what might be viewed as 'messy' in the eyes of a conventional New Zealand farmer will be interpreted in a different way by an organic farmer. The 'productive agricultural' landscape is hence a symbolic environment through which people define themselves by

furnishing meaning and form to the landscape from within a certain world view.²³ It is through values and beliefs that landscape appreciation is filtered.

ORAL EXPRESSIONS OF BELIEFS AND VALUES REFLECTED IN LANDSCAPE TASTES

In-depth, unstructured interviews which I conducted with Canterbury farmers informed me of their various beliefs reflected in their landscape preferences. During 1998 I visited twenty-three farms in the Canterbury region, the majority of which were organic. The types of farms included cropping, grazing and orchards and were chosen from an organic certification organisation list. The conventional farms I chose to visit were referred to me by neighbouring organic farms. When talking to farmers I presented myself as a PhD candidate in the Social Science Division who was interested to listen to their views about farming lifestyles in New Zealand and their relationship to their land. I preferred not to mention the fact that I was also a landscape architect. I feared that if I would reveal that my interest was landscape I would receive responses that would reflect what they thought was an expectation for an attractive landscape. Conflicting world views and different landscape tastes did, however, emerge in the discourse of farmers.

James is a third generation Canterbury farmer whose neighbour suggested I should contact. James' farm was viewed by his neighbours as an example of a well-managed and meticulous looking farm. While James was struggling to maintain a reasonable income from his farm, it was still important for him to keep his farm tidy:



James: '...we do it [...] because we like the place to look neat and tidy'.



*Sandy's farm:
'a normal farmer
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absolute fit, whereas
I don't mind'.*

'people drive round here and say: well the place is neat and tidy which we try and keep'. As a response to my questioning about the short mowed grasses James said: 'we like to take a pride in our place, so like we always mow the roadsides'. James brings in a contractor to trim his shelterbelts and gorse hedges every year. Introduced gorse hedges are an invasive weed in New Zealand and this farmer said:

It is law in actual fact that you are supposed to cut the liners every year, but we do it [...] because we like the place to be neat and tidy [...] we keep them like that for two reasons: one is it keeps it nice and thick and it doesn't all break away, ah you know, and the other thing is that it looks better. [see left]

The productionist utilitarian approach is expressed in James's valuing of trees and his landscape preferences: 'to me, like if you gonna [plant trees], they're only two types of trees and that's - fire wood and lambing shelter really'. When comparing the typical landscape around his farm with other areas James said:

If you go away up round Oxford and Waimak Gorge, Darfield, Sheffield, Methven and up there, they got hell of a lot bigger trees than we got variation in landscape, and you come home and you think well, it's a bit too sort of low and squat and all the rest of it, but I mean, it's the way we like it so.

Scotch thistle weeds in the landscape were referred to by James as 'just untidy brutes' and 'we declare war on thistles, we don't like thistles

[...] we spray all Californian thistles' he told me. James had firm beliefs about the feasibility of organic non-spray land practices: 'The longer they do it, the dirtier the place gets, so as they put each crop on each year and they don't spray, sooner or later in time they're gonna get to a point where they gonna say: "Well look, weed's just taken the place over".'

The view conventional farmers have of organic farming practices is reinforced in Sandy's account of a friction between herself and her neighbour, a conventional farmer. Sandy grows herbs for essential oils organically. She is very concerned about the effects that sprays and chemicals have on human health and the environment. In Sandy's view: 'New Zealand even is not clean and green, the image they are trying to create'. When trying to track down her neighbour's spraying routine Sandy said she was: 'told in now unrepeatable words that it was people like me that were going to put people like him out of business, and from that day on we hardly ever spoke'. Sandy held the opinion that conventional farmers viewed people like her as a threat and thought they were: 'long haired Jandaly idiots'.²⁴ Sandy also said organic farmers usually get frowned on because of the look of their farms: 'a normal farmer would come through here and have [an] absolute fit, whereas I don't mind' (see above). Sandy's landscape taste is different from that of James, the conventional farmer. She preferred a natural looking farmed landscape and said she didn't like the look of geometrically trimmed trees and hedges because they were 'so boring'. Yet, it might also be of significance to note that Sandy is an immigrant to New Zealand, and the Victorian work ethic and values that are reflected in some of the New

Zealand born farmers are not ingrained in Sandy's thinking.

Cara, who grows cherries organically on the outskirts of Christchurch does actually express her concern for tidiness strongly. Cara reflects the current awareness of health issues that are related to chemical usage in food production. She adopted organic practices because: 'I'm just not into chemicals basically'. Cara's landscape preference is still very much influenced by her New Zealand farming background as she testified:

I grew up with people that took pride in their farm and surrounds [...] our farm was always neat and tidy, [...] they worked hard to make a productive unit that also worked, and you know, it's a nice place to come home to.

Cara believes that: 'it depends on which brigade you come from, the "neat and tidy brigade" sees neat and tidy rather than wild and woolly'. Cara is frustrated, however, as she finds it difficult to maintain a living from her small orchard and to keep a tidy appearance: 'I would like to be in the "tidy brigade" but you can't really with organics because it's very difficult to maintain' she told me.²⁵ Cara appreciates the trimmed hedges and shelter belts, she said she liked 'just [to] see a place looking like someone loves it really, and that's it's cared for as opposed to just let it go'. Cara's desire for tidiness as an expression of human care is probably not a unique New Zealand expression. Similar relationships to the landscape have been presented by landscape architect and researcher Joan Nassauer in the United States. Nassauer found that farmers ascribed value to 'clean and neat' farms and viewed them as 'attractive' and 'cared for'.²⁶

Farm appearances as a sign of social respectability, however, are not ignored by Tony and Rachel, who are considered successful organic farmers. Tony and Rachel have in the last decade converted part of the fourth generation family farm to an organic production system. They were driven by environmental values along with the challenge to explore a new way of doing things and niche market opportunities.²⁷ Tony maintains that: 'Farmers generally measure people on results [...] the idea might be wacky [...] but if it's a profitable farming system [...] I think that's the judge'. But how do they know the results? I asked Tony. 'Driving down the road probably, if the place looks messy that's a bit of an indication' said Tony. The landscape preference expressed by Rachel, however, was different from that of James, the conventional farmer, and similar to the one expressed by

Sandy: 'We're looking at a bit more variety and perhaps for more naturalistic look or style'. Paul, Tony's father, was very supportive of his son's desire to convert the family farm and Tony ascribes the success of his farming venture to his father's wisdom in encouraging him to carefully plan a gradual transition. Paul expressed an emotional relationship to the landscape: 'You develop a love for the land' he said to me, and as to the geometrically trimmed hedges typical of the Canterbury landscape Paul thought: 'It's not very inspiring to look at'.

Bill, who has been an avid advocate for 'organics' in New Zealand in the last twenty years shares Paul's landscape preference. Bill believes that: 'it's how you treat the landscape that shows whether you have an understanding of the environment' and expressed his dislike for the 'rational' landscape: 'I don't think the Canterbury landscape engenders an understanding of nature because it's [a] very mechanistic landscape, everything is clipped, rather horrifying'. It seems like this preference for the 'natural' looking landscape over the mechanistic one is not coincidental.

ORGANIC FARMING IN NEW ZEALAND

In New Zealand, scientific farming and an extensive use of chemicals became prominent in the post-World War Two era. During the 1950s farmers were encouraged by the government to increase production via the use of chemical fertilisers in pasture lands. The New Zealand government invested funds in research and extension work, and as these scientific methods of farming did indeed increase production, they were positively viewed by most farmers. The Modernist model of reason and progress in which agricultural success was measured in terms of productivity per acre, largely legitimised chemical input. Underlying that legitimisation was the belief that there is an urgency to increase capacity to grow food to feed the escalating world population numbers.

Views which opposed scientific farming were apparent in New Zealand as early as the 1940s, yet it was the 1960s European and American nature and environmental awareness which permeated into New Zealand and advanced alternative farming practices. Ivan and Gloria are one example of the influence of environmental winds that were blowing through Western cultures in the 1970s. Influenced by those trends, after their graduation from university, they travelled to Europe with the aim of investigating environmentally-sound ways in which they could manage the family farm they were about to inherit. One of the options they were introduced to was Bio-Dynamics, a routine which incorporates spiritual elements into prac-

tice. Upon their return Ivan and Gloria made contact with the New Zealand Bio-Dynamic Association. As they began practicing the Bio-Dynamic farming methods they adopted the Rudolf Steiner philosophy that underpins Bio-Dynamics. Ivan and Gloria both expressed a preference for a naturalistic looking landscape. Ivan told me he ended up trimming the sides of shelterbelts because it made the task of fencing easier and less costly, however he thought: 'A straight shelter [...] looks quite as if you're imposing your will on the landscape'. Ivan believes that: 'It is a reality in conventional farming terms that they see land as a productive tool and not as something they have sympathy to' and Gloria reinforces this belief by stating that the conventional New Zealand farmer would be: 'all in favour of nice straight shelterbelt rows but he probably wouldn't cut the corner off and plant a jungle in there because that serves no function and it's using up a paddock and it looks messy'.

Economic restructuring in the 1980s facilitated the emergence of an organic agriculture movement in New Zealand. The restructuring set the stage for diversification and a change in land use patterns. The changes were supported by tax schemes which allowed reduction of income tax through investment in farm properties. As large scale farming was becoming less viable and a middle-class urban population was looking to shift to bucolic settings, subdivision of farm land occurred. This phenomenon happened particularly in peri-urban areas and led to the emergence of 'Lifestyle' farming blocks. The new farmers represented a different approach to land use from the existing ways of farming at that time, and often set up intensive and experimental farming ventures. Although most of these new farmers did not share the same values of those who had traditionally opposed scientific farming in New Zealand they were often interested in environmental and personal health issues related to agricultural practices.²⁸ Within the setting of a middle-class peri-urban society and growing awareness among the public of environmental threats, an organic agriculture movement began to develop in New Zealand. Until the 1990s, underlying motivations for adopting organic production techniques amongst New Zealand farmers, similar to those in other countries, were ideological and philosophical such as concern for the environment or a health-related lifestyle.²⁹

CORPORATE GREENING AND ORGANIC FARMING

The changes in the organic agriculture movement in New Zealand in the 1990s occurred within the context of the world phenomenon of

'corporate greening' which is defined as an attempt to satisfy high value niche consumers who desire green products.³⁰ The Organic Agriculture Movement was incorporated into an industry and became internationalised when large corporations found the New Zealand Organic Agriculture Movement structure suitable for export programmes. The two most eminent are Wattie Frozen Foods Ltd and the New Zealand Kiwifruit Marketing Board.³¹ This step resulted in some legitimising of the concept of organic production amongst conventional farmers, producers and companies.³² Wilma and Jeremy are an example of 'lifestylers' who chose to grow organic produce for Heinz-Wattie. Their motivation comprised a dislike for spraying practices along with economic opportunities provided by the corporation. When I first approached Wilma she was very apologetic, and told me that their farm looked messy, later she said to me:

I'd like to have no weeds but I'm quite comfortable with [...] that the way it goes and I can justify [...] that they are there and I think: 'well that's the way it is, and we've got pheasants and things living in those' [...] and I love the sounds of pheasants and the pheasants wouldn't be there if it was perfect and well, perfect in other people's eyes.

For Wilma, it seems that the conversion to organic practices driven by economic incentives is influencing an acceptance and justification of a landscape type that was not her ideal. Celia, another organic lifestyle farmer, however, told me how her husband who was very pragmatic about the whole venture resented their next door neighbour Michael, who also farmed organically: 'Don [her husband] gets very angry when we look across to his back right there and there are thistles all summer'. They find it hard to accept that their neighbour does not cultivate that paddock. The productionism model emerges through Celia's discourse: 'Don sort of sees it as a waste', Celia said to me, 'We just wondered why he doesn't take the opportunity to, you know, make some money, sort of grow something up there, plant some trees'. With regards to their own landscape Celia told me they began planting some diverse shelterbelts but at the end of the day 'it all comes down to what you've got to spend'. While most of the organic farmers I talked with told me they viewed the geometrically trimmed shelterbelts as 'a boring landscape', Celia, nevertheless, said she quite liked those forms. Celia's landscape taste highlights the current 'green' transformation trends of farming in New Zealand. It is the productionist paradigm that underpins this

couple's involvement in organic practices, rather than the traditional organic philosophy which resented the 'mechanistic order' of the production landscape.

The 'corporate greening' process is not confined to lifestylers or 'townies' as they are referred to by the established farmers. In some cases, where the conversion to organic practices is driven by circumstances rather than ideology, the need to maintain a controlled and representative landscape might even be greater. When visiting Canterbury fourth generation farmers who have converted part of their farm into organic production I found different ideas about the landscape. In 1993 Jack and Rebecca ran into financial difficulties. Heinz-Wattie Corporation was looking for organic vegetable produce in an attempt to accommodate a niche market growing export demand. Wattie encouraged local farmers to change their vegetable growing practices by offering growers higher premiums, and better payment options than those offered by the firms who were buying conventional produce off growers.

Jack and Rebecca took that challenge upon themselves and say that today they are back on their feet financially. The neighbouring farmers, however, all being conventional fourth generation farming families are sceptical and look at Jack and Rebecca's organic venture 'humorously' said Rebecca. The appearance of their farm is thus particularly important to Rebecca: 'it was a very tidy farm when we bought it from Jack's father and we put a lot of effort into keeping it tidy, [...] it would concern us to have an untidy property'. Rebecca prefers trimmed hedges to natural looking ones: 'well, it's very tidy, it's very defining, all the hedges get trimmed on the farm, the whole lot, macrocarpa and all square cut' and went on telling me: 'it gives it a very tidy look, it gives it a very completed look I think'.

Rebecca's and Jack's preferences reflect their social milieu - although at present they are practicing organic farming, they would not want to be associated with a certain image of 'organics' which exists in the New Zealand society. Rebecca told me that when they had just joined Wattie's programme, the New Zealand organic certification inspector who visited their farm almost drove them out of the whole venture:

[He] was a sandal wearing, holes in clothes unbelievable character, and he wanted trees and flowing water and I mean, I mean we felt guilty that we ate red meat, we felt guilty that we weren't wearing a sarong, and you know, caftan and sandals, and you know, shaved hair or plaited hair or whatever.

The type of landscape that the certification inspector tried to impose on Rebecca and Jack is the type that the Organic Agriculture Movement promotes. One of the underlying principles of IFOAM (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movement) is 'to create a system which is aesthetically pleasing to both those within and those outside the system'.³⁵ Rebecca does not appreciate this landscape type, which to her represents the 'caftan and sandals' image.

'TRADITIONAL ORGANIC' VERSUS 'CONVERTED ORGANIC'

Beus and Dunlap have shown that in the United States views of those involved in organic farming differ from those who practice conventional farming, not only in their attitudes towards the use of chemicals in agriculture but also in their wider perspectives upon other issues that are part of the historical contention between agrarianism and industrialisation.³⁴ The New Zealand farmers I had talked with reinforce that statement and their landscape preferences indicated that dissension. While the traditional organic farmers are generally motivated by a philosophical view which expressed a liking for a naturalistic form of landscape and a clear dislike for the geometric 'rational' landscape, the newly converted farmers expressed some ambivalence and this was reflected in their landscape tastes. When the origins of the organic agriculture concept are seen as a pastoral sentiment, as an opposition to industrialisation, it is understandable why recent trends in the organic farming industry would cause uneasiness within the organic agriculture movement. Bill's view of the industrialised agricultural landscape as a landscape which reflects 'no understanding of nature' reflects the ideological opposition within the organic agriculture movement as to the appropriateness of corporatisation and this process as defined by Bill is a 'mainstreaming of organics without changing the main stream'. This issue is today a point for discussion in the world organic agriculture movements.³⁵

These different world views are also reflected in the explanations farmers gave for why they did things which influenced their farmed landscape. James, a conventional farmer justified the trimming of hedges and trees to create thick and thus useful shelter from the damaging effects of the prevailing Canterbury gales. At the same time, Shona, a permaculture farmer, who defined her practices as 'working with nature', described those type of shelterbelts as 'tortured trees' and explained to me how by boxing and thickening the shelterbelt the wind would actually swirl over the shelter and damage crops.³⁶ Shona argued that a 'natural' looking form of

trees would be more functional as it would filter the wind and weaken its effect. While James, made an effort to mow the grass all the way to the road, Michael, an organic farmer, told me he let the grasses grow high because of the way it attracted insects. Michael, however, was aware that his neighbours might be looking down at him, interpreting his passive land management as laziness. While conventional farmers read the organically farmed landscape as 'messy', organic farmers argued that it was not a 'messy landscape' but a 'functional landscape' in which there was logic and reason for letting grasses grow high in order to attract beneficial insects and leaving the trimmed branches on the ground to compost.

CONCLUSION

Although New Zealand 'organics' used to be viewed as a counter culture expression and was considered radical associated with 'long hair and sandals', it is today diffusing into mainstream agriculture.³⁷ From the viewpoint of organic farmers, however, New Zealand is not yet environmentally clean. From the perspective of the conventional farmers, the green organic farming landscape is messy, not clean. At the same time sentimental and complex ideals are coalescing

in the context of the current environmental paradigm in which economic opportunities are provided to farmers by corporations.

An inherent paradox exists in the above process: the organic movement which is underpinned by Romantic ideology is moving towards the mainstream because of the work of corporations which represent a contradictory world view, that of a reliance on sophisticated technology and industrialization. This tension is mirrored in the meanings embodied in the 'Clean & Green' but 'messy' farming landscape. Farmers' discourse expresses how landscape is interpreted through values and beliefs. As stated by Thayer: '[landscape meaning] ultimately lies in the observer, but the observer acts as though the meaning resides in the environment'.³⁸ Listening to farmers talk of their relationships to their landscapes a range of ideologies are revealed: agrarianism, productionism, a settler society's relationship to the land, conflicting views of nature, and different types of pastoral sentiment. Viewing the contradicting interpretations of 'Clean and Green' within the context of the pastoral mode contributes to our understanding of the layers of meanings which the New Zealand contested farming landscapes portray.

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NOTES

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is a minority (twelve per cent of the population) New Zealand is considered to be a bi-cultural society. However, Europeans, mainly from British and Dutch descent dictate the mainstream culture and values of New Zealand society.

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- 24.** Jandals is the vernacular term for rubber beach sandals.
- 25.** 'Organics' or 'Organix' is the vernacular term used to describe the philosophy and practice of organic production.
- 26.** J Nassauer, 'Messy Ecosystems Orderly Frames', *Landscape Journal*, vol 14, no 2, 1995, pp 161-170.
- 27.** Organic produce in New Zealand is barely marketed to food chains and is mainly sold as a boutique product in health food stores, geared towards high income consumers.
- 28.** H Campbell, 'Recent Development in Organic Food Production in New Zealand. Part 1: Organic food exporting in Canterbury', *Studies in Rural Sustainability Research Report No. 1*. Dunedin: Department of Anthropology University of Otago, 1996.
- 29.** C Lamb, 'The Production and Marketing of Organic Food: An Analysis of Organic Pea Production and Consumer Purchase Determinants', paper presented at 10th International Organic Agriculture IFOAM Conference, New Zealand: Lincoln University, 1994; Fairweather and Campbell, 1996.
- 30.** MacRae in Campbell, 1966.
- 31.** Wattie Frozen Foods Ltd later became Heinz-Wattie New Zealand and the New Zealand Kiwifruit Marketing Board is now known as Zespri International.
- 32.** Campbell, 1996.
- 33.** L Woodward, 'The Alternative View - Organic Farming in Input/Output Relationships in Agriculture', *Proceedings of the 7th Study Conference of the Scottish Agricultural Colleges*, SAC, 1984.
- 34.** C Beus, R Dunlap, 'Endorsement of Agrarian Ideology and Adherence to Agricultural Paradigms', *Rural Sociology*, vol 59, no 3, 1994, pp 462-484; C Beus, R Dunlap, 'Agricultural Paradigms and the Practice of Agriculture', *Rural Sociology*, vol 59, no 4, 1994, pp 620-635.
- 35.** L Woodward, D Fleming, H Vogtman, *Health, sustainability and the global economy: The organic dilemma*, UK: Elm Farm Research Centre, 1997.
- 36.** The word Permaculture was defined by the Australian Bill Mollison in the 1970s. It is a concept that opposes monoculture and emphasises a holistic approach of combined animal husbandry, orcharding and crop growing.
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- 38.** R Thayer, *Gray World Green Heart*, New York: John Wiley, 1994, p 105.