INSTITUTIONALISING THE PICTURESQUE:
The discourse of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Landscape Architecture at Lincoln University

by
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To Dorothy and Ella
Despite its origins in England two hundred years ago, the picturesque continues to influence landscape architectural practice in late twentieth-century New Zealand. The evidence for this is derived from a close reading of the published discourse of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, particularly the now defunct professional journal, *The Landscape*. Through conceptualising the picturesque as a language, a model is developed which provides a framework for recording the survey results. The way in which the picturesque persists as naturalised conventions in the discourse is expressed as four landscape myths. Through extending the metaphor of language, pidgins and creoles provide an analogy for the introduction and development of the picturesque in New Zealand. Some implications for theory, practice and education follow.

**Key words**

picturesque, New Zealand, landscape architecture, myth, language, natural, discourse
Preface

The motivation for this thesis was the way in which the New Zealand landscape reflects the various influences that have shaped it. In the context of landscape architecture the specific focus is the designed landscape, and particularly the perpetuation of design conventions. Through my own education at Lincoln College (now Lincoln University) I became aware of how aspects of the teaching of landscape architecture were based on uncritically presented design 'truths'. The termination of the journal of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, *The Landscape*, gave added impetus to the research, standing as a milestone in the development of the practice of landscape architecture in New Zealand. This milestone was underscored by the symmetry between the date of Richard Payne Knight's significant work on the picturesque, *The Landscape*, in 1794 and the final issue of *The Landscape* exactly two centuries later, in 1994. My first investigations into the picturesque in New Zealand, in women's paintings, are published in the final issue of *The Landscape*, which gives this thesis a note of self-referentiality and provides a sense of closure to the covert usage of the picturesque in the journal. It seems somehow appropriate that as the first doctoral thesis in landscape architecture in New Zealand, the focus is the profession itself, a self reflection on theory and practice.

On a technical note, throughout the thesis I refer to 'picturesque' with a lower case 'p'. As is evident in the range of quotations included, authors vary in their usage of the upper or lower case when referring to the picturesque. My usage of the lower case follows the precedent of Hunt's *Gardens and the picturesque* (1993). It is also consistent with the conventions of the Chicago Manual of Style. In Turabian's adaptation of the manual, she advises that "Proper nouns and adjectives that have lost their original meaning and have become part of everyday language ... are not capitalized: french doors[,] india ink[and] roman numerals."\(^1\)

Versions of parts of this thesis have been published and presented at conferences during the period of research. Part of chapter 1 was published as 'Junior England: the picturesque in New Zealand' in *The Picturesque* (1994); part of chapter 6 was included in 'The view through the window' in *The Landscape* (1994); material in chapters 2 and 3 was presented as 'The Picturesque: metaphor and myth in New Zealand landscape architecture' at the Pacific Bridges conference, *Rewriting the Pacific*, University of California at Davis and Berkeley, October 1995; Section 3.2.2 includes material from 'A tool for surveying *The Landscape*' in *Landscape Review* (1996); chapter 6 is based on 'Pidgin picturesque' presented at the Languages of Landscape Architecture conference and published in *Landscape Review* (1995); portions of

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\(^1\) Turabian, 1987, p.61.
chapter 7 were presented as 'The Same Old Scene: the picturesque and New Zealand landscape architecture' at the inaugural Lincoln University Postgraduate Conference (1995).

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Introduction

Two centuries and a half a world stand between contemporary New Zealand landscape architecture and the origins of the picturesque. Yet I propose that picturesque conventions have endured through both time and space, and can be found within the published discourse of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects (NZILA). There is an apparent inevitability about this persistence, as the picturesque was a significant force in both the envisioning of the New Zealand landscape and the profession of landscape architecture. European settlers brought picturesque conventions to New Zealand during the nineteenth century, setting a visual agenda for future generations of New Zealanders. Meanwhile, the profession of landscape architecture developed in parallel with the picturesque, forging links that persist today. With a country suffused by picturesque vision and a profession dominated by its conventions, the reproduction of the picturesque in the discourse of the NZILA seems unavoidable. However, the presence of the picturesque in the discourse is not transparent; it is heavily veiled, dressed up, disguised, myth-like.

The persistence of the picturesque in contemporary landscape architecture has been noted by a number of commentators. Treib, for example, suggests, “the modernized version of the picturesque remains a mainstay of the profession,”¹ and Howett agrees that, “the picturesque aesthetic continues to inform so much contemporary landscape architecture.”² Hunt proposes it is surprising that “the craze for the picturesque... was not fully rejected by modernism,”³ and Crandell confirms that “the landscape garden is a powerful idiom that has comforted us for generations and from which it is difficult to withdraw.”⁴

This thesis draws upon this wider analysis of the picturesque in landscape architecture and extends it to the New Zealand context. Furthermore, it demonstrates the way in which the picturesque persists, investigating the expression of convention in a myth-like fashion. A notational system which demonstrates the operation of denotation and connotation in the generation of myth is developed as an analytical tool. This ‘L-diagram’ is then employed in the investigation of the discourse within the medium of the professional journal The Landscape, and related publications.

The research is motivated by the sort of scepticism identified by Corner in his summary of Eagleton and Brookfield, where critical thinking is focused on “authority, rules, and conventions that have long gone unquestioned.”⁵ And as Corner suggests, “Although such skepticism may often be subversive, it is neither

¹ Treib, 1993, p.286.
² Howett, 1987, p.4.
⁴ Crandell, 1984, p.53.
cynical nor destructive, but rather emerges from a discontentment, an unfulfillment.⁶ The goal of the thesis is instrumental, with a concern for improving the theory and practice of landscape architecture in New Zealand and beyond. Though seeking to be accessible to students, practitioners, and educators, it is intended not to be "esoteric and peripheral,"⁷ but clear and central. The project has a goal of enabling the future of design, rather than disabling it.

⁶ ibid.
⁷ McAvin in McAvin et al, 1991, p.156.
Chapter 1: Research context

This research is located within two contexts, one global and one local. Globally, it sits within an emerging field of discourse on theory in landscape architecture. It draws on the history of the profession and is part of the growing concern with critique. Locally, it is an outcome of the particular environment of New Zealand. It is a legacy of this country's history of colonialism, its indoctrination by the picturesque, and the specific experience of the profession in this setting. This chapter explores these two contextual domains; it is at the intersection of these that the thesis is located.

1.1 Disciplinary context

Landscape architecture is a profession arguably born out of the eighteenth century period of theorisation and debate that surrounded the picturesque. However, after two centuries of development the profession now finds itself in a period of transition. While there have been some episodes of theoretical vigour, such as the modernist experiments of Gropius-influenced Harvard graduates, the development of theory has not been a priority. As a relatively young profession the concern has previously been with getting work on the ground, and this has largely precluded the growth of theory and critique. A report by Fein in 1972 concluded that the profession was more craft orientated than theoretical in outlook, and Manning suggests the “common perception [is] that landscape design is an empirical process lacking a theoretical base to support what is actually practised; to explain why it ‘works’.” This echoes the words of Hubbard and Kimball some 70 years earlier, that “Nearly all the trained men in the field are giving their energies to active practice rather than to theorization or writing.” Walker and Simo suggest that the lack of theorising and critique can be attributed to the very nature of landscape architects, suggesting they tend to be “reticent, discreet, accommodating and not given to undue publicity.” They observe that “landscape architects tend to be doers rather than critics or philosophers [and that] they have tended to focus on the practical work at hand.” Furthermore, Walker and Simo identify the perceived role of landscape architecture as a setting for other objects (mainly architecture) as a hindrance to the development of critique. The dominance of the architectural criticism culture has also tended to repress the emergence of critique in landscape architecture. Meyer believes it is necessary to “recover the historic ground upon which contemporary landscape architects construct their theories and practices.” She contends that “this history is poorly served by the discourses of modern art

1 In Fabos, 1979, p 1.6.
2 Manning, 1995a, p.77.
4 Walker and Simo, 1994 , p.3.
5 ibid, p.4.
and architectural history which have relegated the landscape to a minor, repressed or misrepresented other.  

Beyond the experience of the profession at large, there is also a change in academic landscape architecture, with a shift from a dominantly applied focus to a greater concern with theorising. Selman claims that schools of landscape architecture were traditionally "heavily oriented to design and practice but, under pressure from vice-chancellors and other colleagues, their emphasis has shifted sharply towards scholarly research and publication." Less cynically, Riley states, "Academic landscape architecture is in transition from a profession to a discipline. The concerns and the activities of our academic world are no longer driven by the world of practice and applications." Shirvani identifies landscape architecture as a discipline rather than a profession, because, "A discipline embraces a broader agenda, far beyond the needs of a 'profession,' an agenda that can generate more identity and recognition for landscape architecture as a field of inquiry as well as a profession. It also attempts to educate students with an attitude that continuously is in search of new contributions to the development of the discipline." A similar concern with the position of the profession within the academy has also been addressed by the architectural profession. While there is concern with the "the academy and its disengagement from the world of practice," the comments of Cuff are enlightening: "The school has to help the students to reflect upon the issues they see in practice... We should be challenging people to think more broadly about architecture and have vision about what they are doing, to be able to critique and take a critical view of what they do. Over the long run, the profession is its own engine for evolution and renewal."  

The above comments on critique underline the central problem of theoretical development. Without critique there is no challenge to design norms; critical thinking is a protection against the stagnation of theory, and a decrease in the standard of design. Corner concurs, "Critical thinking is paramount to the success and sophistication of our practice, but only when it is primarily understood as a political and strategic phenomenon, not as an arcane, autonomous one." Meyer also identifies criticism as central to design thinking, as it "fosters precision of language..., produces new ways to think and evaluate...[and] agitates for change..." The case of the picturesque is an example par excellence of the implications of the lack of critical thinking, as discussed under 2.2. Persisting unchallenged as a design code, the picturesque suffered from theoretical impoverishment, design cliche, and apparent deception as

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6 Meyer, 1994, p.13  
7 Selman, 1995, p.49.  
8 Riley, 1990, p.47.  
11 Dana Cuff in Crosbie, 1995, p.94.  
it masqueraded in other roles, such as ecological design. Criticism of the taken-for-granted design conventions is crucial for the advancement of design, as Krog observes "lacking a critical mechanism for confronting the past, a progressive future remains elusive."14

The calls for increasing critique are being addressed in a number of ways. One of the clearest indicators of change is in the range of landscape architectural periodicals. The net growth in the number of periodicals serving the profession is a gross indicator of the increase in writing on landscape architecture. Of more particular interest is the nature of these periodicals. The journals of the professional institutes have generally endured, for example, Landscape Architecture in the USA and Landscape Design in the UK. However, academic journals have also emerged, notably Landscape Journal in the USA and Landscape Research in the UK. Through an academic rather than practice orientation these journals can maintain a certain distance from the profession. They provide an arena for the exploration of issues in greater depth, and foster criticism beyond that which might be possible in a professional journal geared to providing technical and institutional information. McAvin explains, "Professional journals seldom venture beyond journalistic reporting to critical assessment of specific works in context... The closest such publications come to criticism are essays by or interviews with designers offering briefs for the critical stances represented in their own work or comments about award-winning projects made by jurors in theatrical simulations of academic design reviews."15 Indeed the informal name for Landscape Architecture, Landscape Architecture Magazine, underlines a differentiation of the discourse: as Riley states, "practitioners have magazines and scholars have journals."16

Also indicating the growing commitment to critique are recent additions to landscape architectural literature. Moving beyond the practical concerns of the textbooks and treatises that have characterised the majority of landscape architectural writing, these new works examine the very nature of the profession and its products. The work of Geoffrey Jellicoe17 and J.B. Jackson18 prefigures the rise of critical writing on landscape architecture. In identifying the designed landscape as a focus for research both authors make a departure from the practice focus of landscape architectural literature. Increasing self-criticism in the profession is evident in works such as Marc Treib's Modern Landscape Architecture: A Critical Review (1993) and Peter Walker and Melanie Simo's Invisible Gardens (1994). Significant conferences and exhibitions focusing on critique have also contributed significantly to the theoretical discourse through the publication of proceedings and catalogues with wide circulation, for

15 McAvin, 1991, p.156.
17 For example, Jellicoe, 1960.
18 For example, Jackson, 1970.
example: *The Culture of Landscape Architecture*, Design + Values, and *The Once and Future Park*. The recently introduced annual competition for critical writing on landscape architecture is a further example of the changing climate of landscape architectural discourse. The *Critiques of Built Works of Landscape Architecture* competition run by Louisiana State University is a proactive attempt to develop "an awareness of the need for well-written critiques of built works" so that "the level of quality in built works will be improved."

Landscape architectural theory is thus coming full circle. After its theoretically intense origins in the eighteenth century, a shift in priorities saw the emphasis switch to practice. Now, two centuries later, the disciplinary context of landscape architecture is again embracing an active engagement with theory and criticism.

### 1.2 New Zealand context

#### 1.2.1 The picturesque in New Zealand

The second contextual domain of my research is New Zealand. The trajectory begins with the introduction of the picturesque to New Zealand. As one of many colonies settled by the British, New Zealand shares a common pattern of aesthetic appropriation by the conventions of the picturesque. Mitchell describes how, "The South Pacific... provided a kind of tabula rasa for the fantasies of European imperialism, a place where European landscape conventions could work themselves out virtually unimpeded by 'native' resistance, where the 'naturalness' of those conventions could find itself confirmed by a real place understood to be in a state of nature." The picturesque convention of representing an idealised, formulaic, nature was thus fused with an almost wholly natural environment. The boundary between culture and nature was blurred, as the environment which was encountered so readily fulfilled the formula of the picturesque. Shepard describes the paradox of the unfamiliar and the familiar which was central to the English settlers' experience of New Zealand, where the "complex of landforms and biotic features combined the familiar and the exotic and offered new experience for English eyes. Though foreign, these landscapes were laced with familiar features similar to those of the humid temperate environment of home."

The timing of colonisation is significant. The picturesque had passed from a phase of theorising and codification around the end of the eighteenth century to a more popular application of its conventions.

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22 Louisiana State University, Competition Flyer, 1994
By the mid nineteenth century, therefore, the picturesque was absorbed into the fabric of everyday life. And it was in early September 1850, that four ships left England with settlers bound for New Zealand. The Times said of these pioneering settlers, "They are attempting what has never been attempted before - to carry England with them." It is not clear why The Times should make so much of the departure of these settlers, as New Zealand was a comparatively late colony, but it was true, the settlers carried England with them in their baggage and in their minds. With a cargo that included English plants and cottage pattern books, and with minds coloured by the landscapes of Capability Brown and Humphry Repton, the settlers had all the raw materials they needed to reconstruct the picturesque in New Zealand. However, the landscape they encountered was not always consistent with the picturesque ideal. Artistic licence was freely used by early painters to ensure the landscape conformed to accepted conventions, but for most of the settlers the application of the picturesque was fraught with numerous obstacles.

As the foundation on which the picturesque was constructed, topography was critical to its success. Appleton describes the close relationship between topography and the picturesque in Britain, contending that, "with few exceptions, the opportunities afforded by nature for the achievement of those effects which were admired and advocated by the writers on picturesque landscape were unevenly distributed. The vast majority of natural features conducive to picturesque design - cliffs, waterfalls, ravines, precipices, etc. - occur among the Palaeozoic, igneous or metamorphic rocks of Upland Britain..."

The link Appleton described between topography and the picturesque is also evident in New Zealand, and is graphically illustrated in the Canterbury region. Three distinctive features make up the topography of the area: the Southern Alps, the Canterbury Plains and Banks Peninsula. (Figure 1-1) Whilst Banks Peninsula, with its hills and harbours, was receptive to picturesque conventions, the neighbouring plains caused dismay to new arrivals. Settlers arrived at the port of Lyttelton, and the setting was captured by C. Warren Adams in 1853, "There are few prettier towns than Lyttelton as seen from the sea. Situated in a small but picturesque bay, it is as it were, framed in the bold and rugged hills..." (Figure 1-2) However, settlers then had to cross the Port Hills from Lyttelton to the new settlement of Christchurch, located on the Canterbury Plains. (Figure 1-3) Adams viewed Christchurch from the vantage point of the Port Hills, and described it as "ugly", adding the site was "very unfavourable to beauty." Lord Lyttelton, one of the founders of the Canterbury Association, gave a

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25 Reed, 1949, p.94.
26 See, for example, Pound (1983) and Smith (1984).
28 Adams, 1853, p.25
29 ibid, p.33.
Figure 1-1. The first published map of Canterbury, New Zealand 1849. (from Barley, 1966)

Figure 1-2. "Port and Habour of Lyttelton, from the residence of Hamilton Ward, Esq. 'Quail Island'.” (Adams, 1853)
similar view: “for emigrants of a complaining turn of mind, and fond of the picturesque, [the Canterbury Plains have] at first sight seemed exceedingly repulsive.”

The obstacle of the flat topography was further exacerbated by the functional concerns of the settlers. Adams commented that Christchurch’s location was “a good situation in point of utility, which must always be the main consideration in the establishment of colonial towns”, and added, “I believe those only are displeased with it who, to use the expression of a leading colonist, consider the act of emigrating ‘merely as a protracted picnic, relieved with a little ornamental church architecture.”

This preoccupation with utility is emphasised on the Canterbury Plains, where the gridiron approach to surveying saw the whole area parcelled into rectangular blocks. The opportunities for views to the Southern Alps were balanced against the constraining influence of the strong, hot, dry Nor’west wind which came from the same direction. Practicality triumphed over the picturesque, and endless shelterbelts shut out views to the Alps, and reinforced the geometric layout provided by the surveyors. A recent survey of 243 homesteads in Canterbury found, “On the west side the trade-off with shelter involves the evening sun and a view of the mountains. The fact that 99.7 percent of the houses have major unbroken shelter on the west indicates a clear choice in this regard.

The pattern and location of country estates in Canterbury highlights the way in which the picturesque seeks out topographical features. In the gently rolling country bordering the Plains in the north, country estates such as Cheviot Hills and Parnassus capitalised on the picturesque setting (Figure 1-4). The foothills of the Southern Alps provided further opportunities for the picturesque, as illustrated by estates such as Peel Forest, Mount Peel, and Homebush. A visitor to Peel Forest in 1876 recorded the picturesque scene, “The view from my bedroom window is charming. The deciduous trees are showing various shades of brown and yellow in the foreground. Behind them are tufted masses of the native evergreens and above all Mt Peel with patches of snow.”

In the city of Christchurch the meandering Avon River provided some relief from the relentless grid which structured the city as well as the plains. (Figure 1-5) Adams described Mr Deans’s estate at Riccarton (now a suburb of Christchurch) as “a spot with which lovers of the picturesque must be pleased.” (see Figure 1-3) Although Adams found the general setting of Christchurch “ugly”, the presence of a patch of native bush and the situation of the house “on the bank of a beautiful stream of very pure water,” were sufficient to evoke the picturesque at Riccarton. Planting along the river in

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31 Adams, 1853, p.33.
34 Adams, 1853, p.34.
35 ibid, p.34.
Figure 1.3. "The Canterbury Plains, from the Heathcote Ferry. (Adams, 1853)

Figure 1.4. "The Cheviot Country" (Cresswell, 1951)
central Christchurch sought to emphasise the Avon’s picturesque qualities. In 1862 a report on the landscape improvements to be made to Oxford Terrace, adjacent to the river, described how, “the first line of upright poplars next to the footpath will form a handsome uniform avenue. The second ... judiciously planted will afford an interesting variety of foliage throughout the year, whilst the pendant branches of the weeping willows gracefully overhanging the margin of the stream will afford an interesting and pleasing diversity.”36 Half way around the world these words echo Richard Payne Knight’s *The Landscape*, where “Willows and alders overhang the stream, / And quiver in the sun’s reflected beam.”37

Figure 1-5. Christchurch 1862, illustrating the grid layout of the streets in contrast to the meandering pattern of the river. (from Barley 1966)

36 Report by Wilson, Hall and Gould, quoted in Challenger, 1979, p.2.16.
37 Knight, 1794 , p.56.
In contrast to the Canterbury Plains, the topography of some areas of New Zealand appeared to abound with picturesque potential. Adam describes the landscapes of Government House and Auckland Domain in the mid nineteenth-century: "Romantic walks were created at both sites, where one could experience many picturesque elements such as the native and exotic vegetation, streams and cliffs (Domain only), and extensive views across the Waitemata Harbour, as recorded by visiting artists and photographers from the 1840s onwards."38 The significance of topography to the picturesque is also demonstrated in the Horowhenua39 where an area of hilly country contains a lake dotted with islands. Sir Walter Buller, a pioneer natural historian and nature conservationist, immediately appreciated the setting of Lake Papaitonga when he first saw it in the 1850's. Buller eventually gained possession of the lake after the forceful eviction of the local Maori40 people, continuing a legacy of removing unwanted occupants and their dwellings from picturesque estates. In England, Joseph Damner had removed the medieval village of Milton Abbas from his estate to allow for a Brownian design around his new house in the 1752, and Lord Harcourt destroyed the ancient village of Newham in 1756 and relocated the villagers discreetly out of sight. Buller epitomised "The man of wealth and pride" in Goldsmith’s mythical The Deserted Village:

"But times are altered; trades unfeeling train
Usurps the land and dispossesses the swain;
Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn,
Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn;
Amidst thy bowers the tyrant’s hand is seen,
And desolation saddens all thy green:
And only one master grasps the whole domain."41

Park’s description of how Buller transformed the landscape at Papaitonga after he acquired it in 1892 resonates with Goldsmith’s lines: "The view from the house-site down to the lake was landscaped with fashionable ornamental trees, and a patch of lakeside native forest he called the Garden of Maui42 was planted up in the design of 'an epitome of native flora'. Maori canoes and a pataka43, important pieces he had collected, and now in the National Museum, were placed on the islands and the lake shore. Together with its forested rim now surrounded by 'smiling farms', Papaitonga had become a theatrical landscape reminiscent of the great landscaped English estates of the 18th century with their Greek and Italianate sculptures and acropoli."44

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38 Adam, 1995, p.85.
39 Province in the lower North Island.
40 Aboriginal New Zealanders.
42 In Maori legend, Maui fished up the North Island, from his canoe - the South Island.
43 A storehouse.
44 Park, 1987, p.89.
Buller's landscape garden illustrates the way in which the indigenous buildings of the Maori were incorporated into the picturesque vocabulary. In Canterbury, Adams recorded that, "The 'warries' look picturesque at a distance, but do not improve on a nearer inspection." Adams's illustration of "Mr Keale's Warrie, Port Levy", Figure 1-6, not only depicts the picturesque nature of the structure, but confirms his own preoccupation with the picturesque. The spectator figure represents a tradition of such figures which extends back to Gilpin's "loitering peasant", and beyond to Rosa's banditti and Claude's historical figures. The portfolio or sketch book is placed prominently in the foreground, as though underscoring Adams's allegiance to the picturesque.

The picturesque was also evident in the vernacular buildings of the settlers. The style of the ferme ornée was imported as an aspect of the picturesque garden. Strongman notes how, "Some of the Canterbury settlers brought ... design books with them and traces of this style have influenced some of the buildings on the estates, notably at Glenmark [North Canterbury]." Even the most basic early settlers' cottages gained picturesque status when they were elevated from the utilitarian to the decorative. The country estate of "Te Waimate", in Canterbury, illustrates the way in which the early dwellings were retained once the main house was built - an interesting contrast to the way in which English country houses added rustic dwellings to their picturesque landscapes. At Te Waimate, "The first home, a tent, was succeeded by a tiny cob house, or cuddy, a very solid structure. Between outer slabs of totara and inner laths, spaced a foot or more apart, the cob - made of soft clay mixed with chopped tussock - was rammed down, filling all the interstices, and the whole was smoothed with a board. Rammed clay made a hard floor, and the roof was thatched with snow grass and rushes. The little cob house, warm in winter and cool in summer, still stands in the homestead garden after nearly a century." It is now nearly one hundred and fifty years later, and the "Cuddy" remains as a picturesque folly in the garden at Te Waimate, Figure 1-7, looking a little like an antipodean version of the Philosopher's Hut at Ermenonville - but with much more prosaic origins.

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45 Misspelling of whare, the Maori word for house.
46 Adams, 1853, p.49.
47 Ornamental farm.
49 A New Zealand native timber.
50 Reed, 1949, p.132.
Figure 1-6. “Mr Keale’s Warrie, Port Levy” (Adams, 1853)

Figure 1-7. The Cuddy, Te Waimate (Reed, 1949)
Less receptive to picturesque convention was New Zealand’s native vegetation. Despite the ease with which painters transformed New Zealand “bush” into archetypal picturesque vegetation, the reality proved more of a challenge. The constraints of the New Zealand native vegetation were quickly noticed by settlers. In 1848 Thomas Arnold recorded his impressions of the New Zealand bush in a letter home to his mother: “It must be confessed that, owing I suppose to most of the trees being evergreen, there is a certain stiffness in the appearance of a New Zealand forest, which contrasts unfavourably with the fresh tender green of an English wood.”

Charlotte Godley highlighted another characteristic of New Zealand natives that precludes them from being direct analogues of British trees. Visiting a garden at Otaki in c.1850 she noted how native trees left exposed “generally die of their own accord when they lose the protection of the trees around.” The constraints of the native vegetation of New Zealand meant Richard Payne Knight’s advice to English “Improvers” to “Choose, therefore, trees which nature’s hand has sown / In proper soils, and climates of their own” went begging.

Even the very atmosphere of New Zealand challenged the picturesque vision of the settlers. Samuel Butler’s diary recorded, “January 27, 1860 - Oh, the heat! the clear transparent atmosphere, and the dust,” and Adams noted, “the clear atmosphere is most deceptive as to distances.” This is emphasised by the observation by one of the passengers on the first four ships, that from the Bridle Path, “The air is so transparent that distances cannot be guessed by an eye accustomed to English or Irish scenery. The furtherest mountain that we could see - one of the two called the Lookers-on - though 110 miles off, seemed to me but 25 miles distant.” The implication of this for picturesque convention is significant. The misty atmosphere of England causes a strong sense of aerial perspective, with the layering of views echoing the Claudian ideal. Nikolaus Pevsner described how, “That moisture streams out of Turner’s canvases ..., makes Constable’s so uncannily clear and fresh, and lays a haze over man and building, dissolving their bodily solidity.” Without such a misty matrix covering the New Zealand landscape it was a challenge to evoke the picturesque.

The landscape of New Zealand has thus both challenged and accommodated the picturesque. The value placed on scenery extended beyond the Canterbury area, and Raine describes how “Many colonists appreciated the picturesque qualities of the New Zealand landscape and incorporated ‘prospects’ or fine views, natural features and native plants into their gardens.” The vegetation and atmosphere seemed uncooperative and stubborn, whilst the architecture was easily incorporated into accepted conventions.

51 Thomas Arnold, 1848, quoted in McNaughton, 1986, p.203.
52 Challenger, 1974, p.60.
53 Knight, 1794, p.53.
54 Butler, 1923, p.31.
55 Adams, 1853, p.37.
56 Quoted in Reed, 1949, p.97.
57 Pevsner, 1956, p.163.
The topography provided equal measures of opportunity and constraint, a fact most clearly illustrated in the Canterbury region where picturesque hills abut the "exceedingly repulsive" Canterbury Plains. But with time, even these plains and the "ugly" city of Christchurch have weathered and become picturesque. The England that the settlers brought with them in their minds, in their pattern books, and in their imported vegetation, ensured the success of the picturesque, even in the face of adversity. The picturesque was so successful that in 1897 Mark Twain wrote of his travels through Canterbury, "It was Junior England all the way to Christchurch in fact, just a garden. - And Christchurch is an English town, with an English-park annex, and a winding English brook just like the Avon..."59

1.2.2 Landscape architecture in New Zealand
The experience of landscape architecture in New Zealand reflects the international development of the profession, as well as being a response to this specific historical, physical and cultural setting. The profession was established relatively recently. Although a Diploma in Landscape Design was awarded to Edgar Taylor by the Canterbury Society of Arts in 191260, it was an isolated award, and it was not until the 1960s that landscape architecture became established as a profession. Swaffield explains that "The main impetus for the formal development of the profession of landscape architecture in New Zealand came during debates on scenery preservation in the 1960s. Concern over the impact of public works on the countryside stimulated calls for the use of landscape architects to help fit development into the environment."61 Harry Turbott and Jim Beard returned to New Zealand after qualifying in the United States. The first landscape papers were taught as part of the Bachelor of Horticultural Science prescription at Lincoln College in 1962 and were the catalyst for the establishment of the first university teaching of landscape architecture there in 1969. Charlie Challenger trained at Newcastle upon Tyne, and Frank Boffa at the University of Georgia. The United States and Britain have consequently continued to influence the development of the landscape profession in New Zealand.

From the early days the discourse tended to be very internalised, with the majority of landscape architects employed in government departments. This internalisation inhibited the early establishment of a climate of discussion and critique. In his presidential address of 1976, Jackman said, "... I contend that in our endeavours to see a profession and an Institute developed we have gathered ourselves into somewhat sheltered enclaves afraid to reveal even to each other our respective works."62

The discourse of landscape architecture in New Zealand reflects the precedents of English and American influences, and in a way is a microcosm of the broader pattern of experience. The role of landscape periodicals as indicators of the state of the profession, as discussed in 1.1 is closely mirrored, and to

59 Mark Twain quoted in Eisen and Smith, 1991, p 110.
60 Challenger, 1990, p.4.
62 Jackman, 1976, p.3.
some extent experienced more acutely in New Zealand than elsewhere. For example, the professional journal did not simply encounter increasing competition as in the case of the English and American journals, but completely ceased publication in 1994, emphatically highlighting the change in the climate of the profession. *The Landscape* (Figure 1-8) had had the role of "provid[ing] contact between members, and items of technical and professional interest," as well as, "publicis[ing] the landscape philosophy more actively, and act[ing] as a vehicle for the dissemination of information about the profession and its activities."63 It was the "mouthpiece" of the profession64, and provided "a means of talking to each other, as members of a once fledgling profession, and of presenting to a previously uninitiated readership, images and information about landscape architecture."65 However, as Titchener observes, "willing providers of copy for the journal ... diminished," either because "go-getters" sought publication in higher profile publications, or because potential contributors were blasé about submitting work. "It's always more fun to build a hut, than to sit in it, once built,"66 he says of the lack of continued commitment to *The Landscape*.

The loss of *The Landscape* was followed by two significant developments. First, an academic journal emerged from Lincoln University. This journal, *Landscape Review*, allows the sort of academic distance that promotes theorisation and critique. The journal "aims to provide a forum for scholarly writing and critique on topics, projects and research relevant to landscape studies and landscape architecture in the Asia-Pacific region."67 The particular interest of the journal is the "issues arising from the interplay between the concepts and practices of western cultures and the indigenous environments and cultures of the Asia-Pacific region. Contributions are encouraged from both academics and practitioners."68 Second, a magazine, *Landscape New Zealand*, started production, with a focus on the wider arena of the landscape industry - "landscape architects, designers and planners; engineers, contractors and suppliers..."69 The motivation for the magazine was described as follows: "The greater public awareness of their domestic civic and rural environment, the impact of the Resource Management Act and the changing lifestyles and expectations of New Zealanders have all contributed to the rapidly growing recognition of the role of the Landscape Professionals."70 The role of *Landscape New Zealand* is to be "a forum for news, comment and analysis. It is about the landscape - its planning, development and maintenance - and the design principles and construction techniques which make for good landscapes."71 Coincidentally, this reconfiguration of the discourse parallels the first major change in.

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63 Challenger, 1976, p.17.
64 Oates, 1985, p.25.
66 ibid, p.24.
67 *Landscape Review* endpapers.
68 ibid.
70 ibid.
71 ibid.
Figure 1-8. Front cover of issue 1 of *The Landscape*, 1976
teaching of landscape architecture in New Zealand, with the emergence of the second tertiary course at Unitech, Auckland

This transformation of the discourse can be summarised as a change from a largely inward looking institutional and professional focus, to an increasingly divergent, outward and detached looking perspective. The change in emphasis is indicated by the shift in focus from simply New Zealand to an awareness of the wider Asia-Pacific context with Landscape Review, and to the broader industry focus of Landscape New Zealand.

Martha Schwartz’s visit in 1989 and the NZILA Critical Path conference in 1990 heralded the emerging concern with critique in the New Zealand landscape architectural discourse. Schwartz’s lecture offers a considerable challenge to the status quo, and Lister’s paper from the conference marks the transition to a more informed discourse: “We have all been unquestioning of our theoretical underpinnings. And they are all the more dangerous for our reluctance to critically examine them.”

Chapter 2: The Picturesque in Perspective

It was humiliating, at the time, to find my aesthetic impulses no more than the product of heredity and environment. Yet it was gratifying to know the name of one's subjectivity.1

Writing on the picturesque is extensive and multi-disciplinary. In addition to the original texts and histories of the picturesque, it has also become the subject of considerable critique in recent years. As Andrews observes, "the Picturesque has been gendered, politicized, deconstructed, rhetoricized and so on. Every single '-ism' has preyed upon it."2 However, my research focus is not on the original texts or the histories of the picturesque, but upon its expression within professional discourse. The following literature review therefore provides an overview, only, of the general history of the picturesque in order to situate my research. More specifically I look at the relationship between landscape architectural literature and the picturesque, highlighting the ways in which it has influenced the profession and what relevance it has to contemporary practice and criticism.

2.1 An overview of literature on the picturesque

2.1.1 Origins of the word "picturesque"
The origins of the word "picturesque" provide an important prelude to the overview of the literature, as so much of the history is embedded in the definitions of the word. The French pittoresque and the Italian pittoresco are the predecessors of "picturesque". The Oxford English Dictionary (1933) indicates that a critical change occurred when the word was assimilated into English. In French and Italian, the word meant "painter-like" (i.e. in the manner of a painter), but in English became "picture-like". Early uses in English retained the continental sense, for example William Aglionby in 1685, when referring to the free and natural execution of a painting explained, "This the Italians call working A la pittoresk, that is boldly."3 The earliest usage of Picturesque recorded by the Oxford English Dictionary is by Steele in 1703, in Tender Husband: "That very Circumstance may be very Picturesque", referring in this case to the allegorical or academic manner of painters. In 1712 Alexander Pope wrote, "Mr Philips has two lines, which seem to me what the French call very picturesque," retaining reference to the continental use of the word.

William Gilpin’s An Essay on Prints: containing remarks upon the principles of picturesque beauty in 1768 appears to be the first explicit use of the sense, "picture-like." Gilpin in fact states that by "picturesque beauty" he means "that kind of beauty that would look well in a picture."4 By 1773,

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1 Hussey, 1967, p.4.
3 Hipple, 1957, p.185.
4 Manwaring, 1925, p.168.
Johnson's Dictionary provided no definition of "picturesque" as such, although curiously used the word to define one sense of prospect: "A view delineated; a picturesque representation of landscape." The influence of Gilpin is clear in this definition.

The status of the word picturesque was enhanced considerably by Uvedale Price in 1794, when he added "the" and capitalised picturesque. Through adding the definite article Andrews suggests he "elevated an unassuming adjective into an aesthetic concept of overwhelming contentiousness." However, Robinson believes that, "To put a capital letter on such a frail idea as the picturesque seems the height of intellectual ostentation."

By 1801, George Mason's Supplement to Johnson's Dictionary required a half column of definitions for picturesque, indicating the momentum which the picturesque debate had gained since Johnson's edition. The Supplement describes picturesque as "1) what pleases the eye; 2) remarkable for singularity; 3) striking the imagination with the force of paintings; 4) to be expressed in painting; 5) affording a good subject for a landscape; 6) proper to take a landscape from." Krauss suggests the definitions move "in a kind of figure eight around the question of the landscape as originary to the experience of itself;" Indeed, the definitions have embedded in them much of the circularity and paradox which constantly thwarts the picturesque. The third definition implies that a picture is a template for describing landscape. However, by the fifth definition these roles are reversed, and it is the landscape which becomes the subject of the picture.

This is a circularity which persists in explanations of the picturesque, and largely stems from the process where, "A description is elevated into a category: a container with things placed in it, or leaking out of it as the case may be." In the 1933 Oxford English Dictionary, picturesque is defined as "Like or having the elements of a picture; fit to be the subject of a striking or effective picture; possessing pleasing qualities and interesting qualities of form and colour (but not implying the highest beauty or

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5 ibid, p.168.
6 The 1982 supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) added two earlier examples of the picturesque, and one of a capitalised picturesque, but neither has the gravity of Uvedale Price's the Picturesque. The first in 1749 by D. Hartley in Observations on Man: "The Nature of the Caricatura, Burlesque, Grotesque, Picturesque, &c. may be understood from what is delivered .. concerning Laughter, Wit, Humour, the Marvellous, Absurd &c. to which they correspond." In 1782, William Gilpin in Observations on River Wye wrote "Col. Mitford .. is well-versed in the theory of the picturesque."
8 Robinson, 1988, p. 75.
9 Krauss, 1985, p.163.
10 ibid, p.163.
sublimity). So, again the landscape is both a copy of a picture ('like'), and the origins or subject or a picture ('fit to be').

The OED also gives a second variation of the first sense of picturesque, in relation to gardening - "the arrangement of a garden so as to make it a pretty picture; the romantic style of gardening, aiming at irregular and rugged beauty." This includes some significant shifts in definition of the word, including the adjectives "pretty" and "romantic". Both adjectives differ greatly from the early sense of picturesque. In particular, "romantic" is at odds with the tenets of the picturesque, as Hussey has pointed out, "The romantic mind, stirred by a view, begins to examine itself, and toanalyse the effects of the scenery upon its emotions. The picturesque eye, on the contrary, turns to the scene...." Hipple expresses the relationship between the picturesque and the romantic as an equation: "picturesque = romantic - [minus] Romantic.

The third and fourth senses of picturesque given by the OED are described as obsolete: "Marked as if with pictures" (i.e. marble etc), and "Having a perception of or taste for picturesqueness." The fifth and final sense reflects the addition of the definite article, becoming the noun, "The picturesque, that which is picturesque; the picturesque principle, element or quality; picturesqueness."

Recent definitions of picturesque appear to have returned to Gilpin's 1768 "kind of beauty that would look well in a picture." For example, the Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English (8th edition, 1990) gives picturesque as "1. (of landscape etc.) beautiful or striking as in a picture. 2.(of language etc. strikingly graphic; vivid." (p.960) In the Penguin English Dictionary (3rd edition 1979) picturesque is simply "adj: suitable for a picture, of romantic or charming appearance; (of language) graphic, vivid; (fig) of striking appearance, colourful." (p.546). The sense of the Picturesque is not included in either of these recent definitions, suggesting it has been again become an "unassuming adjective".

2.1.2 Writing on the picturesque

As indicated by the short history of the word itself, the concept of the picturesque developed from simple origins into a complex concept. Reflecting the major philosophical activity of the Enlightenment, the picturesque was the subject of extensive investigation during the eighteenth century. The development of the theory began early in the eighteenth century when Addison wrote in the Spectator in 1712 on "The Pleasures of the Imagination." His comments highlight the thinking of the time, which provided fertile ground for the development of the picturesque:

12 OED, 1933, 832.
14 Hipple, 1957, p.189.
The Chinese laugh at the plantations of our Europeans which are laid out by rule and line, because they say anyone can place trees in equal rows and uniform figures. They chose rather to discover the genius in trees and in nature, and therefore always conceal their art. Our trees rise in cones and pyramids, and we see the mark of scissors upon every plant and bush... I would rather look on a tree in all its luxuriance and diffusion of boughs and branches, than when it is cut and trimmed into a mathematical figure.  

Addison identified two categories: primary sources of pleasure in the imagination, i.e. "objects or prospects distinguished by greatness, uncommonness or Beauty"; and secondary sources which came from a love of comparing objects or tracing resemblances: "We find the Works of Nature still more pleasant, the more they resemble those of Art." This observation by Addison persists as the kernel of picturesque thinking and debate to the present day. Also, importantly, Addison elevates sight above the other senses - as "the most delightful" sense. This promotion of the visual is significant and is examined further in chapter 5.

Throughout the ensuing century attempts to categorise the ways in which the landscape is experienced continued. Burke, Reynolds, Gilpin, and Addison were among those who grappled with the theory of the picturesque. Brownlow provides a very succinct summary of the course of events during this period of picturesque development:

The Picturesque emerged as a third category when Burke's much quoted categories of the Sublime (limitless, awe-inspiring) and Beautiful (smooth, curvilinear) were found inadequate to cover a whole range of objects strictly neither sublime nor beautiful. Gilpin sought the qualities of great landscape paintings in uncultivated nature, Uvedale Price extended and refined Gilpin's values, stressing the complexity of pictorial design and Payne Knight emphasized mental energies expressed in the work of art.

This period has been referred to as the picturesque debate, picturesque controversy, or picturesque decade, and is extensively examined in the literature, emphasising its significance. It was during this period that the picturesque was codified and formalised, with an emphasis on the relationship of landscape design to pictures, as opposed to the academic, literary picturesque which had dominated the first half of the century. Gilpin's expression of "what would look well in a picture" was no longer considered adequate, and Price and Knight attempted to define the nature of the picturesque. Repton was significant in providing a bridge between theory and practice, and the relationship between the picturesque and landscape architecture is expanded further in 2.2.1. However, as Goode explains, Repton's involvement in the theoretical dimension of the picturesque became overshadowed, as

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15 Addison quoted in Pevsner, 1944, p141.
17 ibid, p.52.
20 Bermingham, 1986.
From 1809 onwards he became personally aware of a new and even more threatening (visually and socially) landscape - the landscape of manufacturing industry. These sets of problems lay well outside the framework of the Picturesque controversy, and Repton could have found no benefit by referring back to it... Looking back from the troubled and threatening world of 1816 [when he published *Fragments*], his theoretical conflict with Knight and Price, however acrimonious verbally, must have seemed like a distant echo from a vanished age when aesthetic questions could be the subject of leisurely discussions between gentlemen.21

Hipple also identifies the early nineteenth century as a significant change point in the development of the picturesque, contending that 1810 was the end of the picturesque's development as it was "just at the time when picturesque attitudes had become generally adopted and when practical applications of the picturesque were being most fully developed."22

During the nineteenth century the picturesque became the subject of critique from the world of literature and art. Jane Austen's novels provide a contemporaneous picture of the cult of the picturesque and its place in the social milieu. Michasiw describes her as having constant admiration for Gilpin, and "despite her occasional jokes at his disciples' expense, is very precise on the class locations of her various students of the picturesque."23 In *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) Elizabeth Bennett declined to join a group out walking, saying, "No, no; stay where you are. - You are charmingly group'd, and appear to uncommon advantage. The picturesque would be spoilt by admitting a fourth. Good bye."24 Austen's use of the picturesque here is much more astute than many readings give credit, as Michasiw points out that Elizabeth and her author recalled that "Gilpin's preferred grouping for humans was a pair. Groupings of three were reserved for domestic animals, especially cows. Elizabeth thus employs Gilpin's discourse not only to jibe at those who have aroused her personal spite but to indulge her superior taste and learning at the expense both of the old aristocracy and the rising bourgeoisie."25 Krauss also refers to the "amused irony" of Austen, citing the example of Catherine Morland in *Northanger Abbey* (1818) to show how the landscape is "constructed" by the highly educated. Henry Tilney and his sister are Catherine's more highly educated companions, and Austen writes how "...a lecture on the picturesque immediately followed, in which his instructions were so clear that she soon began to see beauty in every thing admired by him.... He talked of fore-grounds, distances, and second distances - side-screens and perspectives - lights and shades; - and Catherine was so hopeful a scholar that when they gained the top of Beechen Cliff, she voluntarily rejected the whole city of Bath, as unworthy to make part of a landscape."26 Price suggests the character of Henry Tilney "seems to bring to the subject the lightness and playfulness that are inherent in it as a mere aesthetic exercise."27

22 Hipple, 1957, p.188.
23 Michasiw, 1992, p.95.
Wordsworth provided a vitriolic critique of the picturesque with its "tyranny of the eye," and its basis on a "comparison of scene with scene/ Bent over much on superficial things..." Dickens was concerned with the social implications of the picturesque and attempted a moral and responsible perspective through the characters in his novels. In *The Chimes* a poor labourer, Will Fern, expresses his anguish at living in one of the hovels which were the subject of picturesque excursions. Fern outlines the paradoxes involved in the picturesque appreciation of his cottage:

...You may see the cottage from the sunk fence yonder. I've seen the ladies draw it in their books a hundred times. It looks well in a picter, I've heerd say; but there an't weather in picters, and maybe 'tis fitter for that, than for a place to live in.

John Ruskin also addressed the immoral aspect of the picturesque. He established two categories of the picturesque: the low, heartless picturesque which "ignores or fails to comprehend the 'pathos of character hidden beneath it,'" and the higher, or Turnerian picturesque, which is more morally responsible.

Manwaring's *Italian Landscape in Eighteenth-Century England* (1925) and Hussey's *The Picturesque: studies in a point of view* (1927) foreshadowed a wave of documentary writing on the picturesque in the mid-twentieth century. When Hussey's work was republished in 1967 it joined a resurgence of writing on the picturesque, including works by Hipple (1957), Meeks (1956), Barbier (1963), Price (1965), and Malins (1966). These works are largely documentary, focusing on the historical picturesque and exploring the context of its development.

Beyond a documentary treatment of the picturesque, *Architectural Review* advocated a resuscitation of picturesque theory. Perhaps the earliest example of reactivation of picturesque theory is Pevsner's writing on town planning. In an influential series of articles during the 1950s Pevsner explicitly identifies the picturesque as an approach to design. Pevsner's position as editor of *Architectural Review* was significant, ensuring the picturesque's raised profile in the discourse. "There is an English national planning theory ... hidden in the writings of improvers from Pope to Uvedale Price." Pevsner identifies the Garden City and Garden Suburb as a return to picturesque practice, and claims, "For the town planner [the picturesque] is more than significant, it is the life-line by which he can defeat chaos." Bandini traces the way in which the editorial team at *Architectural Review* orchestrated the revitalisation of the picturesque as a viable approach to design in the face of modernism. He contends

29 Wordsworth quoted in Hussey, 1967, p.27.
32 For example, Pevsner (1944, 1954, 1959)
33 Pevsner, 1956, p.168
34 Pevsner, 1954, p.229
that because the *Architectural Review*'s "criticism of contemporary planning was mainly focused on the lack of an aesthetic and emotional dimension (qualities greatly admired in the casual structure of the traditional English town and its architecture), it was understandable that the editorial board of the *Architectural Review* should turn to the Picturesque for principles of visual analysis and design."\(^\text{35}\) For Pevsner and his colleagues at *Architectural Review*, the picturesque was a "methodological guideline, not a formal romantic style."\(^\text{36}\)

The overt use of the picturesque persists in recent articles in *Architectural Review*. For example, in Davey's 'An Apology for Picturesque Architecture', the Sydney Opera House, the Pompidou Centre in Paris, and Kansai and Stansted airports, are described as picturesque "in the best sense of the term."\(^\text{37}\) A new lion enclosure at the Hellabrunn Zoo in Munich is described by its critic, P.M., as a combination of "technology with the picturesque."\(^\text{38}\)

Further surveys of the picturesque have been produced in recent years, including Hunt (1976, 1988), Watkin (1982), and Andrews (1989, 1994). However, the main development in writing on the picturesque has been the rise of ideological critique. Picturesque paintings, landscape designs, and colonial endeavours have all become the subject of critique.

Art historians Ann Bermingham and John Barrell adopt an ideological perspective in their analysis of eighteenth century landscape painting. Bermingham criticises the position of historical neutrality adopted by many overviews. She suggests that as the real landscape was increasingly artificial, with drainage and enclosure, the garden aspired to look increasingly natural. "In its celebration of the irregular, pre-enclosed landscape, the picturesque harkened back nostalgically to an old order of rural paternalism. In its portrayal of dilapidation and ruin, the picturesque sentimentalized the loss of this old order."\(^\text{39}\) She describes the paradox of the aesthetic pleasure taken in ruins, suggested for example that Constable's picturesqueness was muted because he was too close to the experience of squalor to enjoy it as a visual spectacle. As Kemp comments in his discussion of picturesque photography,

> In a sense, the picturesque provides a test of whether the spectator is always able to assume the perspective of "disinterested pleasure" that Kant designated as a precondition of the aesthetic attitude.\(^\text{40}\)

Bermingham is criticised in an extensive essay by Michasiw,\(^\text{41}\) who claims her cause and effect link

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\(^\text{35}\) Bandini, 1992, p.139.
\(^\text{36}\) ibid, p.139.
\(^\text{37}\) Davey, 1994, p.5.
\(^\text{38}\) P.M., 1995, p.22.
\(^\text{39}\) Bermingham, 1986, p.70.
\(^\text{40}\) Kemp, 1990, p.107.
\(^\text{41}\) Michasiw, 1992.
between economic development and aesthetic theory does not take into account that not all rural gentry were enthusiastic improvers. However Michasiw agrees that Bermingham’s study does suggest the complexity of the determinants producing the picturesque. Michasiw’s criticism is far ranging, as he attempts to redress the role of Gilpin in the picturesque. While many studies portray Gilpin merely as a collector, Michasiw seeks to establish his status as a significant contributor to the theory of the picturesque.

Landscape imagery and the design of picturesque landscape has also come under the scrutiny of cultural geographers and historians. The work of Daniels (1982, 1992), Short (1991) Cosgrove (1985, 1993), Williams (1985), and the collections by Pugh (1988) and Copley and Garside (1994), have contributed considerably to the understanding of the picturesque and its context. Williams’s critique of the eighteenth-century landscape expresses the nature of the ideological critique of the picturesque. He proposes that the history of the eighteenth-century English landscape has been ‘foreshortened’. Some histories, Williams contends, lead us to believe that “the eighteenth-century landlord, through the agency of his hired landscapers, and with poets and painters in support, invented natural beauty.”

Williams reworks this view to take account of the social context, indicating the situation was much more complicated. He describes a different kind of observer who divided observations into ‘practical’ and ‘aesthetic’, and explains, “The point is not so much that he made this division. It is that he needed and was in a position to do it, and that this need and position are parts of a social history, in the separation of production and consumption.” As Short emphasises, the landscape of the English countryside “was and is a landscape which carries the imprint of power.”

The picturesque’s role in colonisation is the third area of emerging critique. Explorations of the dynamics of the interaction between imported conventions and indigenous peoples and landscapes, have identified the picturesque as an important factor. For example, Carter (1987) and Ryan (1992) are amongst those who have addressed the picturesque heritage of Australia. While providing a significant documentary history on the importance of the picturesque to the early explorers’ and settlers’ experience of Australia, Carter underscores the importance of this founding experience in the present day. He explains,

when we travel over many Australian roads or tracks, we do not travel ‘Australia.’ Rather, we relive those first journeys and campsites. But going over the ground with the advantage of history, we do not come to these places as the first squatters and settlers did. In order to share their experience, we must interpret what was obvious to them - the attraction of the picturesque. To understand their routes and resting places, we have to travel reflectively, even picturesquely.

42 Williams, 1985, p.120.
43 ibid, p.121.
Ryan’s investigation of the picturesque in Australia’s history focuses on the way in which the picturesque allowed the land to be appropriated by European settlers. He states that, “far from being fresh and innocent transcriptions of the natural world, the discursive construction in the journals of what is seen by explorers is generated by already existing cultural formations which are used to naturalise the appropriation of land.”

Canada’s picturesque legacy has also been extensively documented and critiqued. MacLaren’s works on the “aesthetic mapping of nature” and the “imaginative mapping of the Canadian Northwest” record the completeness of the picturesque’s hold on the experience of early explorers in North America. The work of Schenker (1994, 1995) and O’Malley (1992) further document the experience of the picturesque in North America, focusing respectively on the imaging of the Great Central Valley in California, and early gardening literature. Indeed, every country colonised by the British was influenced by the picturesque, as evident in literature on the Caribbean (Seymour, Daniels, Watkins 1995), South Africa (Bunn 1994), the South Pacific (Smith 1984), and New Zealand (Shepard, 1969; Pound 1983; Cooper, 1987; Bowring, 1995a) The portrayal of the encountered landscapes in art and literature shares similarities around the globe, but distinctive differences emerge. For example buffalo in the far west of Canada are depicted within a ‘corrected’ landscape, and “appear to have come under Capability Brown’s ubiquitous control, allowing themselves to be clumped irregularly but formally along lines on the lawn.” Meanwhile in the Caribbean it was the people themselves which afforded a picturesque prospect, according to a 1790 description:

There is something particularly picturesque and striking in a gang of negroes, when employed in cutting canes upon the swelling projections of a hill; when they take a long sweep, and observe a regular discipline in their work: indeed the surrounding accompaniments of the field afford a very singular and interesting variety.

More recent manifestations of the picturesque have also been addressed in the literature. For example, Carter and Perry (1987), draw comparisons between Constable’s *The Cornfield* and a television advertisement for New Zealand frozen food retailer Watties. Constable’s painting has been identified as an iconic image of the picturesque, and Calow identifies some 16 picturesque qualities evident in the image. Its exploitation in advertising underscores the significance for such images in popular culture.

Another area in which the influence of the picturesque is evident is in heritage conservation. As Andrews explains,

The Picturesque is ... embedding itself in the discourse of conservation. It is there in the letterpress to the photographs of old London. It is there in the speeches of the Society for the Protection of

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47 MacLaren, 1985b, p.105.
48 Seymour, Daniels and Watkins, 1995, p.25.
Ancient Buildings (secretary, William Morris). It is there in the literature of the National Trust, which was established in 1895. And it remains indispensable to the promotional language of the Heritage industry today.⁵⁰

Lowenthal describes how much of the taste for decay was developed during the mid-eighteenth century picturesque period. "Irregularity of form, a tension between previous unity and subsequent corrosion, and the prospect of variation through further decay made ruins ideal exemplars of the picturesque."⁵¹

This survey of the literature is by no means exhaustive, but serves to demonstrate the breadth of concern with the picturesque, and illustrate its current theoretical status. Its passage from a simple word to complex concept, and more recently as a subject of ideological critique, makes the picturesque a rich and diverse topic of research. In order to define the area of interest, attention is now turned specifically to landscape architecture's experience of the picturesque.

2.2 The picturesque and landscape architecture

The theory of the picturesque has been expressed in landscape architectural discourse in a range of ways. First, the picturesque was constructed during the eighteenth century, in a period which largely predated any specific landscape architectural discourse per se. Towards the end of this period, with the emergence of a recognised profession of landscape design, concern with the picturesque moved from theory to practice, with a consequent emphasis on the reproduction of picturesque principles. With this came a repression of the picturesque, as it steadily receded from direct reference in the discourse. Subsequently, in the mid-twentieth century, the picturesque has regained explicit recognition, and has in effect been reconstructed and resuscitated. Following the lead of key individuals, picturesque theory has been revitalised, expressed in the discourse as an explicit and legitimate approach to the discussion of landscape design. Recently, landscape architectural discourse has become reflective, as the unconsidered perpetuation of the picturesque in landscape architecture practice is subjected to critique.

The evolution of the picturesque in the discourse of landscape architecture is discussed in detail below.

2.2.1 Construction

As outlined in 2.1.2, the picturesque emerged out of a period of multi-disciplinary investigation that lasted a century. Throughout the eighteenth century the picturesque was applied in landscape and garden design alongside its expression in poetry, painting, literature, and architecture. Individuals such as Alexander Pope were not bounded by any one medium, and garden design was one of many activities in which ideas on picturesqueness were explored. Vanburgh, an architect, also pursued the new attitude

⁵¹ Lowenthal, 1985, p.156
towards design not just in building, but in sweeping expressions in the landscape, as at Castle Howard. The application of the picturesque in landscape design was also practised by amateurs, who created some of the most enduring examples of the English landscape school. For example, Henry Hoare, a banker, was responsible for Stourhead, which has emerged as an icon of picturesque design. The landscape was created between 1741 and 1751, and was described by Walpole in 1765 as “one of the most picturesque scenes in the world.”

The connection with picturesque is quite literal, as Malins describes how the view opens and “Claude’s landscape ‘Coast View of Delas with Aenas’ ... unfolds before you.... The placing of the water reflecting the setting sun, and the three architectural features are exactly as in Claude’s composition.”

William Kent and Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown contributed extensively to the physical realisation of the idea of making landscapes in a picture-like way. Both Kent and Brown, however, produced no texts in support of their ideas, and did little to advance the theory. In fact, Hunt suggests Brown was responsible for obscuring the earlier academic picturesque. He suggests we now find it almost impossible to read the pre-Brownian works. Brown was so successful in creating epitomes of nature that his work seems to lie like an obscuring filter across the earlier works, eliminating the richness and readability of these designs. Hunt writes that we have to remind ourselves how to read landscapes before “Brown embrowned England and our taste.” Hussey suggests that although Brown was “allowed to ‘improve’ people’s parks and make them romantic and picturesque,” he was no more than “a very capable gardener.”

However, Brown’s considerable oeuvre inflates his influence so that his work becomes synonymous with the English landscape school and picturesque landscape. Ironically, it is Brown’s name which is often evoked in association with the idea of the picturesque in landscape, although picturesque theorists argue that he eliminated more than he contributed. What Brown represents could be called, to use Bois’s phrase, the ‘beautiful picturesque.’ That is to say, Brown’s work derives from picture-like influences, but it is to do with the smooth, featureless landscape of the beautiful. This image of a smooth, tended picturesque is reflected in comments such as Nassauer’s, that "Whether one accounts for the love of a picturesque mix of a neat open ground plane with well-spaced canopy trees on rolling terrain as a consequence of evolution ... or taste ..., the cultural concept of picturesque produces a landscape that looks tended, not wild." This Brownian picturesque is a landscape of Arcadia and apparent pastoral plenty. Yet it is a landscape fraught with contradictions which have continued to

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52 Walpole quoted in Malins, 1966, p.49.
54 Hunt, 1992, p.44.
56 Stroud identifies Brown’s involvement in over 200 properties. (Stroud, 1975)
57 ibid, p.163.
undermine the picturesque in landscape architecture. For example, the very image of 'nature' was not natural, but contrived and managed. And while the rolling green lawns suggested a rural Arcadia, all aspects of utility and production were excluded, literally 'beyond the pale.' Hunter describes the landscape of Blenheim with the perimeter of the park planted as a wooded pale, which separated "the landscape within from the functional countryside beyond."^58

It is Humphry Repton who provides the link between the theory and practice of the picturesque in landscape architecture. He identified himself as the successor to Brown, and in turn carried out a considerable number of commissions.\(^59\) Significantly, Repton also developed a theoretical aspect to his work, initially through the production of 'Red Books' for each landscape design. Through his identification of himself as a 'landscape gardener,' Repton signalled the rise of professionalism in landscape design, breaking away from the multi-disciplinary amateurship of the earlier eighteenth century and distinct from the 'gardening' approach of Brown. Hipple contrasts Repton's professionalism with the amateurs, Price and Knight, describing how he generated a number of rules to "fulfil the requirements of his profession."\(^60\) Concurrent with the emergence of a profession of landscape architecture the picturesque moved into a new phase of theorisation prompted largely by Repton's work, and his acquaintance with Uvedale Price and Richard Payne Knight. In 1794 Repton had published extracts from his Red Books, along with a commentary, and titled it *Sketches and Hints on Landscape Gardening.* Picturesqueness was listed by Repton as one of 16 sources of pleasure.

Considering his acquaintance with Price and Knight to be amicable, Repton was surprised when they attacked his work, and signalled the beginnings of the picturesque debate. Knight's *The Landscape, a Didactic Poem addressed to Uvedale Price* appeared before the end of April 1794, and prompted Repton to add another chapter to his work. A delay at the engravers also allowed him to reply to Price's *Essays on the Picturesque* (1794) include it as the Appendix to *Sketches and Hints.* Knight criticised Repton's notion of 'Appropriation', that is to say, of marking the extent of the owner's property. Price agreed: "there is no such enemy to the real improvement of the beauty of the grounds as the foolish vanity of making a parade of their extent, and of various marks on the owner's property under the title 'Appropriation'."\(^61\) Repton responded by repeating his principle of appropriation, and defending Brown, who was also under attack. Repton was also at odds with Price and Knight over the prioritising of beauty and utility in picturesque design, as Goode summarises, "The primary aim of the improver is to make pictures - convenience and propriety are to be a second corrective: Repton reverses this order of priorities."\(^62\)

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59 Repton claimed to have produced 400 Red Books, although less than 200 can now be traced. (Jellicoe, Goode and Lancaster, 1991).
60 Hipple, 1957, p.226.
61 Uvedale Price quoted in Goode, 1982, p.34.
62 Goode, op cit, p.38.
The debate became more complex when Knight and Price also began to disagree. Although Knight originally supported Price, in his preface to the second edition of *The Landscape* in 1795 he argued that Price's distinction between the beautiful and the picturesque was "an imaginary one," and that the picturesque was "merely that kind of beauty which belongs exclusively to the sense of vision - or to the imagination guided by that sense." The debate, although subjecting the picturesque to considerable scrutiny, was quite different in nature to the development of ideas on the picturesque earlier in the eighteenth century when the emphasis was on an academic picturesque. Hunt suggests, "Intricacies of texture in landscape, real or painted, seemed to fill the vacuum which the departure or neglect of subject had created." He explains that the message was sacrificed for the medium, and the form of the picturesque became more important than the content. This was apparent in Gilpin's concern for 'effect' and Price and Knight's attempts to define the appearance of the picturesque. The concern with the visual expression of the picturesque was so emphatic that Hussey considers it a prefiguring of impressionism. Many of the points raised by the picturesque debate remained unresolved, and this theoretical instability is seen by some as a hindrance for picturesque theory, and by others as a source of richness and continued debate.

### 2.2.2 Reproduction and repression

The immediate concerns of the nineteenth, and much of the twentieth, centuries were largely with practice. New opportunities demanded immediate, accessible information. The growth of suburbs and colonies meant a devolution of elitist theory into popular practice was required. The title of Loudon's 1838 work, *The Suburban Gardener and Villa Companion*, indicates the smaller scale of gardening activity, in contrast to the eighteenth-century concern with large country estates. Picturesque theorisation was thus suspended, and the "picturesque controversy marked the end of an era, ... aesthetic problems of landscape gardening were now inextricably involved with complex social and political issues." Picturesque theory became an artefact over which the sediment of popular usage was laid. Works such as those by Loudon were important for the dissemination of the picturesque, but did little to contribute to its advancement. Instead the picturesque was fossilised as a style and was presented uncritically to a receptive public. Loudon's works were significant in their coincidence with the period of colonisation of New Zealand and Australia. For example, Irwin records that Helenus Scott, an early New South Wales colonist, received a shipment from his mother in 1827. Amongst the books he had requested was a copy of "an Encyclopaedia of Gardening." Irwin deduces this "can only have been the one by J.C. Loudon, published in 1822, after Helenus had sailed for Australia. It had rapidly established itself as one of the most important gardening publications of the first half of the nineteenth century."

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64 Hunt, 1992, p.135.
65 Goode, p.40.
Strongman also notes that a copy of Loudon's "Encyclopedia [sic] of Gardening" was held by J.B.A. Acland at Mount Peel (New Zealand), where a serpentine walk was made, "indicating that the English landscape style of the eighteenth century had some influence on the structure of the garden."67

One of Loudon's correspondents was A.J. Downing, whose work, A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening, was widely disseminated in the USA during the nineteenth century. Downing perpetuates the models of Claude and Rosa as examples of the beautiful and the picturesque, and reiterates picturesque theory throughout his treatise. John Ormsbee Simonds, in the introduction to the reprinting of Downing's Treatise in 1967 wrote that, "The essential principle of his unique and still valid approach is that all landscape design is an abstract or idealized imitation of nature."68 He considers that Downing's work is still applicable in the 1960s, because he "writes of fundamentals".69 Simonds' comments illustrate the way in which the picturesque has become naturalised in the discourse. There is a certain taken-for-grantedness underlying his comments, and a lack of reference to an explicit picturesque. Rather it is naturalised as correct, essential, fundamental.

In 1829 in The Gardener's Magazine, Loudon proposed a scheme of rural and city 'belts' in order to provide the necessary open spaces in squalid and overpopulated cities. This is a prelude to Joseph Paxton's 'A Plan for Forming Subscription Gardens' which appeared in issue 1 of his own journal, the Magazine of Botany. This plan, with its irregular tree belts, wide areas of grass, and irregular lake provides an important link between the picturesque (now fossilised as a style) and Birkenhead Park, Paxton's realisation of the subscription garden concept. Olmsted's visit to the park in 1850 is one of the most significant events in landscape architectural history, as the park proved the inspiration behind his design for Central Park, which in turn, influenced almost every park designed subsequently. Birkenhead Park was a critical link in the perpetuation of picturesque conventions, as it "represented the continued viability, in the middle of the nineteenth century, of an aesthetic theory and principles of composition that had emerged more than a century earlier in the school of informal and picturesque landscape gardening."70 Although Paxton's contribution to the literature was minimal, his superintendent, Edward Kemp, produced a book, How to Lay Out a Small Garden (1850), published in America as Kemp on Landscape Gardening. Many of Paxton's principles, which straddle the picturesque and the gardenesque, are outlined in Kemp's work.

Olmsted is also better know for his designs rather than his writings, but his influence on the literature has been immense. "Olmstedian" has become a synonym of picturesqueness,71 and his continued

67 Strongman, 1984, p.81.
68 Simonds in Downing, 1967, p.IV.
69 ibid, p.IVD.
71 See for example Meyer, 1992, p.171.
influence "has dominated the practice of landscape architecture even into our own day."\textsuperscript{72} Olmsted's work was suffused with the picturesque, reflecting the legacy of his inspiration on his travels to England. This legacy continued as "Frederick Law Olmsted's apprentices faithfully studied such eighteenth-century Romantics as William Gilpin and Sir Uvedale Price; Boston's Charles Eliot was sure that the age of creative landscape theory extended only from 1770 to 1834."\textsuperscript{73} Fabos suggests that Olmsted is "to landscape architecture as Freud is to psychology."\textsuperscript{74}

The picturesque remained embedded in the literature even during the Beaux Arts period. Meyer observes "By the 1930s when landscape architecture as profession was establishing itself as an academic discipline, most students knew the Picturesque through textbooks such as Hubbard and Kimball's \textit{The Study of Landscape Design} which petrified the category as a style."\textsuperscript{75} The text draws on many picturesque conventions which have strong eighteenth century resonances. For example, it might be Repton writing the following words about the role of the landscape architect:

> He may ... choose and develop certain points of view from which the natural landscape forms fall into good pictorial compositions, and he may arrange the foreground over which he has control in such a way as to enframe a good composition and to conceal incongruous elements.\textsuperscript{76}

When Hubbard and Kimball's text was republished in 1959, Markley Stevenson commented in the foreword,

> Although thirty years have passed since the last revision (when changes were made only in the updating of bibliographic references in the field), the thinking and the aesthetic theory still seem so sound and so lucidly developed as to warrant republication of the last printing (1931) without substantial alteration.\textsuperscript{77}

Thus, this text was being produced some 40 years later almost in its original form, highlighting the continuing emphasis on reproduction of the picturesque, rather than theoretical development.

The picturesque was reproduced under the guise of modernism in three notable contexts: the landscape vision of the architect Le Corbusier, the Gropius-influenced Harvard graduates, and the modernist phase of British landscape architecture. Notions of 'style' were repressed in these three modernist arenas, and the expressions of the picturesque were based on the formal qualities, rather than the connotations. Le Corbusier presented pure geometric form against a picturesque 'backdrop', with his drawings depicting the formulaic image of lawns and groups of trees. Meyer describes how Le Corbusier's work was significant in the dissemination of the picturesque, and "the idealized landscape surrounding and

\textsuperscript{72} Howett, 1993, p.2
\textsuperscript{73} Schimtt, 1990, p.57.
\textsuperscript{74} Julius Fabos quoted in Du Fresne, 1979, 26.
\textsuperscript{75} Meyer, 1992, p.177 (note).
\textsuperscript{76} Hubbard and Kimball, 1959, p.130.
\textsuperscript{77} Stevenson in Hubbard and Kimball, 1959, p.iv.
engulfing both urban and rural buildings was the same homogenous matrix of verdure - a perfect, neutral, formless background for modern architecture’s pristine object-buildings.”

The Harvard revolution led by Eckbo, Kiley and Rose “dethroned Repton, Downing, Olmsted, Eliot, as well as the Beaux Art theory, and supplanted these with a new approach to design based upon space, the use of new materials, and new societal concepts.” This reawakening of an interest in theory in the profession of landscape architecture had the potential to challenge the reproduction of the picturesque. However, although the Harvard group insisted they were proposing a theory and not a style, their design expressions quickly became as theoretically moribund as the picturesque, with their ideas largely misunderstood and “thoughtlessly applied elsewhere as a set of clichés.” Streatfield contends that the intention of designers was not to embrace the experimental ideas on form proposed by the Harvard group, but “was still to create a series of picturesque images from multiple viewpoints.” Church was another American landscape architect to be influenced by modernism, through his travels to Europe. Laurie’s observation of Church’s work identifies the influence of Cubism, but the continuing thread of the picturesque is also evident in the way “the central axis was abandoned in favour of multiplicity of viewpoints, simple planes and flowing lines.”

The reproduction of the picturesque as modernism is evident in the work of post-war British landscape architects. Gibberd’s redesign of the cooling towers of Didcot Power Station in Berkshire, England, demonstrates the application of the picturesque at the industrial scale (Figure 2-1). Jellicoe explains, “The cooling towers were re-composed from the purely functional ... into the picturesque ... so agreeable that horror at their presence is mitigated by an appreciation of their grandeur - gigantic follies composed like gods in converse.” Picturesque conventions also define the design approach advocated

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78 ibid, p.177 note.
80 ibid, p.98.
81 ibid, p.98.
82 Laurie in Treib, 1993, p.33.
by authors such as Colvin, Crowe and Fairbrother. Colvin, for example, prioritises the informal in landscape design, despite the context. In a comment on a photograph of a Dutch polder development she writes, "It is laid out with typical Dutch precision, perhaps the logical treatment for this flat area, though an informal treatment would make for more pleasing landscape."\(^{84}\) Fairbrother offers various mottoes from Price uncritically as design guides, such as "So great is the power of trees of correcting monotony, that, by their means, even a dead flat may become highly interesting,"\(^{85}\) and "... in this labyrinth of intricacy, there is no unpleasant confusion; the general effect is as simple as the detail is complicated."\(^{86}\) And in recommending landscape responses to the impact of roads, Crowe reproduces picturesque principles as design ‘truths’: "Those effects which the eye has always enjoyed, the passing from light to shade, the contrast of open and closed views..., the framed view, the focal point..., the rhythmic line of swept contours, have all to be translated to the new scale of speed."\(^{87}\) Crowe’s presentation of the conventions as having been "always enjoyed" masks their relatively recent cultural origins. Manning notes the lack of precision in a range of standard texts of landscape design when it comes to guidance on landscape theory and principles. He draws attention to, for example, Colvin’s\(^{88}\) reliance on the painter Reynolds, and Turner\(^{89}\) being "content to quote elsewhere (and without comment) from Repton.\(^{90}\) Manning describes how "Turner reproduces an entire catalogue of ‘sources of pleasure’ [from Repton] without critical analysis.\(^{91}\)

In the United States the picturesque also provided the covert, naturalised conventions in textbooks and guides. In McHarg’s _Design with Nature_, for example, picturesque conventions are veiled behind comments such as:

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Wherein lies its beauty, why is it vulnerable? What is the essential genius of this landscape [Baltimore]? While there are many other areas of intimate beauty, the genius of the landscape resides in the great valleys - Green Spring, Caves, Worthington, and the wooded slopes that confine them. If the beauty and character of the landscape are to be sustained, then these great sweeping valleys, and the pastoral scenes they contain, must be preserved unchanged.\(^{92}\)
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In the field of landscape assessment the picturesque persists as an implicit aesthetic standard. Andrews suggests the picturesque “has left its mark on our habitual attitudes and evaluations of country scenery and ancient ruins,” and referring to the three volume collection of original picturesque texts he adds, “Those who browse through this anthology may recognise how little our appreciations of such views

\(^{84}\) Colvin, 1970, p.264.
\(^{85}\) Price quoted in Fairbrother, 1974, p.77.
\(^{86}\) ibid, p.168.
\(^{87}\) Crowe, 1960, p.34.
\(^{88}\) Colvin, 1970.
\(^{89}\) Turner, 1987.
\(^{90}\) Manning, 1995 p.78.
\(^{91}\) ibid, p.86 note.
\(^{92}\) McHarg, 1969, p.82.
have changed in the last two centuries. Indeed, despite the critique which has been levelled at the use of the picturesque formula as an aesthetic standard, it persists as an accepted means of determining visual quality.

In terms of landscape design, Hunt suggests there has been an obsession with the picturesque garden, and this seems to have prevented theory addressing the many other types of site that have emerged since 1800. Instead, the eighteenth-century English country estate provided the model for cemeteries, public parks and golf courses in the nineteenth century, and is responsible for the lost opportunities of twentieth century developments of airports, highways and railroads. Preece also contends that the modern large scale projects, in contrast to garden design "could be seen to derive in part from a rediscovery and reapplication of eighteenth-century design principles." He believes that the design principles of Blenheim Palace "and indeed the concept of working at such a scale, are today used as a criteria for award winning landscape schemes of major engineering projects such as motorways and land reclamations..." Preece highlights the implications of this dominance by the picturesque, explaining, "At a more general level, for the layperson these principles offer, if only to the subconscious, a whole concept of naturalness and the type of country scenery which is most admired." By the mid 1970s, Treib argues, the leading instigators of landscape thinking were sculptors, while, "The profession of landscape architecture, with some rare exceptions, remained primarily custodial, attempting to protect the environment, retaining it in an original form or in a mock picturesque mode deriving from 18th century England or 19th century America."

The trend within this period of reproduction is one of diminishing explicit references to the picturesque, as naturalisation takes place, and an explicit picturesque is repressed. Accompanying this was a growing conflation of the picturesque with ideas of the natural, and in particular with ecology. As Meyer suggests, "Each succeeding treatise or design handbook seemed to extract more and more of the picturesque's complexity until its meaning was reduced to little more than 'a pleasing scene'." The picturesque has become a familiar and easy set of conventions for design thinking, as Howett observes, "In a 1751 letter to a friend, the Reverend Joseph Spence set forth sixteen principles of garden design that seem thoroughly familiar and appropriate more than two centuries later," and she suggests, "With very little change in terminology they could probably serve as a course handout in a contemporary planting design class."

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93 Andrews, 1994, p.56.
96 ibid, p.46.
97 ibid, pp.46-7.
100 Howett, 1987, p.4.
2.2.3 Reconstruction and resuscitation

In contrast to the uncritical reproduction of the picturesque is its active reconstruction and resuscitation. Here, the picturesque is not considered pejorative or moribund, but is embraced as a vital and viable theory. As outlined in 2.1.2 the picturesque had been revived in architecture, particularly with the writings of Nikolaus Pevsner in *Architectural Review*. More recently there have been further examples of the explicit use of picturesque theory. Whilst these examples refer to landscape, few of them emerge from landscape architecture per se. They do, however, make a significant contribution to the relationship between landscape architecture and the picturesque.

In an important essay, ‘Frederick Law Olmsted and the Dialectical Landscape,’ the land artist Robert Smithson skewers together eighteenth-century picturesque theory, Olmsted, ecology, and land art. Smithson posits the picturesque as a *synthesis* between Burke’s *thesis* of a smooth, gently curving Beautiful, and the *antithesis* of terror, solitude and vastness, which is the Sublime. It is this dialectic quality which is central to the picturesque, according to Smithson, providing “a way of seeing things in a manifold of relations, not as isolated objects.” Smithson describes how Olmsted’s Central Park possesses this dialectical quality, the way it is “a ground work of necessity and chance, a range of contrasting viewpoints that are forever fluctuating, yet solidly based in the earth.” He criticises the “one-sided idealism” of present-day ecologists, and suggests both miners and ecologists should study Olmsted’s precedents.

Yves-Alain Bois’s *A picturesque stroll around Clara-Clara* (1987) is also grounded in the conventions of picturesque theory. Addressing Smithson’s writing on the picturesque, and examining Serra’s work (Clara-Clara) Bois uses picturesque theory to elucidate the experience of environmental art works. While Serra’s work does not immediately evoke the picturesque in its pictorial sense, Bois demonstrates how the picturesque has implications beyond the formulaic image. For example, he suggests Serra reflects the picturesque in his *a posteriori* approach; that is to say, he does not start from the plan, but only produces a plan in retrospect to capture his ideas and concepts for those who will construct the work. Bois believes Serra’s approach comes together with the picturesque at this point, as René-Louis de Girardin expressed it in 1777, the picturesque is above all the struggle against the reduction “of all terrain to the flatness of a sheet of paper.” Furthermore, Bois contends that Serra’s work echoes the picturesque in its non-centred approach to space, as reflected in the work of Piranesi. In Piranesi, as in Serra, there are no dominant orientations; as Serra remarks, “‘It is not goal oriented’... ‘the expanse of the work allows one to perceive and locate a multiplicity of centres.’”

101 Smithson in Holt, 1979, p.119.
102 *ibid*, p.124.
104 Serra quoted in Bois, p.355.
The potential of picturesque theory as a valid approach to the investigation of modern sculpture and architecture is also demonstrated by Caroline Constant in *The Barcelona Pavilion as landscape garden* (1989). The subject matter at first seems incongruous, as Constant suggests it could be considered subversive to associate Mies van de Rohe with the picturesque. “After all,” she writes, “the Picturesque is associated with emotive appeal, formal eclecticism and artifice, while Mies van de Rohe identified his aims with rationalism, the rejection of formal issues, and realism.”\(^{105}\) However, Constant identifies a number of resonances between picturesque theory and Mies van de Rohe’s work. For example, he describes his Museum for a Small City (1943) saying, “the barrier between the work of art and the living community is erased by a garden approach for the display.”\(^{106}\) Constant compares this to Walpole’s comment on Kent’s ha-ha, “He leaped the fence and saw that all nature was a garden.”\(^{107}\) The serial quality of the picturesque is recognised by Constant as critical to the experience of the Barcelona Pavilion, “like the contrived, scenographic effects of the Picturesque garden, Mies van de Rohe’s architecture renders the spectator an active participant in the scene.”\(^{108}\) Additionally, the dissolved quality of the Barcelona Pavilion is compared to the “tendency of the Picturesque to minimise architecture.”\(^{109}\) She refers to Watkins’s argument that “rather than conceive of landscape as an extension of architecture, the Picturesque provides the inspiration to conceive of architecture as landscape.”\(^{110}\)

Meyer suggests that the writings by Constant and Bois are significant in that they attempt to recover the non-visual aspects of the picturesque.\(^{111}\) It is true that Constant’s Barcelona Pavilion and Bois’s Clara-Clara are not immediately evocative of a visual picturesque, yet they use picturesque theory to enhance our understanding of these works.

The importance of Smithson in this aspect of the picturesque is further underlined by Crandell’s piece on Asphalt Rundown, where the artist poured asphalt over the side of a quarry. Crandell asserts the work was “meant to be seen as a photograph.”\(^{112}\) She explains Smithson’s work in relation to the picturesque:

> Industry has modified the landscape beyond a scale thinkable in the eighteenth century. For us, most industrial sites have become nonsites - places screened from view, zoned away, or reclaimed to look “natural.” Smithson did not veil deformities as eighteenth-century writers on the picturesque

\(^{105}\) Constant, 1989, p.46.
\(^{106}\) Mies van de Rohe quoted in ibid, p.46.
\(^{107}\) Walpole quoted in ibid, p.46.
\(^{108}\) ibid., p.50.
\(^{109}\) ibid, p.57.
\(^{110}\) ibid, p.53.
\(^{112}\) Crandell, 1986, p.16.
instructed. He accentuated the vastness of the excavation and showed it as a work of culture rather than of nature.\textsuperscript{113}

2.2.4 Reflection

The resuscitation of picturesque theory as discussed above results from an explicit use of the language of the picturesque to explore design works. A further emerging trend is the critique of the covert use of the picturesque in design, and three concerns emerge: impoverishment, cliché, and masking.

As outlined, the origins of the picturesque were rich and complex. However, uncritical reproduction has meant an elided, impoverished picturesque. As what might be called the 'petit picturesque' it persists as a disparate, trivial, petty style. After nearly three centuries of Chinese whispers, fragments of the picturesque are jumbled together, so that ‘English park,’ ‘English landscape school,’ ‘Capability Brown,’ and ‘trees and lawn’ become abbreviated into a list of synonyms which are combined in a pastiche of naturalism. Wilson summarises the passage of the picturesque into this elided form: "Versions of the English Park persist right through the Romantic, Victorian, and Modernist landscape work of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and an impoverished version of it - lawn-and-trees - is still the mainstay of contemporary municipal park work."\textsuperscript{114} The consequence of this abbreviation is the loss of the rich, literary origins of the early picturesque, and the subtly of definition arising from the later picturesque debate. The picturesque thus passes into the state of myth, where superficial expressions obscure the complex and rich origins. History drains away, and only the surface remains.

Hunt addresses the loss of meaning in picturesque gardens, the impoverishment of the picturesque. In works such as \textit{The Figure in the Landscape} (1976) and \textit{Gardens and the picturesque} (1992) Hunt catalogues the richness of the literary, visual, and philosophical content which informed the genesis of the picturesque. However, he suggests that with the success of Capability Brown, landscapes like Castle Howard came to be seen as "an apparently effortlessly beautiful landscape... instead of temples and bridges... transforming their context and themselves, they were registered simply as items dumped in the landscape."\textsuperscript{115} Brown is identified by Hunt as responsible for the loss of the 'readability' that was central to early picturesque landscapes, referring to Brown's "naturalistic, unemblematic landscape."\textsuperscript{116} He traces the way in which the picturesque develops in opposition to the bare landscapes of Brown and to the academic picturesque. The picturesque debate focused on the visual expression of the picturesque and Hunt suggests that subsequently the "fuzzy, busy, colorful, endlessly textured picturesque,"\textsuperscript{117} was

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{113} ibid. p.16.
\item \textsuperscript{114} Wilson, 1992, p.94.
\item \textsuperscript{115} Hunt, 1992, p.42.
\item \textsuperscript{116} ibid, p.87.
\item \textsuperscript{117} ibid, p.289.
\end{itemize}
promoted as "the picturesque in garden design has crammed space with materials, determined to keep the eye endlessly busy."\textsuperscript{118} This impoverished version of modernism is described by Hunt as "a dedication to the thin end of that particular cult and not to the careful blend of mental associations with visual stimuli that had marked its heyday."\textsuperscript{119} Exasperatedly he writes,

 Granted that meanings (significances, cultural topics) which pleased and enthralled late eighteenth-century garden users have lost relevance, it cannot be beyond the wit of man to establish a new agenda of meanings for the garden, an agenda that offers plurality, variety and not simply formal maneuvers.\textsuperscript{120}

Like Hunt, Robinson also traces the picturesque from its historical roots to its persistence to the present day. Robinson's \textit{Inquiry into the Picturesque} (1991a) explores aspects of the eighteenth-century picturesque, reassessing the work of Price and Knight and making connections to aspects such as the political and economic context. Robinson reaches similar conclusions to Hunt regarding the fate of the picturesque, referring to the "apparent accessibility that leads to the end of complexity and the triumph of gross sensory abbreviation that characterises the subsequent history of the picturesque."\textsuperscript{121} He notes that picturesque has become a pejorative term, and has "come to be considered a weak, indulgent, and artificial way of seeing and designing the landscape."\textsuperscript{122}

In 'Systems, Signs, Sensibilities: Sources for a New Landscape Aesthetic', Howett presents the case for a "new and more appropriate landscape aesthetic."\textsuperscript{123} Her concern is that the picturesque, with its "tyranny of the visual,"\textsuperscript{124} is not an adequate basis for landscape design. She remarks "... the discomfort of ecologists with the landscape model as an aesthetic approach to natural environments should give us pause, since it suggests that there might be analogous deficiencies in the picturesque aesthetic that continues to informs so much contemporary landscape architecture."\textsuperscript{125} Howett advocates a better understanding of semiotics (which, ironically, also emphasises the visual) as an escape from the perpetuation of the "univalent, hackneyed design tradition"\textsuperscript{126} of the picturesque. The advice to "put aside, at least for the moment, scenographic conventions and aesthetic assumptions that derive from our inheritance of picturesque practice,"\textsuperscript{127} confronts much of the foundation of the profession. In a reply to Howett, Eaton summarises, "The metaphors at work in picturesque landscapes may have become frozen or at least clichéd. This is not to say that they are not enjoyed at all, for clearly they are. However, they

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{118} ibid, p.373.
\item \textsuperscript{119} Hunt, 1993, p.140.
\item \textsuperscript{120} Hunt, 1992, p.292.
\item \textsuperscript{121} Robinson, 1991a, p.114.
\item \textsuperscript{122} Robinson, 1991b, p.12
\item \textsuperscript{123} Howett, 1987, p.4.
\item \textsuperscript{124} ibid, p.7.
\item \textsuperscript{125} ibid, p.4.
\item \textsuperscript{126} ibid, p.8.
\item \textsuperscript{127} ibid, p.11.
\end{itemize}
have become comfortable and easy." Eaton contends that it is impossible to simply 'put aside' a set of culturally created values, and slow, modest change is required; it is absurd to start to speak a whole new language. Paraphrasing philosopher G E Moore, Eaton advises "one can repair a boat at sea only one plank at a time." If a change from the picturesque is necessary, as urged by Howell, Eaton believes there must be a conscious effort by designers to make the new meanings manifest.

Treib is also concerned by the way in which an impoverished picturesque persists in landscape design. In his introduction to Modern Landscape Architecture: a critical review (1993) he targets the tradition of the picturesque as a hindrance in the evolution of new ideas in landscape design. He describes how, "During the 1960s the concern for form in landscape architecture suffered a major setback. In the anti-aesthetic throes of social turmoil, and the consequent rise of an ecological consciousness, interest in shaping landscape design was seriously undermined. The Olmsted picturesque aesthetic continued to hold sway as landscapes emulated the natural." The "nagging persistence" of the picturesque is seen by Treib to dominate our thinking where the natural is concerned, and he challenges the myth of the natural in ecological designs, why the natural is so easily accepted: "Is it because the 'natural' pattern, masquerading as nature, is less open to question by client or visitor alike?... Or is it a conscious or unconscious harking back to received picturesque values?"

Allied to the impoverishment of the picturesque in contemporary landscape architecture is the perpetuation of cliché in design which is frequently signalled by reference to two key figures as signifiers in the literature: Capability Brown and Frederick Law Olmsted. The inappropriateness of Brown as a synonym for picturesque has been alluded to above, with his formulaic solutions based on a pastoral, 'beautiful,' version of the picturesque. However, the extent of Brown's oeuvre allows his work to become naturalised as a cliché of landscape design, and an elided version of the picturesque. For example, Crandell writes, "... how often site plans depict the encircling belt of trees popularised by Capability Brown. This has been transferred into aspects such as 'landscaping' and 'buffers' - "Grass, shrubs and trees are planted with the intention of hiding the parking lots that lie behind them. We know that unsightly objects are there because these plantings have become well-understood signs that what is behind them is in conflict with the pastoral ideal."

Olmsted is perceived as a generator of picturesque cliché, and his work has also been categorised as pastoral, although Meyer identifies a range of 'types' in Prospect Park: the pastoral, the picturesque and

129 ibid, p.23.
130 Treib in Treib, 1993, p.x.
131 ibid, p.ix.
134 ibid, p.167-8.
the sublime.\textsuperscript{135} Balmori explains the way in which Olmsted's work is the root of landscape design cliché: "So successful were [the nineteenth-century picturesque] parks in their own time, and so well established have they become as monuments, that it is difficult to imagine any other images but these for a park - the Olmsted vision standing as a perfect fit of public space with the cities and society of its time."\textsuperscript{136} Howett also claims we are "still haunted by Olmsted's vision of an idyllic pastoral park,"\textsuperscript{137} but points out the clichés came not from Olmsted himself, but with a parroting of his work as a style. "The more superficial stylistic conventions of the large body of Olmsted's design work were easily perpetuated by his own firm and by legions of disciples and imitators after his death."\textsuperscript{138}

Beyond the critique of impoverishment and cliché is the concern of the masking qualities of a naturalised picturesque. The concern with masking extends back to the association of the picturesque with colonisation. Michasiw asks, "Is it possible that the class envy, masked violence and gaming that are embedded in the discursive frame of the picturesque provided the imperial agents with a ... comforting frame for activities they knew to be repugnant to their announced moral senses?"\textsuperscript{139} The benign disguise of the picturesque is addressed by Robinson, as he observes, "The Picturesque can be both trivial and disturbing. When it is seen as a mask covering up reality it becomes a pejorative term. That is where we are today."\textsuperscript{140} This is highlighted in the literature through references to the suppression or repression. For example, Constant writes of the "repressed role of the Picturesque in modernism,"\textsuperscript{141} and Copley and Garside explain how "Picturesque habits of viewing, representing or constructing aesthetically pleasing objects - whether they be landscapes, artefacts or human figures - have been seen to rest on the suppression of the interpretative and narrative signs which masked earlier representation."\textsuperscript{142}

Crandell also exposes the way the picturesque masks any understanding of nature. She states, "what surrounds General Foods is a textbook example of the English landscape garden. This site is a startling symbol of how we have come to take the landscape garden for granted. With serpentine lines, irregularity, an island in a lake and occasional trees, we certainly are meant to believe that we are in a natural, untouched setting when we walk around the building."\textsuperscript{143} Crandell suggests the acceptance of this landscape is surprising given the technological, twentieth-century monumentality of the building, and explains, "The landscape at Rye Brook comforts us and suggests that, despite the advent of high

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{135} Meyer, 1994, p.23.
\item \textsuperscript{136} Balmori in Muschamp, 1993, p.39.
\item \textsuperscript{137} Howett, 1987, p.3.
\item \textsuperscript{138} Howett, 1993, p.21.
\item \textsuperscript{139} Michasiw, 1992, p.100 note.
\item \textsuperscript{140} Robinson, 1988, p.74.
\item \textsuperscript{141} Constant, 1989, p.46.
\item \textsuperscript{142} Copley and Garside, p.6
\item \textsuperscript{143} Crandell, 1984, p.49.
\end{itemize}
technology, 'nature' has not really changed very much." A further exploration of the picturesque's dominance in landscape architecture is undertaken in Crandell's critique of the way in which pictures determine our understanding of the landscape. In *Nature Pictorialised: 'The View' in Landscape History* (1993) she asks, "In what way is a geyser superior to a marsh?... we have defined and judged nature on the basis of its conformity with pictures. That which is most deserving of protection is most beautiful." More specifically Crandell targets the picturesque in her critique: "Today when we think of nature we too often conjure up images borrowed from eighteenth century England. This is an extraordinary fact that we rarely question."

In order to confront the masked picturesque, commentators attempt to highlight the artifice of the picturesque - to unmask it. Crandell contends, for example, that "...it is knowledge of the history of these conventions and the images from which they have developed, and which they have in turn generated, that is needed in order to avoid the most basic mistake inherent in landscape architecture: believing that the framed, distant, perspectival view is somehow a 'natural' way of designing." Corner agrees: "The danger in pictorial representation lies in the designer making 'pictures' as opposed to 'landscapes', scenes and visual compositions based upon the illusory logic of the picture plane, rather than upon the sensual arrangement of landscape form, replete with a fullness of spatial, temporal and material qualities." Meyer also writes about how a critical reading of the picturesque "raises immediate questions for students too eager to attribute naturalness (and freedom, liberty, virtue) to any scheme lacking geometric forms." She sees a need to instil in students "some sense of the artifice and structure inherent in these built works that are too frequently dismissed as amorphous, informal, irregular, anti-urban, and Olmstedian."

In conclusion, it is apparent that after a period of uncritical reproduction, the picturesque is regaining a critical and theoretical dimension. The appearance of a new journal solely devoted to the picturesque in 1992, a major collection of picturesque texts in 1994, and two significant exhibitions reinforces the current concern with the picturesque. Recent critique of the picturesque has been intense and often vitriolic. Citing examples of such critique, Michasiw observes, "The intensity of these condemnations is

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144 ibid, p.53.
145 Crandell, 1993, p.3.
146 ibid, p.8.
150 ibid, p.171
151 *The Picturesque: Being the Journal of the Picturesque Society.*
153 *Beauty Horror and Immensity: Picturesque Landscape in Britain 1750-1850* (Peter Bicknell ed.) and *The Picturesque Landscape: Visions of Georgian Herefordshire* (Stephen Daniels and Charles Watkins eds.)
somewhat surprising. Later eighteenth-century fads and fashions tend not to rouse passions at this late date.154

The reasons behind the re-emergence of the picturesque in the literature appear to reflect, firstly, the role of certain individuals (for example Pevsner and Smithson) who have been critical in reactivating the theory. Second, the current climate of ideological critique and post colonial commentary in the social sciences has influenced the landscape architectural perspective on the picturesque. As Burgess remarks, "the speed with which post-colonial critiques have impacted on landscape studies is quite breathtaking - and very exciting."155

154 Michasiw, 1994, p.76.
Chapter 3: Research Approach

The difficult quest of what constitutes the parameters, methods, and standards of research in landscape architecture is ongoing.¹

The picturesque has a paradoxical relationship with contemporary landscape architecture. While commentators identify it as a major influence on practice, the picturesque's familiarity renders it largely invisible. My aim is to reveal the picturesque, to make it visible, and thus to explore its influence on landscape architectural practice in New Zealand. The nature of landscape architectural practice is manifested in two ways: the 'built' works themselves, and the description of these works in the published discourse. This latter alternative offers advantages as a focus for research as it is a filter for those works that have come to represent the profession through their inclusion in the discourse; they have been 'canonised' by the profession. The published discourse provides a focus on a body of work which has been self-selected by the profession, and thus is an expression of the way in which the profession defines itself. In addition, the written discourse portrays not only the works themselves, but is a snapshot of the way in which the profession refers to such images through its accepted codes, both graphic and linguistic. Furthermore, it allows an examination of those professional activities which fall outside the definition of built works, such as submissions, opinions, reviews, and letters.

The invisibility/visibility paradox presents an obstacle for research, as while the picturesque's influence is asserted in the critical literature, its presence in the discourse is obscured. Thus, like an archaeologist approaching a site believed to contain a buried settlement, I needed tools with which to search, a means of recording the evidence, and an approach to analysing and theorising about the results of the dig. First, the archaeologist's meticulous brushing and scraping has a textual parallel in the concept of close reading (3.2.1). The excavated evidence must then be classified systematically to allow for subsequent analysis. I present a language model of the picturesque as a framework for classification (3.2.2). These fragments are then analysed, as the archaeologist pieces together a picture of the site. Here I use the concept of myth, which I have developed into a notational model of denotation and connotation - the L-diagram (3.2.3). And finally, the placing of the analysis into a broader conceptual framework leads to an inductive phase of theorising. It is here that the broader issues are examined, and the excavated site is related to wider temporal and spatial contexts. I draw on the notion of linguistic analogy, and in particular the behaviour of pidgins and creoles, to explore the wider implications of the research (3.2.4). This movement through a range of scales responds to Riley's assertion that, "Scholarship in Environmental Design must come to be an exchange between inductive (case generated) and deductive (theory generated) process."² My approach to research is expressed diagrammatically in Figure 3-1, and

¹ Editor's comment, 1995, p.159.
² Riley, 1990, p.50.
outlined in detail below. The archaeological model has obvious parallels to the survey-analysis-design model of landscape design. And just as landscape architecture rarely springs from directly from this lineal model, the archaeological model is metaphorical only, and not a literal picture of the steps undertaken.

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Figure 3-1. Research as archaeology

3.1 Discourse

"Discourse" has become an important focus for research in the social sciences. Since the early 1960s, Foucault suggests, there has been a "sense of the increasing vulnerability to criticism of things, institutions, practices, discourses." Foucault’s work is central to ideas on discourse, with his work on madness, health, and sexuality demonstrating the implications of de-mythologising discourse, of defamiliarisation, of turning the Same into the Other. Foucault argues that discourses have a naturalising effect, and that the association of discourses with institutions allows a legitimisation of the "truths" they produce. Thus the connection between power and knowledge which is central to Foucault’s thinking:

... in a society such as ours, but basically in any society, there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterise and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and function of discourse.³

³ Foucault, 1980, p.80.
⁴ During, 1992, p.92.
⁵ Foucault, 1980, p.93
The definition of discourse has been the subject of debate, including various interpretations of Foucault’s concept of discourse. Leslie W. Hepple, in his discussion of South American geopolitical literature, concluded that “it has considerable internal diversity, especially between different nationalistic interpretations, but also sufficient common direction and internal coherence to be seen as a discourse in Foucault’s sense of the term.” More specifically, Hepple describes discourse as “a set of rules or perspectives for the acquisition and organisation of knowledge, with its own dominant metaphors that facilitate further knowledge and insights but simultaneously limit it.”

In the same collection of essays, Judith Kenny is unwilling to accept Foucault’s view of discourse. Following Duncan (1990) she sees Foucault’s definition as too deterministic. Duncan states that he “do[es] not subscribe to a ‘strong’ [i.e. Foucauldian] definition of discourses, in seeing them as separated by ruptures or discontinuities in history, as incommensurable or as unassailable from the outside.” These contrasting views on whether or not to accept Foucault’s concept of discourse - Hepple’s and Duncan’s - underline the complexity of discourse theory. It is debatable whether Hepple’s acceptance and Duncan’s reservations indicate conflicting interpretations, or rather they are merely strong versus loose definitions. Indeed Duncan’s own definition of discourse is one which appears to agree with Hepple’s, and captures much of the spirit of Foucault’s concern with power/knowledge and the need to de-mythologise and defamiliarise:

Discourses ... can be defined as the social framework of intelligibility within which all practices are communicated, negotiated, or challenged. These discourses are both enabling resources as well as constraints or limits within which certain ways of thinking or acting seem natural and beyond which most who have learned to think within the discourse can not easily stray.

Duncan’s identification of the ‘natural’ ways of thinking and acting in discourse reflects Foucault’s sense of ‘dans le vrai’, or ‘in the true’. Foucault emphasises the controlling influence of these ‘true’ ways of thinking, “The discipline is a principle of control over the production of discourse. The discipline fixes limits for discourse by the action of an identity which takes the form of a permanent re-actuation of the rules.”

The group which generates the discourse must also be defined in some way. An extreme definition is Foucault’s ‘societies of discourse’, “which function to preserve or produce discourses, but in order to make them circulate in a closed space, distributing them only according to strict rules, and without the

6 Hepple, 1992, p.139.
7 ibid, p.139.
8 Duncan, 1990, p.17.
9 ibid, p.16.
10 Foucault, 1981.
holders being dispossessed by this distribution." Other less exclusive definitions based around the concept of community have also been suggested. Stock uses the notion of 'textual communities' to describe those groups "in which there is both a script and a spoken enactment and in which social cohesion and meaning result from the interaction of the two." Potter and Wetherell look at discourse as social practice, rather than as a neutral transmitter as it has been seen in the past. They define discourse units in terms of repertoires, which have a restricted range of terms which exhibit specific stylistic and grammatical patterns. The idea of a 'community' talk is a classic example of a repertoire. Fish uses the idea of 'interpretative communities,' which Barnes explains are institutions "internally bound by a common set or rules, methods and approaches for dealing with some facet of the world." These examples of the arena in which discourse takes place, like the definition of discourse itself, appear to differ in degree rather than substance. The concepts of societies of discourse, textual communities, community talk, and interpretative communities may vary in terms of a focus on written or verbal discourse, and in the degree of exclusivity, yet most importantly they share the notion of a body of statements which characterise an identifiable group. Thus as a general approach to researching the profession of landscape architecture, discourse embodies the notion of a group producing a cohesive body of ideas.

The decision to focus on written rather than spoken discourse determines the nature of the research corpus. The history of the profession in New Zealand, and the nature of design in general, is most evident in publications. Thus written discourse, including the designer's domain of graphic discourse, provides a readily accessible and comprehensive discourse. Furthermore, written discourse is advantageous in that it minimises "researcher interference." That is to say, apart from the unavoidable bias which accompanies any reading, the use of an entire published discourse allows the content to be pre-selected.

Although the notion of discourse focuses on the shared propositions and beliefs at the group level - disciplines, institutions, communities - the role of the individual can be significant. Within the context of an institution, "discourses shape the positioning of individuals in an institution, and the discourses so adopted, in turn, depend upon an individual's position there." The published discourse of architecture has reflected the role of individuals in the perpetuation of the picturesque. Watkin describes how Christopher Hussey's "profoundly felt perception of the link between architecture and landscape, which he learned from the Picturesque, lay at the heart of all he tried to do in his fifty-year-long career at

12 ibid, pp.62-63.
13 Stock, 1990, p.100.
14 Barnes, 1992 p.120
16 Barnes and Duncan, 1992, p.8.
Also he notes how Nikolaus Pevsner “used his position as an editor of the *Architectural Review* to argue for the application of picturesque principles to modern urban design.”

Pevsner’s power was also alluded to by Banham, who recalled Pevsner’s series of articles giving “historical justifications for a revival of the picturesque.” Banham’s cohort of architects who had their training interrupted by the war experienced a “combat between a barely middle-aged architectural ‘Establishment’ [Pevsner et al] armed with a major magazine, and a generation of battle-hardened and unusually mature students.” Banham’s metaphor, and his recounting of the efforts made by his colleagues to counter this domination by the picturesque, underlines the latent power of discourse.

In summary, discourse provides an appropriate framework for researching a professional group such as the NZILA. While there are varying definitions of discourse, and the groups which construct discourse, the general notion of discourses embodying the norms of a group is agreed. Furthermore, in a Foucauldian sense it is “the association [of discourses] with institutions that legitimates the ‘truths’ they produce.” The manner in which norms become a constituent part of the discourse, so much so that they remain “unvoiced and unthought” reflects the claim of the naturalisation of picturesque convention in landscape architecture, and as I reveal, in the discourse of the NZILA.

### 3.2 Language

Having established discourse as the ‘site’ of research, it is necessary to formulate the methods with which to carry out the investigation. The linguistic nature of discourse suggests that language tools are most appropriate, such as the use of close reading to examine the text. However, language also provides a means of investigation which extends beyond the initial surveying of the text. Language as a metaphor provides a powerful conceptual tool, and its potential has been demonstrated across a range of disciplines. Importantly, the linguistic analogy has found fertile ground in the field of design and landscape, as a cursory glance at titles in architecture and geography demonstrates. For example in architecture titles such as Jencks’s *The Language of Postmodern Architecture* (19??) and Alexander’s *A Pattern Language* (19??), and in geography, Duncan’s *The City as Text* (1990) and Pugh’s *Reading Landscape* (19??), illustrate the adoption of the metaphor. As Burgess summarises,

> With hindsight it was obvious that the so-called ‘linguistic turn’ with its emphasis on discourses, social representations and cultural politics which impacted on so many of the social sciences and the humanities would have proved hard to resist [in landscape research]. Notions of ‘landscape as text’ and ‘reading the book of nature’ have become commonplace. 

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18 ibid, p.198.
20 Barnes and Duncan, 1992, p.9.
Howett identifies "semiotics, which in proposing analogies between language and architecture has forced a fresh understanding of the expressive meanings of built form and the devices of architectural communication" as one of three critical and theoretical currents "from which we might garner ideas and insights." Other examples of the linguistic analogy are evident in writing on landscape architecture. For example, Krog refers to the Language of the Modern, and Treib describes "the formal language of the Sonoma landscape." The Lincoln University Department of Landscape Architecture's conference, *Languages of Landscape Architecture*, March 1995, also highlights the adoption of the language metaphor by the discipline.

3.2.1 Surveying: Reading and Close Reading

The use of *The Landscape* as the research corpus poses problems about the way in which to approach text. At one extreme, a realist position could be adopted, for example, in the use of content analysis. Performing content analysis on *The Landscape* would allow a quantitative assessment of the degree to which the picturesque persists as subject matter. However, as Burgess points out, "Content analysis assumes a 'transparent' text, i.e that meaning is fixed, universally understood and unproblematic." The realist position presents the possibility of a "naive" reading, as such assumptions cannot be sustained in the light of recent theoretical developments.

At the other extreme is the relativist approach, where the text is anything but "transparent". Barthes explains this position, "We know now that a text consists not of a line of words, releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the 'message' of the Author-God), but of a multi-dimensional space in which are married and contested several writings, none of which is original: the text is a fabric of quotations, resulting from a thousand sources of culture." However, this approach is also inadequate, as highlighted by Duncan and Duncan: "... the poststructuralists' project entails permanent contestation, interrogation, and subversion of interpretation [and] it is not clear if critique is in fact possible, given their steadfast refusal to assert a privileged vantage point from which to launch this critique." Duncan and Duncan strive for a middle ground where "the relativism of this stance can be tempered with the realist recognition that there is an empirical reality to which explanations are accountable."

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23 Howett, 1984, p.4.
24 ibid, p.4.
26 Treib, 1993, p.64.
27 Burgess, 1985, p.194.
29 Duncan and Duncan, 1988, p.125.
30 ibid, p.125
The key to this middle ground is the recognition of the context in which the text is located, fixing it in time and place. Duncan and Duncan criticise literary theory for its lack of contextual considerations:

... there are some drawbacks in contemporary literary theory. Although it is important to recognize the instability of meaning, it is equally important to realize that this plurality is finite. It is related to actual empirical differences in interpretations. These differences are neither merely individual constructions nor autonomously generated by signifiers. Interpretations are the product of social contexts of historically and culturally specific discourses; they are constructed by interpretative communities and they frequently, but not always, reflect hegemonic value systems. 31

Authors such as Duncan and Duncan, Short 32, and Burgess take from contemporary literary theory, in particular the work of Roland Barthes, the expanded notion of text and the desire for denaturalisation. However, they work within the geographical context to ground the study in landscape and culture (as opposed to a structuralist approach which would tend to be acultural and ahistorical). Through close reading of the "texts" at hand - be they literal texts or metaphorical texts such as paintings or maps - they set out to "denaturalise" them, to expose the myths, the way the cultural is accepted as natural. For example, Burgess looks at the myth of the inner city as created by the popular media, "through close attention to the texts of newspapers, to see what we are given to understand about the inner cities." 33 Short explores the myths of wilderness, countryside and city within the texts of "English" novels, the Western, and Australian landscape painting.

Duncan and Duncan examine the ways in which texts are transformed into landscapes, and how landscapes which are read within an ingrained cultural framework are often read inattentively. Thus "If, by being so tangible, so natural, so familiar, the landscape is unquestioned, then such concrete evidence about how a society is organised can easily become seen as how it should, or must be organised." 34 For example they examine the history of an elitist suburb in Vancouver, Canada, where, "Anglophile landscape tastes... have been incorporated into the discourse of liberal planning under the guise of heritage preservation and green space." 35 This example illustrates how the naturalisation of 'texts' - as landscapes in this case - allows the persistence of cultural values as norms. They found that even within the working classes, Shaugnessy (the suburb) was reproduced as an elite, "by supporting the ideas that Shaugnessy is part of the heritage of all the residents in the city and by preserving it as a fantasy of upward mobility they help ensure its preservation as a reality." 36

The examples from Burgess, Short, and Duncan and Duncan, all illustrate how the denaturalisation of a text can be accomplished through 'close reading'. As opposed to more mechanical approaches such as

31 ibid, p.119
33 Burgess, 1985, p. 221
34 Duncan, 1992, p.50.
35 ibid, p.50.
36 ibid, p.50.
content analysis, close reading embraces the idea of reading to destabilise a text. Whether the ‘texts’ are actual texts, or landscapes, or paintings, the practice of close reading subjects the work to detailed critical appraisal. While not a defined technique with rules and standard procedure, close reading is referred to loosely to indicate the manner of approaching a text. For example, the *Literary Sources and Documents* series published by Helm Information describes itself as “a research tool - offering an overview of its subject whilst allowing close reading of original and important texts basic to a needful sense of the subject in both its specific and general contents.” Meyer also uses the term when she describes how “a close reading of the reports and treatises written throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries supports another interpretation altogether.”

Potter and Wetherell caution that the approach to discourse is very different from traditional academic research. They explain how academic training “teaches people to read for gist”, and that this is “precisely the wrong spirit for discourse analysis.” More specifically, “If you read an article or book the usual goal is to produce a simple, unitary summary, and to ignore the nuance, contradictions and areas of vagueness. However, the discourse analyst is concerned with the detail of passages of discourse, however fragmented and contradictory, and with what is actually said or written, not some general idea that seems to be intended.”

My approach to the discourse follows these examples of reading and close reading. I attempt to find the middle ground between a theoretically naive realist approach and a theoretically strangled relativist approach. At one extreme the notion of a “transparent” text, and at the other “a nauseating void of signifiers in which a nihilistic abandonment to free play and arbitrary will seems the only appropriate strategy.” I seek to denaturalise and destabilise the text though the practice of close reading, examining the discourse with the meticulous scrutiny of the archaeologist.

3.2.2 Recording: Learning the language of the picturesque

Any process of searching necessitates a definition of the phenomena which is sought. Despite the extensive literature on the picturesque, and numerous attempts at description, no single, definitive definition of the picturesque has evolved. The imprecision of the picturesque was problematic from the very beginning. Gilpin defines picturesque objects as those “which please from some quality of being

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40 Mitchell, 1986, p.29.
illustrated in painting." Price, however feels such a definition was "at once too vague and too defined." He expands on the problem:

Were any other person to define picturesque objects to be those which please from some striking effect of form, colour, or light and shadow, ... such a definition would indeed give but a very indistinct idea of the thing defined; but it would be hardly more vague, and at the same time much less confined than the others, for it would not have had an exclusive reference to a particular art.

This tension between certainty and flexibility has dogged the picturesque throughout its history, in attempts to define it. In fact, the picturesque oscillates un-cooperatively between a number of positions. For example, Andrews describes how it “emerged in the nineteenth century as both a ridiculous cliché and a concept of baffling complexity; and there it remains today.” Changes in the definition of the picturesque have been described as “deformations” or as Robinson suggests, “The picturesque has undergone so many transformations since its initial discussion in eighteenth-century England that it is hard to say just what it is.”

This lack of a definition presents problems for approaching the discourse, since not only is the picturesque buried, but it is poorly defined. Before confronting the discourse, therefore, I needed to formulate a definition of the picturesque which allows for the breadth of meaning, yet achieves some degree of certainty. The concept of language provides a useful and workable framework for conceptualising both design and landscape, as highlighted in 3.2 above.

Beyond this general application of linguistic analogy, the notion of language is of specific relevance to the picturesque. From its origins the picturesque was closely associated with notions of textuality and “reading” the landscape. The notion of an iconography was central to the early examples of picturesque landscape design, with garden visitors expected to be sufficiently literate to read the codes. Hunt accuses “Capability” Brown of eliminating “‘readability’ from a landscape,” and whose influence saw the loss of a “garden vocabulary” which included items as specific as statues and obelisks which could literally be read in addition to the general use of a “painterly syntax”.

However, the application of language to landscape endured the ravages of Brown, and retained its association with the picturesque. Gilpin for example described how he spoke “the language of

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41 Gilpin quoted in Price, 1810, p.38.
42 Price, 1810, p.39.
43 ibid, p.39-40.
46 Robinson, 1991a, p.xi.
48 ibid, p.58.
49 ibid, pp.186.
painting"\textsuperscript{50}, and explained how he was so "attaching to his picturesque rules."\textsuperscript{51} Later, in 1801 John Stoddart described the formulaic nature of the picturesque as like "apothecaries' prescriptions, or receipts in cookery,"\textsuperscript{52} and in 1807 Robert Southey referred to the picturesque as a "language."\textsuperscript{53} Soon after, a satire of the picturesque, reputedly based on William Gilpin, featured Dr Syntax in search of the picturesque.\textsuperscript{54} The ideas of formulae, syntax, codes, readability, and so on have thus characterised the picturesque throughout its early development. Recent references to the picturesque have perpetuated this approach. For example, Andrews notes that "by the turn of the century the Picturesque vocabulary, both verbal and pictorial had hardened into a jargon,"\textsuperscript{55} and Bermingham suggests, "... as much as it was a way of seeing, the Picturesque was what we might call a 'lingo'...."\textsuperscript{56} Copley and Garside suggest that "the cultural importance of the Picturesque stands in direct proportion to the theoretical precision of its vocabulary,"\textsuperscript{57} and Corner describes it as "a practical 'language'".\textsuperscript{58} And the notion of a system of signs is evident in phrases such as, "It was an idiom which was frequently reduced to simple patterns of picturesque symbols, generally including framing trees,"\textsuperscript{59} and the "semiotics" of the picturesque.\textsuperscript{60}

These concepts of vocabulary, syntax, and formulae draw on a microscale view of language. That is to say, they concentrate on the operation of language as a system. Applications of the broader context of language, at the macroscale, are discussed under 3.2.3. The 'language' of the picturesque can be presented as a range of vocabulary units combined in a specific manner or syntax. While none of these elements evoke the picturesque in isolation, the combination of specific elements according to established formulae conveys a 'readable' design language. Through examining a wide range of definitions and descriptions of the picturesque I constructed the following categories of vocabulary and syntax. These form the framework for classifying the fragments unearthed in the search.

\textsuperscript{50} Gilpin quoted in Barbier, note p.74.
\textsuperscript{51} ibid, p.72.
\textsuperscript{52} John Stoddart, quoted in Andrews, 1989, p. 33.
\textsuperscript{54} Combe, 1881.
\textsuperscript{55} Andrews, 1989,p.33.
\textsuperscript{56} Bermingham in Copley and Garside, 1994, p.85.
\textsuperscript{57} Copley and Garside, 1994, p.1.
\textsuperscript{58} Corner, 1990, p.72.
\textsuperscript{59} Bicknell, 1981, p.87.
\textsuperscript{60} Bunn, 1994, p.129.
**Vocabulary**

Vocabulary refers to the content of a work, and is a standardised, recognisable, array of signs. The following lists summarise the attributes which have been described as picturesque signs, and Figure 3-2 illustrates the nature of some of these.

- distant view
- irregularity
- decay
- unevenly lit (chiaroscuro)
- playfulness
- sketchiness
- repoussé
- tree groups and mounding
- muted colours
- screen
- variety
- roughness
- mounding
- neglect
- beauty vs use
- ruins
- accident
- serpentine
- view
- age
- coulisse

**Figure 3-2. Vocabulary of the picturesque: Salvator Rosa (1615-1673), River Landscape with Apollo and the Sibyl. (Turner, 1986)**

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61 "A pictorial device much used by academic landscape painters in which elements in the foreground are used to 'frame' the composition. Thus Claude in *Landscape with the Father of Psyche Sacrificing to Apollo* (1660-70) has placed a copse of trees, typically rendered as near-silhouettes, to the right foreground and a Classical temple to the left, thereby prompting the eye to wander towards a distant sea port and mountains painted with a very pale palette. As a means of 'setting back' part of the composition, it is most often used in conjunction with the recessional devices of linear and aerial perspective." Michael Greenhalgh and Paul Duro, *Essential Art History*. London: Bloomsbury, 1992, p.250

Syntax

Syntax relates to the composition of the design, and implies standard modes of combination. The following list summarises the compositional modes which characterise picturesque syntax, as illustrated in Figure 3-3.

- natural looking
- serial vision
- layering
- vignette
- spirals or flat planes
- whole outweighs the part
- eclecticism
- park-like

blending in
framing
composed view vs panorama
elevation vs plan
high vs low view
backdrop/foreground
trees-and-lawn
mystery

Figure 3-3. Syntax of the picturesque: Claude Lorraine (1600-1682), The Temple of Apollo. (Manwaring 1925)

There is, therefore, a range of vocabulary and syntax which define the picturesque. However, vocabulary and syntax can only provide a means of recording evidence of the picturesque, and is inadequate for the next stage: analysing. Vocabulary and syntax combine to produce meanings, which can be either denotative or connotative: it is this ambiguity which bestows myth-like qualities on the picturesque. The concept of myth captures the way in which the picturesque is ‘invisible’ within the discourse despite the evidence of the vocabulary and syntax, and provides a means of analysing the survey findings.
3.2.3 Analyising: Myth and the L-diagram

The way in which the picturesque is concealed in the discourse of the NZILA can be usefully interpreted as an example of what Roland Barthes calls myth, where meanings are “buried beneath layers of what he termed ‘ideological sediment’.”63 This concept of myth relates to the way in which ideas become naturalised and taken for granted, so that we are no longer aware of them. This allows myths to act innocently within the discourse, whilst their presence may have broader and more serious implications.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denotation</th>
<th>Representation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3-4. Denotation

The concepts of denotation and connotation were introduced by Barthes to explain how myth operates. He suggested that at one level there is an apparently intended meaning for some image or idea. This is denotation, the dictionary definition of which is, “to indicate by a sign: to signify or mean.”64 This could be visualised as a simple relationship between a representation and its intended meaning (Figure 3-4.) A solely denotative reading could be described as realist, where a representation is considered to be a ‘real’ depiction of something. This is exemplified by Brown and Keith’s observation that “the very real qualities of topographical painting derive directly from the landscape.”65 But there are also other meanings attached to the image - its connotations, which the dictionary defines as, “the implication of something more than the denotation of an object.”66 The connotative meanings can be visualised as an alternative or additional interpretation of the representation (Figure 3-5). A relativist reading focuses on this connotative axis only, and is exemplified by Pound’s analysis of New Zealand landscape painting: “If landscape painting is a window, you can see nothing through it of the land; it offers nothing but signs painted in paint; its surface is full of nothing but paint, it is painted entirely over.”67

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Representation</th>
<th>Connotation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3-5. Connotation

Cultural studies writers explain how the difference between denotation and connotation is analytic only, saying it is useful “to be able to apply a rough rule of thumb which distinguishes those aspects of a sign which appear to be taken, in any language community at any point in

63 Duncan and Duncan, 1988, p.117.
64 Chambers English dictionary.
66 Chambers English dictionary.
time as its 'literal' meaning (denotation) from the more associative meaning (denotation) from the more associative meanings for the sign which it is possible to generate (connotation)."68

Working with these ideas of connotation and denotation, and my visualisation of them, I developed a model or notational system to conceptualise the idea of myth. This L-diagram has proved a useful tool for approaching the research. (Figure 3-6) The diagram conveys the way in which a representation can be seen as solely denotative or solely connotative, or most importantly a combination of both. However, we can never be sure just how much of each is present, and this is what makes myth ambiguous. The instability of representations is particularly relevant to the picturesque, as the very basis of the conventions rest on the re-presentation of nature in pictures.

The concept of the L-diagram can be paralleled with the principles of polarising filters. A polarising filter is transparent to light within one plane, but absorbs light perpendicular to it (Figure 3-7), a principle of preferential absorption used in Polaroid lenses to cut out glare. When two polarising lenses are 'crossed', or placed at 90 degrees to each other, the effect is an almost complete blocking of the light (Figure 3-8). By analogy, denotation and connotation each let through a preferred reading and eliminate the 'glare' of an alternative interpretation. Further, when denotation and connotation come together ('cross'), as they do in myth, they become confused. A transparent or innocent view is no longer possible; in its place is an uneasy, ambiguous, obscure picture, where we no longer know what is

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68 Hall, 1980, p.133.
denotation and what is connotation. Connotation is naturalised and
the two are completely conflated. The L-diagram denaturalises
myth, pulling denotation and connotation apart. It thus becomes a
model of myth and an analytical tool.

The L-diagram owes a debt to the work of Barthes, but makes a
major departure from his notion of semiological chains (Figure 3-9).
Barthes conceptualises myth as an hierarchical system of planes.
Denotation comes first, and connotation appears at a subsequent
level. Wood and Fels suggest the two planes are where "the
simpler is appropriated by the more complex."69 In contrast, the L-
diagram does not build connotation from denotation, but shows how
each has an equal pull on the representation, and can exist
simultaneously.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>1. Signifier</th>
<th>2. Signified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Sign (meaning)</td>
<td>II SIGNIFIED (concept)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MYTH</td>
<td>I SIGNIFIER (form)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>III SIGN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3-9. Semiological chains (Barthes, 1968, p.124)**

Myth is central to the picturesque. Whilst the design of
landscape must by definition combine nature and art, the
relationship between the two in the picturesque is
ambiguous: "First there is nature (as if that is a certain
thing), then there are pictures made by a painter, then there
is a landscape designer making something that looks like
paintings that look like nature."70 Picturesque design
denotes nature, but has connotations of the art that depicted
nature, (Figure 3-10.)

The art on which the picturesque was based was very specific, initially drawing on the Golden Age
imagery of Claude, Poussin and Rosa, and subsequently on Dutch and English painting. The influence
of the initial imagery is significant, itself being based on myth and thus encumbering the picturesque

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69 Wood and Fels, 1992, p.103.
Real Italian countryside

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Painting by Arcadia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Claude</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3-11.** L-diagram for a painting by Claude Lorrain

Natural landscape

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Picturesque landscape painting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Claudian image</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3-12**

Claudian painting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Italian landscape</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arcadia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3-13**

Natural landscape

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Picturesque landscape design</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Claudian painting Arcadia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3-14**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Picturesque landscape design</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Claudian painting Arcadia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3-15**

with further connotations. Figure 3-11, for example, shows an L-diagram for a painting by Claude Lorrain. Whilst apparently denoting the Italian countryside, the image naturalises the connotations of Arcadia, and all the accompanying ideology.

A mapping of the picturesque myth as expressed in eighteenth century landscape design is possible, as shown in Figure 3-12-Figure 3-15. The two L-diagrams, one for the design itself, Figure 3-12 and one for the Claudian image, Figure 3-13 intersect at the point of Claude's painting (Figure 3-14). The Claude L-diagram, Figure 3-13, is inverted to avoid confusion between the two denotative components of Figure 3-12 and Figure 3-13, but retains the general denotative/connotative orientation. It is possible to see the layering of connotations which inform the picturesque landscape design, travelling along the axis via the Claude to Arcadia (Figure 3-14). Interestingly, the intersection of the two L-diagrams produces a third diagram, Figure 3-15. That a picturesque landscape could be a connotation of a Claude seems reverse logic, but for someone unfamiliar with the work of Claude and its significance to the construction of the picturesque, this is a possible reading. The paintings of Claude could be said to have been "infected" with their connotations of picturesqueness. If landscapes and paintings can be thought of as "texts", this exemplifies the way such "texts in the world" then recursively act back on the previous texts that shaped them. 

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3.2.4 Theorising: Linguistic analogy - pidgins and creoles

My research progression from surveying, to recording, to analysing the picturesque uses increasingly broad concepts of language. When I move to theorising I have adopted a yet more inclusive macroscale concept of language. The notion of pidgins and creoles provides a metaphor for the introduction of the picturesque “language” to an indigenous environment, moving beyond the particular situation of the discourse itself, and linking my study back to the wider social context.

The metaphor of translation has previously been applied to the movement of design languages. For example, Meyer asks, “What are the implications when the frame changes - a treatise or theory travels from one site to another? Do forms remain constant and meanings vary? Or are the intentions translated into another language? In other words how is Picturesque theory mediated by the particulars of place?”72 Hunt refers to “cultural translation - whereby one particular period receives and shapes for its own specific purposes ideas and forms inherited from predecessors elsewhere.”73 The interaction between the place and the introduced language is significant in the development of design, as Hunt explains “...what we see is a translation from an old into a ‘new’ language with a consequent elision of the two.”74

Hunt’s “elision” and Meyer’s “mediation” are both accommodated within my application of the concept of pidgins and creoles. A pidgin language emerges “when two mutually unintelligible speech communities attempt to communicate.” 75 The qualities of pidgin languages are “a limited vocabulary, a reduced grammatical structure, and a much narrower range of functions, compared to the languages which gave rise to them.”76 Pidgins demonstrate creativity in their response to addressing the needs of different language groups. For example, in Papua New Guinea, gras bilong fes is pidgin for “grass that belongs to the face,” or beard.77 However, as Bryson explains, pidgins “are makeshift tongues and as a result they seldom last long.”78 A pidgin language may develop into a creole, “a pidgin language which has become the mother tongue of a community.”79 The introduction of the picturesque to New Zealand parallels this process of linguistic fusion, with the imported conventions and the indigenous landscape attempting to communicate. The creativity shown in the Papua New Guinean pidgin for beard can be compared to the ways in which the picturesque has adapted to the specific New Zealand vocabulary of plants, climate, topography, and architecture.

73 Hunt, 1992, p.3.
75 Crystal, 1992, p.302.
78 Bryson, 1990, p.18.
79 ibid, p.336.
The metaphor of language therefore facilitates insights into the migration of design conventions like the picturesque. Language embodies ideas of vocabulary and syntax, arguably concepts shared by design at the microscale. This is extended through the concept of myth, which expresses the ambiguous nature of language, and the way in which meanings can be interpreted in different ways. The transitions that occur with pidgins and creoles continue the linguistic metaphor to provide further useful parallels with design.
Chapter 4: Surveying *The Landscape*

... where the interpreter is able to make explicit what the author left implicit or did not recognise or understand, he or she may know more about a work than its author.¹

4.1 The Research Corpus

For 18 years the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects (NZILA) produced a professional journal, *The Landscape*. The journal replaced the *NZILA Newsletter*, and intended to "publicise the landscape philosophy more actively, and act as a vehicle for the dissemination of information about the profession and its activities."² *The Landscape* chronicled the development of the profession, it was the Institute's "voice."³ In 1994 continuing financial difficulties and the ongoing problem of finding sufficient content saw *The Landscape* cease publication with issue 54. Within *The Landscape* reference is made to other publications by institute members, and the boundaries of the discourse are extended to include these additional works. The journals and associated publications represent a significant discourse, by which the profession in New Zealand defined itself.

As a whole, *The Landscape* is characterised by an emphasis on the pragmatic aspects of landscape design. The profession has rarely indulged in self-reflection, with discussion tending to favour aspects such as costs, maintenance, and planting techniques. Design theory is largely invisible, even suppressed, while practice is paramount. Occasionally there are attempts to encourage more active debate, for example in 1982 the new editorial committee of Frank Boffa, Boyden Evans and Julia Williams writes, "We do ... want to encourage healthy debate as well as constructive comment and criticism."⁴ And in 1984, the same committee states, "One of the obvious mediums we have to promote our skills (other than results on the ground) is by publishing our better and innovative works. We cannot help but conclude that landscape architects either have little to write about or they are too immersed in doing their own precious thing."⁵ By 1988, the profession was described by Kirby as having "collectively drooping spirits,"⁶ a portent of the predicament which saw *The Landscape*’s demise in 1994.

¹ Pickles, 1992, p.224.
² Challenger, 1976, p.17.
³ Challenger, 1994, p.2.
⁴ Boffa, Evans and Williams, 1982, p.2.
⁵ Boffa, Evans and Williams, 1984, back cover.
⁶ Kirby, 1988, p.2.
The small size of the profession in New Zealand has undoubtedly inhibited critique, where a sense of comradeship has perhaps stood in the way of objective discussion. Such issues are apparent even in the much larger arena of the USA, where Meyer hints at the problem of respecting "professional loyalties" in her research; a problem which is likely to be heightened within a close community of designers. Densem's belief that the profession's youth is a reason to avoid criticism also indicates the way in which perceived sensitivities can limit critique, throwing a protective mantle around the designers and their work: "There is no point in being hypercritical in an industry which is still so immature and undefined." It is the suppression of critique which allows the picturesque to persist so successfully in the discourse; never questioned, it becomes the inevitable, 'correct', way to design. Hidden within the benign matrix of pragmatism the picturesque lies buried, rarely challenged or even recognised. The discourse is like a heavily sedimented archaeological site, with occasional scratches on the surface when an editorial piece becomes contemplative, or a major area of disruption such as the publication of Martha Schwartz's lecture, which begins to destabilise everything around it.

4.2 Survey and analysis

The Landscape and related publications are conceptualised as an archaeological site, or landscape, to emphasise the way in which the evidence of the picturesque is 'buried' within sedimented layers. As Hulme observes of his work on colonial discourse, "The venture . . . is archelogical [sic]; no smooth history emerges, but rather a series of fragments which, read speculatively, hint at a story that can never be fully recovered." Interestingly, Titchener in his President's Column in The Landscape, writes, "Faced with a choice of having a piece published in a mass-circulation magazine or having it 'buried' in a spasmodically-produced journal with maybe one hundredth the readership base, the modern practitioner has increasingly opted for the former." This metaphor of excavation also helps to express the way in which the discourse is not a simple linear narrative. As Duncan and Duncan explain,

In the sense that they are not 'naively given' or read in a predetermined linear fashion, texts as Eagleton describes them appear like landscapes. For the text "has 'backgrounds' and 'foregrounds', different narrative viewpoints, alternative layers of meaning between which we are constantly moving" (Eagleton, 1983, page 77-78).

The language model of the picturesque proposed in 3.2.2 provides the structure for recording the fragments of the picturesque unearthed in the discourse. Many of the fragments could have been placed

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8 Densem, 1987, p.4.
9 Schwartz, 1989.
10 Peter Hulme quoted in Byrnes, 1993, p.16.
12 Duncan and Duncan, 1988, p.120.
in a range of categories, but are indexed under only one to avoid repetition. And like any language, the picturesque cannot function by means of its vocabulary and syntax in isolation; it is the simultaneous operation of these which allows us to read and comprehend. The fragmentary nature of the picturesque language in the discourse, however, demands dissolution into elements in order to reveal it.

A representative range of evidence is given for each category, along with an explanation of the category and its history. This presentation of historic sources and contemporary evidence is analogous to what Barnes and Duncan call ‘tacking’ between the text sources and the primary material. Quotations from The Landscape and other publications from the discourse (for example, Creative Forestry, Woodlots in the Landscape) are presented in italics throughout this chapter to distinguish them from the general text, identifying them as ‘evidence’ in the search for the picturesque.

4.3 Vocabulary

The language model (3.2.2) proposes that the picturesque can be conceptualised as a product of the combination of ‘vocabulary’ and ‘syntax’. Each of these categories includes a range of conventions which are recognised, either alone or in combination, as the picturesque.

4.3.1 Muted colours

The use of muted colours was important to picturesque convention, and referred to the varnished appearance of the old masters. The Italian word patena, referred to a dark varnish applied to shoes, and denoted the flattering tones on old varnished paintings over time. Patina was seen as having a "harmonising" influence. The ‘subtle tonal unity’ of old master paintings was in fact more induced by dirt and London fog than by the patina of centuries, but widespread admiration of the ‘golden glow’ of age led restorers to heap varnish on early masterpieces. The importance of muted colours in the landscape is illustrated by Hubbard and Kimball’s comment, “Fortunately for the American landscape, the colors which are usual in brick and stucco and cement are on the whole more subdued colors.”

Cole’s work on the use of colour in the New Zealand landscape echoes the picturesque convention of muted colours. He states that the problem with modern building materials is that they do not reflect local eccentricities: “In the past, buildings often assimilated the colour of the surrounding landscape,

15 ibid.
either by being built from local indigenous materials or by becoming mellowed from the embraces of a rigorous regional climate.”

Furthermore, “If sensitively applied to a structure, colour will reduce its visual scale, it will unify disjointed elements, and will create interest in the visual landscape.” These observations echo the theories of Knight and Gilpin who both advocated mellow colour in the landscape. Knight could not tolerate white in the landscape, and preferred mellow tones which suggested age and had connotations of the heavily varnished Claudes. Gilpin’s method of throwing a tint over the whole image harmonised it.

In addition to mellow colours, the disposition of colour was also considered critical by the picturesque theorists, and this is echoed in Petrie’s observation that “One of the main problems with structures in such an environment is to ‘break up’ the mass of one colour.”

The Creative Forestry manual recommends accent colours can be used to “reduce the scale and monotony of a surface by breaking it up.”

Large areas of colour, in particular white, were seen as glaring, by Gilpin, as he explains, “white is a hue, which nature expunges from all her works, except in the touch of a flower, an animal, a cloud, a wave, or some other transient objects.” And even when white appears in nature, such as a chalky cliff, nature covers it with plants, stains and various tints, “so as to remove, in part at least, the disgusting glare.”

Gilpin’s comparisons with nature are echoed in Lucas’s guidelines for rural South Canterbury: “Remember the colours of nature are mostly very muted, they are soft and neutral. Bright colours are confined to small, well-defined areas set against the muted background. Aim for similar colour use on buildings.”

The preference for muted colours exemplifies how picturesque convention is naturalised, and becomes a taken-for-granted way of seeing the world. For example, in the Lake District in England, the National Trust has banned windsurfers from some locations because “their bright sails and wetsuits ruined the view.” This opposition to bright colours in the landscape is also apparent in New Zealand, where, “For trampers, the sight of mountain bikers in racing colours on scenic spots like the West Coast’s Heaphy Track is like waving a red flag at a bull.”

The dislike of bright colours extends to gaudily coloured tents and houses that “don’t blend in with the landscape,” according to Martin. While these objections might seem preposterous, they exemplify the extent to which picturesque conventions are ingrained as ‘natural’ ways of experiencing the environment.

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17 Cole, 1979, p.15.
18 ibid.
19 Petrie, 1979, p.6
21 ibid.
22 ibid.
24 Martin, 1996, p.3.
25 ibid.
26 ibid.
4.3.2 Variety

Variety is one of the cornerstones of the picturesque, identified by Price as one of the two most fruitful sources of human pleasure. He summarises, "variety --- the power of which is independent of beauty, but without which even beauty itself soon ceases to please; the second, intricacy --- a quality which, though distinct from variety, is so connected and blended with it, that one can hardly exist without the other."  

Shenstone explained that "landscape should contain variety enough to form a picture upon canvas."  

Piddington, Simpson and Hill's definition of 'good landscape' identifies "the excitement of variation" as one criterion, concurring with Price. Evans's visual riverscape classification uses aesthetic criteria that also have strong resonances of Price: "Unity . . ., variety . . ., and vividness." It is worth noting that the other two factors are also intrinsic to the picturesque. Gilpin expresses the need for unity, and advises "it is a breach of the most express picturesque canon, if the parts engage the eye more than the whole." The quality of vividness is attributed to the picturesque in dictionary definitions.

The principle of variety is illustrated in the guidelines of South Island High Country Forestry Design, which advises, "The best edge transitions are those which avoid hard lines . . . One way to achieve this effect is to allow some seedlings to establish out from the edge of the stand; this can be managed to provide variety in tree density and height." Spatial variety is also recognised as a positive design element, as evident in the caption for a photograph by Lucas, "Looking down drive from near homestead. Drive following edges, giving variety in spaces and directing views." Vasbenter, in describing new ideas for living in Masterton, applied the principle to buildings as well, as " . . . the necessary variety and sense of identity can be introduced into the house groupings."

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29 Piddington, Simpson and Hill, 1985, p.11.
30 Evans, 1976, p.10.
31 Gilpin quoted in Barbier, 1963, p.121.
34 Vasbenter, 1976, p.5.
4.3.3 Irregularity/roughness

Uvedale Price contends that the picturesque is founded on “roughness ... sudden variation ... age, and even ... decay.”35 The pictorial source for these characteristics was Salvator Rosa, known for his remarkable picturesque effects, with his “abrupt and rugged forms.”36 Pinney, a farmer writing in The Landscape, reflects the picturesque predilection for irregularity with his solution for the stark line created at the edge of ploughing: “This starkness can be considerably modified by the breaking of the straight lines through leaving an irregular edge to the tussocks ...”37

![Figure 4-1. Cromwell town plan (Ministry of Works and Development, 1982, p.51)](image)

Picturesque irregularity is also manifested in the attempts by designers to effect an organic appearance in street layouts. Broadbent refers to this approach by planners as “self-conscious irregularity of the kind we call Picturesque.”38 The plan for the Cromwell Town expansion shows a shift from the grid of the original, utilitarian town layout on the right, to an irregular and convoluted configuration on the left (Figure 4-1). This represents in microcosm the changing suburban forms evident in larger cities such as Christchurch, where the original city centre is planned around the colonial grid, but post-war suburbs such as Bryndwr have an ‘intestinal’ character.39 While Christchurch’s grid reflects the utilitarian concerns of settlers, Cromwell was laid out as a construction town, originally intended to be transitory. In both cases the involvement of professional designers, whether planners or landscape architects, saw a ‘softening’ of the grid and an attempt to create a more irregular layout. The triumph of the irregular, picturesque layout over the utilitarian grid is also evident at the New Zealand Electricity construction camp at Murchison, where, “An informal layout incorporating open space areas, was planned in preference to the traditional layout of single men’s huts based on a regular grid pattern.”40

35 Price, 1810, p.69.
36 ibid, p.64.
38 Broadbent, 1990, p.5.
Irregularity is particularly manifested in the attempts to disguise straight lines. Tane fears the impact of the straight line in the High Country and warns, "Unless something is done to change the course of events, pastoral land uses which are based on rectilinear fencing patterns, closed paddocks, arable fields and fence line shelter belts, will turn the high country into another Canterbury Plains. To preserve High Country rangelands, land uses which do not require fences, which follow more closely natural edges in the landscape and enhance topographical features are to be preferred."41 Treeby also advocates avoiding geometric planting, and contends, "There is much scope for more natural shaped plantings defined by the site characteristics rather than the surveyor's theodolite and subsequent subdivision fencing."42 And at Cromwell, the quest for irregularity extended to the smallest details, as Emmitt describes how, "Groundcover such as low growing junipers and native species was used extensively where it was considered street linearity required breaking . . ."43

The predilection for the irregular leads to the removal of existing features because of their linear nature. At Christchurch Girls' High School, the Mill Race was replaced by "a gently winding stream through the central part of the site with a character much in keeping with other such streams in the city."44 It was felt that the Mill Race with its requirement for "a wide, straight, concrete edged channel . . . would have created a deep gash through the site at its most visually sensitive point."45

Counter-evidence for irregularity is scarce. Although some formal designs are proposed, for example, Brady's Saint Mary's Cathedral Park,46 they are exceptions. Schwartz's lecture challenges the status quo of the irregular, informal, rough approach. In working with a railway line, Schwartz wanted to "do something that really played up the beauty of the line, the beauty of the flatness - not to try and disguise it and not say 'gee this is an ugly thing, let's try and hide it, let's pretend it's not here, let's pretend it's England, let's pretend it's somewhere else.'"47

4.3.4 Age

The picturesque is typified by a love of aged, nostalgic elements. Price describes how a temple passes from newness into a ruin with age, becoming more picturesque: "Observe the process by which time, the great author of such changes, converts a beautiful object into a picturesque one."48 He describes the accumulation of stains, the disintegration of the structure, and the actions of plants which make this

41 Tane, 1983, p.4.
42 Treeby, 1984, p.20.
43 Emmitt, 1986, p.4.
44 Ministry of Works and Development Environmental Design Section, Christchurch, 1988, p.11.
45 ibid.
47 ibid.
48 Price, 1810, p. 51
possible. Knight believed that, "new buildings have an unity of tint, and sharpness of angle, which render them unfit for painting, unless when mixed with trees or some other objects, which may break and diversify their colour, and graduate and harmonise the abruptness of their lights and shadows." 49 Hubbard and Kimball reinforce the picturesque fondness for age with their advice that, "A building usually assumes greater harmony with the landscape as it grows old, that is, as it is subjected for a longer and longer time to the natural forces of rain and weather which are operating also on all the other objects of the scene." 50

The concern that landscape developments do not look 'new' is demonstrated in the discourse by Monzingo, in her review of the design for Huka Lodge. She writes, "A year after completing the redevelopment, the lodge and the grounds are losing that new look as the natural building materials weather and the plantings mature." 51 The predilection for aged buildings is also evident in Titchener's report on the New Plymouth Power Station: "The aim [is] ... to continue the flow of vegetation down from the rock, over the batters to the south of the station, and around the base of the buildings, thus enveloping the new with trappings of the existing environment." 52

Gashes on the landscape were also viewed unfavourably by picturesque theorists because of their raw appearance. Greenup's explanation of the rehabilitation of a shingle pit at the Groynes, near Christchurch, follows picturesque convention. "Silver poplars were removed from the hollow but groves of poplars and willows higher on the banks were left to form a backdrop which helps give the newly-made lake a mature appearance." 53 Two hundred years earlier, Price writes, "When a rawness of such a gash in the ground is softened, and in part concealed and ornamented by the effects of time, and the progress of vegetation, deformity, by this usual process is converted into picturesqueness; and this is the case with quarries, gravel-pits, etc ..." 54

4.3.5 Tree groups and mounding

Tree groups and mounding reflects the legacy of Brown, and were defended by Repton for their expediency but criticised by Price as lazy and formulaic. Treib explains, "Trees in the English landscape garden, at least during the eighteenth century, were used 'structurally,' to borrow Tunnard's

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49 Knight, 1808, p.156.
50 Hubbard and Kimball, 19.., p.190.
54 Price, 1810.
term." And "while one may regard as shapes the patterns of Brown's stands of trees, their foremost function was to define spaces and vistas, even if these were at some remove from the main house."

Hargreaves describes what he calls the "cartoon solutions of modernism": "The park or grounds have to be English picturesque: mounds (often the wrong scale); spatially clumped planting; a colourful understorey; and of course a curvilinear water body." Jackman's comment suggests at least some landscape architects realise the clichéd nature of the trees-and-mounds composition. He writes, "If landscape architects are to form the cutting edge of cultural change we must proffer much more than moans, mounds, brown paving, one footpath and a few grouped trees as answers." However, throughout much of the discourse the picturesque conventions of mounds and clumps are naturalised as 'correct' design responses.

Informal clumps form the basis for designs such as Stäger's concept plan for a farm homestead and Electricorp's plan for a village at the Waipapa power station (Figure 4-2). Tree groups are seen as a 'remedy' for artificiality, as is evident in proposals such as Vasbenter's landscape design for the

![Diagram of Waipapa Power Station - Village Concept Plan](image)

**Figure 4-2. Waipapa power station (Electricorp, 1987, p.57)**

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56 ibid.
57 Hargreaves, 1983, p.64.
58 Jackman, 1979, p.6
Figure 4-3. Mounds and tree clumps at the University of Canterbury (O’Mahony, 1981, p.10)

Waiouru Military Museum, where “Ideally any extension should be free in form and set amongst tree groups and drifts of lower plants.” 60 Lucas also uses this approach in directing landowners to “Plant large groups and groves of other productive trees, and have them ‘drift’ back into the main crop,” 61 and these clumps should “have an overall informal shape and layout in keeping with the landscape.” 62 Petrie’s “random groupings to provide shelter for stock and visual relief to the somewhat two-dimensional farmland,” 63 and Gay’s instruction on a plan to “Introduce an occasional clump of Beech into this screen,” 64 further exemplify the immutability of these picturesque conventions.

As shown in the photograph of the University of Canterbury’s landscape design, mounds and clumps provided an approach to siting large buildings in the landscape (Figure 4-3). O’Mahony explains how efforts were made to ameliorate traffic conflicts on the site, and “this frequently required mounding, planting and retaining walls to channel traffic or to screen carparks and service areas.” 65 The same elements were used by New Zealand Electricity at Cairnbrae substation where, “The simple treatment of screen mounding and planting is effective in integrating the substation with the area and is easily maintained.” 66 Both examples reflect the modernist approach of placing strong architectural forms within picturesque landscape. Le Corbusier, for example, recommends that “the proximity of geometrical forms with picturesque vegetation produces a much-needed and satisfying combination in

62 ibid, p.20.
64 Robin Gay, 1982, p.6 (plan caption).
our urban scene."¹⁶⁷ The disposition of the built forms, the earth shaping, and the planting all combine to reinforce the modernist interpretation of picturesque convention.

4.3.6 Ruins

"The cult of the ruin" was an indispensable part of the picturesque ethos. Ruins provided visual interest, analogous to the architectural features of Claude’s paintings. Also, ruins embodied the nostalgic atmosphere required by picturesque compositions in the eyes of ‘associationists’, such as Knight, who believed that the picturesque was evoked by mental imagery rather than merely the visual pattern. The privileging of ruins as a source of aesthetic pleasure is a problematic aspect of the picturesque. The so-called “heartless picturesque”¹⁶⁸ results from this prioritising of aesthetics over social responsibility. This immoral picturesque is echoed in the comments of Harvey on the postmodernist images which feed off the conventions of the picturesque: "The street scenes of impoverishment, disempowerment, graffiti and decay become grist for the cultural producers' mill, not . . . in the muckracking conformist style of the late nineteenth century, but as a quaint and swirling backdrop (as in Blade Runner) upon which no social commentary is to be made."⁶⁹ He adds, "When 'poverty and homelessness are served up for aesthetic pleasure', then ethics is indeed submerged by aesthetics, inviting, thereby, the bitter harvest of charismatic politics and ideological extremism."⁷⁰

In the NZILA discourse, the picturesque fascination with ruins is demonstrated by the Rimutaka Incline Walkway which preserves a disused railway line and its associated structures. The retention of the redundant structures such as “embankments, cuttings, tunnels and bridges” and the addition of “shelters and entrance information structures . . . based on Public Works department standard railway details from the nineteenth century”⁷¹ provides an approximation of a ruin. The walkway, “with the basis of an understanding as they [walkers] progress over the route in either direction,”⁷² has resonances with picturesque landscape in its most academic and readerly form.

Images of ruins in the landscape are used to illustrate how colours should relate to the landscape context by the New Zealand Forest Service (Figure 4-4). “Satisfactory attachment is achieved when the combination of colours selected has the greatest compatibility with the landscape background without losing definition of the structure's form.”⁷³ The images have overtones of the ‘heartless picturesque’, where their justification is on aesthetic grounds, reflecting the picturesque love of decay. As Kemp

⁶⁷ Le Corbusier, 1971, p.236
⁶⁸ Ruskin, 1909.
⁶⁹ Harvey, 1989, p.336.
⁷⁰ ibid, p.337.
⁷¹ Pharazyn, 1988, p.15.
⁷² ibid.
⁷³ New Zealand Forest Service, 1982, p.112.
reiterates, "One of our most remarkable cultural acquisitions, surely, is our capacity for an aesthetic attraction to objects and situations which document decay."74

Figure 4-4. Ruins in the landscape. (New Zealand Forest Service, 1982, p. 112)

4.3.7 Accident/neglect

Accident and neglect were significant sources of imagery for the picturesque, and as Robinson explains, "Design by neglect," as the Picturesque was characterised in the late-18th century, is a very delicate balance between nature's entropic processes and human intervention forestalling total degradation of an aesthetic composition.75 Repton foresaw a huge picturesque forest engulfing the entire country if the "new system of improving by 'neglect' and 'accident'" was allowed to continue.76 His comments were a response to the approach to the picturesque advocated by Price and Knight, where the designer should "gain hints for design from observing the effects produced by neglect and accident."77

Evoking the sense of an accidental, chance element in design is an approach used by designers to avoid a regular appearance in the landscape. For example, the plan for the Ohakune Ranger Station bears the instruction, "These rocks to intrude slightly into paving to become an integral part of the path."78 Such

74 Kemp, 1990, p.103.
76 Repton quoted in Hipple, 1957, p.239.
77 Price quoted in ibid.
a direction indicates that the design is supposed to effect a ‘natural’ appearance, as though the rocks had accidentally tumbled onto the path. To avoid the uniform appearance of mass planting, Brown and Heath recommend, “The contrived appearance can be largely avoided by high density plantings of small stock and allowing natural competition to prevail.”\(^79\) Marsh suggests that “Planting provides an element of disorder and softening,”\(^80\) thus mimicking the effects of accident and neglect.

4.4 Syntax

4.4.1 Backdrop, foreground

Terms such as backdrop and foreground are ingrained in the terminology of landscape, and their pictorial origins are completely naturalised and taken for granted. It was paintings such as Claude’s that established the tripartite division of space into background, midground and foreground. Gilpin describes the divisions as “Background, containing Mountains and Lakes; Off-skip, comprising Valleys, Woods, Rivers; Foreground, comprising Rocks, Cascades, Broken Ground and Ruins.”\(^81\) The formulaic colouring of the three layers is evident in Mason’s description:

> "... three well-mark’d distances
Spread their peculiar colouring. Vivid green,
Warm brown and black opaque the foreground bears
Conspicuous; sober olive marks
The second distance; thence the third declines
In softer blue, or less’ning still is lost
In faintest purple.”\(^82\)

‘Backdrop’ is a frequently used term, and reflects the picturesque’s legacy of theatrical as well as pictorial devices. For example, Buckland describes how at Wellington Zoo, “Plants can be used as a backdrop to the animals.”\(^83\) A usage which evokes the scenic origins of the term is Greenup’s description of the Groynes, near Christchurch, where people “come to enjoy the cool, clear water in its many forms - calm lakes, rushing spillways and deep swimming holes - a vital part of the river side setting with its backdrop of willows and massed native plantings.”\(^84\)

\(^79\) Brown and Heath, 1986, p.22.
\(^80\) Marsh, 1985, p.4.
\(^82\) Mason quoted in Andrews, 1989, p.28.
\(^83\) Buckland, 1977, p.13.5.
\(^84\) Greenup, 1988, p.7.
The casual usage of 'backdrop' is transcended with its elevation to a technical parameter in landscape assessments. "Relationship to mountain backdrop," is an indicator of scenic quality in a landscape assessment of Rarotonga by Boffa Jackman. Claude's tripartite division also enters the technical vocabulary of landscape assessment with Jackman's explanation of the Horawainui technique where the "compounding scale allows for better graphic representation of foreground, midground and background divisions . . ." and "...the different visual values of the three places can be reasonably assessed. In this case complexity of each of the foreground, midground and background could be rated comparatively . . .".

The use of the three distances seems somehow 'natural', yet masks the perpetuation of Claudian pictorial composition as a norm. Language is loaded with ideological baggage, and the confrontation of this can be a powerful statement. As Brownlow describes, the poet John Clare went to great lengths to avoid the use of picturesque vocabulary because of his opposition to the ideology it represented.

4.4.2 Screening

Theatre, as well as painting, influenced the conventions of the picturesque, and this is evident in the use of the term 'screen' and the employment of coulisse in landscape design. The most graphic demonstrations of this was in Repton's work, where he literally applied a paper flap over the painting of the proposed landscape design to show the 'before' view, and removed it to reveal the 'after'. The use of screening in contemporary landscape architecture has subsequently become a 'sign' that something inconsistent with picturesque imagery lies behind it - a modern-day Reptonian flap. This is evident in the Ministry of Forestry's landscape design with "Planting to screen storage area and create backdrop to village . . .". This device was also suggested by the Beautiful New Zealand Secretariat. Landscape architect Ross Jackson was seconded to Tourist and Publicity Department as Research Officer on the Beautiful New Zealand project, and he relates that one of the concerns of the group was the "Practical aspects of planting, e.g. . . . screening of undesirable or framing desirable views.".

In the same way that background and foreground have been naturalised in the language of landscape assessment, there is an apparent assumption that objects in the landscape must be screened. For example in his landscape assessment for the Waikato coal fired power station, Hudson uses the term as
part of an array of factors that resemble the concerns of the eighteenth-century picturesque tourist:

"Some of the factors considered in assessing the absorption capacity included backdrop, screening, distance, observer position and orientation." 91

The theatrical connotations of screening became masked in the naturalisation of landscape as scenery. The landscape is portrayed as a diorama, to be viewed from a particular point, with screens inserted into the space to define the views. For example, when describing forestry's potential effects on the landscape, the Ministry of Forestry refers to "screening." The explanation is that "view to the horizon or the Alps from broad valleys and basin landscapes can be interrupted and contained by planting in the foreground and midground, which detracts from the sense of spaciousness." 92 Lucas's guidelines for rural South Canterbury also illustrate the way in which the screen is conceived of as a way for manipulating the landscape in a theatrical way. She directs: "Align and plant to emphasise vistas and screen poor views. An occasional glimpse of a mountain peak or homestead is usually more effective than having full view throughout." 93

4.4.3 Blending in

"Blending in" reflects the pictorial origins of the picturesque, particularly the atmospheric paintings of the artists such as Rosa and Rembrandt. Knight described the character of the picturesque in this way:

"Its greatest art is aptly to conceal;
To lead, with secret guile, the prying sight
To where component parts may best unite,
And form one beauteous, nicely blended whole,
To charm the eye and captivate the soul." 94

The ideal of a "nicely blended whole," persists in writing on landscape, and becomes the status quo for the introduction of objects into the landscape. For example, in the Landscape of Power, Crowe describes a successful hydro-electric scheme at Tummel-Gary: "The long water takes its shape from the surrounding hills and the margin is varied and natural. In places, the wooded shore is broken by green fields coming down to the water's edge. The new road fits quietly and efficiently into the contours. In most places an unobtrusive fence of post and wire is set back within the woodland." 95 This description by Crowe presents something of an inventory of picturesque signifiers, and strongly echoes the eighteenth-century antecedents. Such thinking obviously influenced the NZILA, with an editorial citing

91 Hudson, 1985, 4
94 Knight quoted in Hipple, 1957, p.249.
95 Crowe, 1958, p.68.
Sylvia Crowe’s *The Landscape of Power* as evidence that “Principles of good design have been known for many years...”

One of the main applications of ‘blending in’ in the discourse is in attempting to reduce the impact of architecture in the landscape. Henderson describes the appearance of a domestic landscape design in Hawkes Bay, “The overall effect was one of much greater integration of house and garden; the house profile was much reduced and house integration with the garden minimised the earlier effect of hard definition lines and physical boundaries.”

At an industrial scale, Hudson explains the optimum setting for the Waikato coal fired power station, recommending, “Ideally the power station would be seen to be set in rather than sit on the landscape.” Hudson continues, “The degree to which an activity has an adverse impact on the visual quality of the landscape depends on the visual contrast it creates with the existing landscape character.” The assumption prompting such an assertion is that elements introduced to the countryside should blend in. This discounts the viewpoint that a power station could have merit in the countryside, echoing a Corbusian vision of a modernist form contrasting with picturesque landscape. A further example of the goal of a seamless blend of landscape and architecture is Huka Lodge in Taupo, where the designer envisaged that “... the buildings should blend into the landscape.”

Again in Taupo, in this instance at Taupo Lodge, Worley Gillman describe their efforts at integrating architecture and landscape: “Building profiles compatible with the landform and materials which reflect the natural quality of the surrounds were recommended.” Chalmers echoes these comments with his belief that at Battle Hill Farm Park a priority is “the integration of the facility into the natural environment.” It is not only buildings which should blend in, according to the reports in *The Landscape*. New landscape developments are also often considered favourable if they blend in with the existing landscape. In aligning a new road near Dunedin, the Ministry of Works state, “The design concept was to shape the cut and fill batters to an extent to blend them into the surrounding natural landform...” A new fitness and confidence course designed for the Police Training College is described as successful because “The final result is a difficult course that has been nestled into the landform.” A seamless boundary is the goal of Boffa Jackman and Associates at Manganese Point Farm Park, as they explain,
"The placement of some house sites adjacent to the golf course will allow the present 'hard line' boundary to be softened and integrated with the proposed comprehensive development." The electric fence proposed by the Ministry of Forestry forms what could be called an electronic ha-ha. Their description of the proposals for a farm landscape reads like a late twentieth-century echo of one of Repton's Red Books: "Existing boundary fence removed so that homestead landscape better integrated with broader rural landscape by incorporating entire front paddock. Area of lawn immediately around homestead regularly mown, with longer 'meadow' lawn beyond maintained either by occasional mowing or by placing temporary electric fence around lawn & grazing with sheep." Forestry planting is one area in which concerns over 'blending in' have predominated, as illustrated in these comments from Creative Forestry: "Mortality, differing growth rates, and regeneration will help soften the boundaries over time ... As forest grazing becomes more widespread it is possible to incorporate open space and low density stands in the forest to achieve good land use and blur the transition between the uses."

The Polhill windmill debate highlighted the way in which concerns about blending in are expressed by designers. Opposition to the turbine was motivated by anxiety over the placement of an object in the landscape. Pharazyn explains, "... our objection to the proposing windmill is that here is a totally unnatural thing being placed in a position that's very dominant and obtrusive." The strategies suggested by Powell, in contrast, show a departure from the received conventions. He proposes, "We clearly can't hide it; it can't be painted a colour to make it disappear. So we take the other approach and make the most of it as a positive approach." Powell's proposal is one of the few examples of counter-evidence of the picturesque in The Landscape. Not only does he challenge the syntax of 'blending in', but also defies the conventions of muted colours, and the whole outweighing the parts, that are central to picturesque landscape.

Notably, a further example of counter-evidence of blending in comes from an architectural perspective. Architect Rewi Thompson writes of the "use of shining modern forms within a natural and earthy landscape." He says this symbolises the "challenge of Maoritanga living in modern society, especially for those who live in more urban environments." While such a design approach is counter to picturesque thinking, according to Crandell it could in fact achieve more in the way of naturalism than any attempt to blend in. She states,
It is unfair to assume... that design that attempts to look like, copy, or imitate what is truly natural (i.e., design that is naturalistic) is truly more respectful of nature. Designs that stand in sharp contrast to their surroundings uncompromisingly declare what they are: products of human or cultural intention. At the same time, such designs show an understanding that they are not natural. As a result, they might well disclose a deeper appreciation of both nature and design than do those designs that attempt to blend with their surroundings.  

4.4.4 Framed views

Bicknell identifies the trees in Claude's *A Landscape with Cattle: Apollo and Mercury* (1666) as "the prototype of a hundred years of the framing trees cliché in British landscape." In fact, this stock convention endures far beyond the eighteenth-century. Evans observes, "Although the picturesque seems faintly daft today, you only have to catch yourself choosing a view and framing a photograph to be aware of its influence." While the idea of a view might seem 'natural', Hussey highlights the recent nature of the convention when he writes, "The Elizabethan regarded distance as little more than an inhibition to clear seeing. Looking at a view was a waste of time, since you could not really see anything." The notion of frames and views refers to both physical interventions in the landscape through the creation of frames, and to an attitude towards landscape with the identification of views as primary sources of scenic pleasure.

The love of the view was reinforced in landscape architecture texts. Hubbard and Kimball advise, "An overhanging tree like an elm is particularly effective for this purpose, because it not only bounds the composition on the sides but to a considerable extent on top, and its spreading shadow upon the ground may inclose the view at the bottom as well."

The frame endured into the modernist phase, as expressed in Fairbrother's *The Nature of Landscape Design*, the recommendation is given "A framed view immediately attracts our attention." Although there is no direct reference to the picturesque origins of such a statement, a hint at the connotations is present, with the view echoed in the accompanying illustration, *A Woodland Landscape*, by Jacob van Ruisdael, one of the Dutch painters to influence the picturesque.

In the New Zealand landscape the proliferation of 'viewing platforms' and signs directing tourists to 'View Mount Cook' underline the centrality of the view to our experience of the landscape. Heath describes his design for a viewing platform at the Waitaki Dam: "Penetration through the wall to the
observation deck is quite mannered and is intended to create a distinct threshold. Once through the wall, vision is further manipulated by the roof edge, first forcing vision down towards the dam and then playing the horizontal edge against irregular skyline of the hills beyond.”

Viewing platforms and scenic lookouts are, according to Crandell, “elevated viewing locations that tell spectators in case they are unaware, that they are looking at a scenic view.”

Views, in particular framed views, are consistently presented as concerns in the discourse. The realignment of State Highway No.1 at Lake Karapiro was designed, “... creating a curvilinear [sic] sweep of road in close proximity, with views of the lake.” In another highway realignment, “One of the most significant features of this alignment will be the framed views of Lake Taupo obtained for north-bound motorists as they descend from the pumice plateau.” Views were also a priority in the planning of a refuse disposal system in Christchurch, where the plan depicts a serpentine path meandering through trees and “... revealing framed views at selected points to the Port Hills, Southern Alps and the sea.” (Figure 4-5)

Bennett identified framed views as an important element in a subdivision planned for Porirua where, “The view of the harbour and the east hills from the higher elevations of the site is magnificent and should be considered in the placement and orientation of housing units. Such a view would be enhanced if it were seen through a frame of trees so that the viewer is given a sense of dimension and distance.”

118 Heath, 1984, p.15.
121 Milligan, 1986, p.5.
122 Miskell, 1984, p.4 (plan caption).
123 Bennett, 1974, p.33.
Designers also concerned themselves with creating the frames necessary to capture the views. At the Parnell Rose Gardens, for example, "The view is framed between two pergolas." Buckland explains how, "Plants can be used to highlight or frame views, both of the animals and in the zoo." And at the William Frazer Building in Alexandra, "Planting was used to define outdoor spaces, providing necessary screening and privacy where required and framing views to and from the complex."

In a rare connection between contemporary landscape architecture and the legacy of the picturesque, Cole summarises, "Trees placed near a viewing point provide a foreground frame through which to appreciate a view. Similarly groups of carefully placed trees within an undulating landscape can be used to direct a view to some distance [sic] feature, a device used by many landscape architects of the eighteenth century."

Counter evidence for the convention of the view is scarce. Summarising findings from her major design study, Roy contends, "It is quite inappropriate to simplify the complex, three dimensional, surrounding environment and approach it in the way one analyses a two-dimensional object such as a photograph, drawing or painting." She continues, "I feel that Litton's approach is essentially two-dimensional in that he concentrates almost exclusively on views in the landscape," and advocates a moving view of the environment in preference to sketches or photographs. (Ironically, such an approach also has connotations of the picturesque, as outlined in the discussion of serial vision below.) Treeby agrees, "The 'picture looking' approach to analysing landscape represents a distancing rather than an involvement."

4.4.5 Park-like

Park-like has become synonymous with picturesque design, immediately conjuring up a vision of a grassy landscape surrounded with groups of informally planted trees. Capability Brown is synonymous with park-like imagery, as he dispensed with any gardens and brought the park right up to the house. The connection between parks and the picturesque is continued with Birkenhead Park and Central Park, the latter becoming an iconic vision of how parks should be.

125 Buckland, 1977, p.13.5.
129 ibid.
130 Treeby, 1985, p.22.
At the Avalon Television Centre, Drakeford explains how "The design objective for the site was to create a 'park-like' setting about the television complex." 131 Scott also uses this adjective to describe the Limeburner's Creek project, where, "The landscape development has created a park-like atmosphere." 132 The picturesque legacy of cemeteries is recalled in Boffa's conclusion that, "To date, the concept of a park-like design has been best realised in crematoria layout, particularly the private crematoria." 133

What is implied in the use of "park-like" is that there is only one style of park: the picturesque. Few would read these references to park-like as referring to a French formal park, for example. As Bain summarises in his study of urban parks, "... a large section of society still demands that some places 'look like' parks. No Parc de la Villette just yet, thanks." 134

4.4.6 Serial vision

The peripatetic view is a sign of the picturesque, as "While it renders Nature an object of manipulation, the Picturesque garden is perceived, not as a thing in itself, but as a series of relationships that are gradually revealed to the moving spectator." 135 William Gilpin used his eye "like a cine-camera, as his boat moves down the river, or as the 'shifting' scenes 'float' past his carriage window." 136 Gilpin advised that, "landscape is not static but constantly recomposing itself into different, separate, or singular pictures." 137 The sequential nature of landscape design was apparent in Shenstone's idea of placing seats along a pictorial route, so that one could see elements in the landscape "in a new light." 138 Paulson suggests that the move to view the landscape as a series of views along a pictorial circuit is that "the world order - the shared myths - having dissolved, or no longer proving viable, polysemous meaning was not longer possible: the viewer could no longer see the object as a whole, and so each bought his own meaning - symbolised by the different viewpoints along the pictorial circuit." 139 Brownlow describes how, "To walk around the gardens of Stowe, Stourhead, or Rousham in their prime was to be involved in landscape and in lime in new ways, and to perceive new relationships between space and time. The picturesque vistas were modified as one walked, or one would pause to compose a
formal picture, or abstract a moral, or meditate upon a memento mori or sic transit gloria mundi theme."\textsuperscript{140}

The reason for the interest in these moving views relates to one of the fundamental rules of the picturesque propounded by Price. This quality, intricacy, suggests Price, "might be defined, [as] that disposition of objects which, by a partial and uncertain concealment, excites and nourishes curiosity."\textsuperscript{141}

The convention of the gradually revealed view persisted throughout the modernist period, and is evident in the work of Gordon Cullen. Cullen's work, \textit{Townscape}, published in 1961, would have been familiar to New Zealand landscape architects, and the word "townscape" is used in the discourse.\textsuperscript{142} Cullen describes the city as scenery, and talks about "pictures in the mind".\textsuperscript{143} He speaks of the experience of moving through the city as "a sequence of revelations", and relates the "shifting interplay of towers, spires and masts, all the intricacy of fresh alignments and groupings, the shafts of penetration and the sudden branching of ephemerals into a dramatic knot ... ."\textsuperscript{144} As Meyer summarises, "Temporal change, spatial sequence, memory and association, the inability to comprehend in a glance - the experiential aspects of the Picturesque have been reclaimed as precursors to both the free-plan and the architectural promenade."\textsuperscript{145}

While the concern with views is paramount, as described above, the manipulation of the landscape experience to provide a sequential experience is also a theme of the discourse. For example, in the realignment of the road at Earthquake Gully, "...the curvature of the road offered a changing view of distant features (e.g. Mt Tauhara[]), and a changing setback between the motorist and the Lake Taupo Forest."\textsuperscript{146} Figure 4-6 shows how the New Zealand Forest Service proposes the relationship to the road to create interest through a sequential experience of views. At a smaller scale, the redesign of Victoria Square in Christchurch included "...a curving central pathway unfolding to focus on the Town Hall and Avon River."\textsuperscript{147}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{140} Brownlow, p.15. \\
\textsuperscript{141} Price, 1810, p. 22.. \\
\textsuperscript{142} For example, Williams, 1979, p.22; and Vasbenter, 1976, p.3. \\
\textsuperscript{143} Cullen, 1961, p.11. \\
\textsuperscript{144} ibid, p.19. \\
\textsuperscript{145} Meyer, 1994, p.172. \\
\textsuperscript{146} Milligan, 1986, p.5. \\
\textsuperscript{147} Bateman, 1988, p.3-4.
\end{flushright}
Describing the design of new housing areas in Masterton, Vasbenter proposes that a reserve will "give an interesting progression of spaces, within which will be sited the childrens [sic] play areas and casual recreation spaces." ¹⁴⁸ Five years later, in a description replete with picturesque subtext, Vasbenter outlines the landscape design for the new housing at Sutherland Road, Wellington: "The planting is designed to make the footpaths as interesting as possible by devices such as planting to obscure and then suddenly reveal views, planting to set off foliage against a back cloth of plain two-storey timber walls and planting to lead the eye along sinuous spaces." ¹⁴⁹ This principle was also proposed by Laws in the development study for the western Bay of Plenty, envisaging "Fine threads of open space and planting spread into housing groups to give an inter-locking and varied progression of spaces." ¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ Vasbenter, 1976, p.3.
¹⁵⁰ Laws, 1986, p.11.
The concept of designed nature is central to the picturesque. Nature herself was not considered adequate, however, and improvement was required. Gilpin explains: “Nature is always great in design; but unequal in composition. She is an admirable colourist; and can harmonise her tints with infinite variety, and inimitable beauty: but is seldom so correct in composition, as to produce an harmonious whole.”¹⁵¹ In improving nature the skill was to conceal the means, as an eighteenth-century writer explains, “the peculiar happiness of this age ... regularity banished, prospects opened, the country called in, nature rescued and improved, and art decently concealing herself under her own perfections.”¹⁵² Or as Robinson states, “The garden looks natural, yet the effort expended to make it look that way is kept out of sight.”¹⁵³

The privileging of the ‘natural’ in design characterises the discourse of the NZILA. For many designers, as with the original practitioners of the picturesque, the ultimate achievement is when the work is not recognisable as having been designed. Although presented here as one element of the design syntax, it is an amalgam of an array of signifiers. This evidence refers to those examples attempting to specifically evoke the natural.

Forestry planting has evidently challenged designers with its alien appearance. The New Zealand Forest Service claims that people’s enjoyment of a landscape reflects how well the patterns relate to each other and to the whole scene, and that “The main expectation is for naturalness, expressed in diverse patterns within a unified, cohesive character.”¹⁵⁴ Where exotic forestry is concerned the manual advises, “Although the new cover may be exotic, the patterns need not be unnatural.”¹⁵⁵ More specifically the Ministry of Forestry’s South Island High Country Forestry Design suggests, “On sites with undulating topography,
planting or allowing seedlings to establish out from the stand edge along drainage swales will create a
more natural forest edge. This will enhance motorist’s views of the forest and the broader
landscape.”156 (Figure 4-7)

The concern with ‘naturalness’ in planting extends beyond exotic forestry. Brown and Wright list one
of their objectives in the maintenance of regrowth between High Tension Power Lines as to “Create a
natural looking fringe between the cleared area and the remaining vegetation.”157 At a housing camp
for the New Zealand Electricity Department it was intended that “Existing lines of vegetation to be
extended into more natural flowing forms.”158

The predilection for ‘natural’ looking landscape designs extends to interior landscape design with the
Glaxo Atrium, where “The stream bed was built up with rocks especially positioned to provide a rugged
natural look.”159 At a much larger scale Boffa Miskell Partners describe how in the design for mining
rehabilitation at Martha Hill, “...it was planned that the structural components of the disposal scheme
could be buried within a more natural landform which in the context of the landscape setting would
appear to be a relatively natural extension of the existing landscape.”160 The desire for naturalism in
design can have serious trade offs with other priorities as Empson suggests in his comments on the
additional playing fields for Newlands College and Intermediate: “Personally, I would have rather
reduced the area of the playing field to achieve a more natural transition.”161

These examples of the prioritising of naturalism in design reflect Preece’s observation that, “Today the
principle employed in large landscape design operations is the same - the designer’s hand should not be
seen.”162 He suggests this is an echo of Walpole’s comment on Capability Brown - “where he was the
happiest [i.e. most successful] man he will least be remembered; so closely did he copy nature that his
works will be mistaken [for nature itself].”163 This predilection for the natural is central to the
picturesque, and is the root of one of the most conflated myths. The boundaries between naturalism and
the picturesque are perhaps the hardest to define, as it is a variation in degree rather than an absolute
boundary. The confusion between the two is evident in the widespread belief that the English
countryside is ‘natural’, whereas in fact it is highly contrived, and depends on considerable compromise.
The scene of a rural Arcadia was not, in fact, highly productive. As Brauer explains, “In order to create
clear, undisrupted lines of vision in these pleasing prospects to enhance pensive reflection and leisureed

161 Empson, 1979, p.4.4.
163 ibid. (Preece’s brackets).
contemplation, fields were massively cleared, while the conditions of labour and land production were banished."  

It is just such paradoxes that make a questioning of the assumptions surrounding naturalism essential.

Counter-evidence for the natural is difficult to find. Smale's comments at a NZILA seminar indicate a self-consciousness that challenges the taken-for-grantedness of the natural: "... so we have proponents of a view that rolling pastoral coastal landscapes with fences and farm buildings (the latter two elements preferably well mellowed with age) are natural, and furthermore that the fences and farm buildings are part of their natural character."  

The transcript of Schwartz's lecture at the Auckland School of Architecture contains the most comprehensive dethroning of the natural in the discourse. She states, "Our tradition is really trying to capture a romantic notion of what is considered to be natural. This is a limited attitude which I feel has had a devastating effect on our visual environment ...."  

In a view that runs contrary to much of the discourse, Schwartz announces, "Most feel today that a successful landscape is that which never reveals the hand of Man, and that is not what I am interested in."  

4.5 Explicit reference to the picturesque

The evidence of the picturesque in the discourse is generally buried and disguised. Direct references to the picturesque are rare and, almost exclusively, these examples come from an academic context. For example, Bain's work on Hagley Park completed as part of landscape architectural studies, Densem's history of suburban gardens, and my article on the window theme in New Zealand women's painting. 

Another example is the Schwartz lecture, already identified as an exception to the nature of the discourse. Two further examples come from non-landscape architects. A doctoral student in English literature, Ronda Cooper, describes a wave of New Zealand pastoral literature where the happier landscape conventions of the Picturesque and the Arcadian were relevant at last. New Zealand now offered landscapes which might be accommodated within the aesthetic and pastoral frameworks established by Claude Lorraine, Constable or Capability Brown. 

In an article on suitable environments for jogging, cross country runner and professor of English literature, Roger Robinson, states, "A Capability Brown park, with its varied contours and interesting landmarks, is perfection." 

References:

164 Brauer, 1994-5, p.11.
167 ibid.
170 Densem, 1992
In the remainder of the discourse, beyond these atypical examples, it is only in a jury report on the George Malcolm award for Victoria Square that the picturesque moves out from the shadows. Its enclosure in quotation marks seems to highlight this remarkable exposure of the picturesque, and emphasise a certain awkwardness in its use:

In the case of the Christchurch Town Hall, unification has been achieved, not through the device of axial arrangement, but by the counterpoint of the curvilinear path which strategically departs from the axial formality to reveal an English “picturesque” view of the water fountain outside the Town Hall.\(^{174}\)

The naturalisation of the picturesque in the discourse means it is taken for granted, and not referred to directly. Picturesque conventions provide the ‘norms’ of the profession, and the picturesque and landscape architecture seem almost synonymous. This conflation of the picturesque with the profession, and the development of consequent myths, is examined in chapter 5.

\(^{173}\) Robinson, 1989, p.10.
\(^{174}\) Jackson, Trotter and Bird, 1989, p.28.
Chapter 5 : Myths of the picturesque

Through Barthes's eyes one sees the world exposed and demystified; one's 'natural attitude' towards the environment is shattered as the apparent innocence of landscapes is shown to have profound ideological implications.¹

Chapter 4 presented evidence of picturesque vocabulary and syntax as a covert set of design conventions in *The Landscape* and related publications. This supports the assertions of overseas commentators regarding the persistence of the picturesque in landscape architecture, and suggests the discourse in New Zealand reflects overseas trends. In this chapter I explore the fragmented and obscured nature of the picturesque vocabulary and syntax in the discourse which results from the unwitting and uncritical acceptance of picturesque convention. The picturesque is masked by apparently innocent denotations, and the almost complete absence of references to the picturesque is testimony to the totality of its naturalisation, and it is only through turning a critical eye on the discourse that the conventions are exposed. The exploration and revealing of such underlying codes challenges the profession's assumptions, as Swaffield asserts, "in a society increasingly distrustful of the role of professional advisers, it is imperative that the promotion of particular values is made explicit, and not submerged within an assumption of false neutrality."² Culler suggests, "In generating mythical meaning, cultures seek to make their own norms seem facts of nature."³ For "culture" we could read "sub-culture", specifically the NZILA. Culler's use of 'seeking' raises questions regarding the role of intention in myth. It implies that there is some conscious attempt on the part of the participants in the discourse to behave in a certain way. In the case of the NZILA discourse, it demands some consideration of the meaning intended by a designer.

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<tr>
<th>overt meaning</th>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;denotation&quot;</td>
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<td>vocabulary + syntax</td>
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**Figure 5-1. Meaning and myth**

The language model proposed for the picturesque is of a vocabulary and a syntax. However, language must, of course have meaning, and it is the reading of meaning which is potentially problematic, with a conceivable mismatch between what the designer intended and the meanings ascribed to it by the viewer. "Representation" is constructed from vocabulary and syntax (Figure 5-1) and used by the designer to denote something - it has an overt, explicit meaning. But the particular combination of vocabulary and syntax may have additional, covert meanings or

¹ Duncan and Duncan, 1992, p. 18.
³ Culler, 1983, p.34.
connotations. In employing the vocabulary and syntax of the picturesque, what is the designer intending to convey? The whole notion of meaning implies intention, as the verb 'to mean' is defined as "to have in mind as signification: to intend, to purpose: to destine, design, to signify." The meaning inevitably intended by the designer is the denotation - the overt meaning. However, there are also covert meanings - connotations - which travel incognito. It is this ambivalence of meaning that allows myth to function, and Figure 5-1 represents the conceptualisation of myth as an L-diagram (see 3.2.3). Connotative meanings are masked by the readily accessible denotative meanings, each generated by the same vocabulary and syntax, but semantically more complex. Denotations are the benign exterior of the Trojan horse, and connotations are the hidden and potentially dangerous cargo.

The issue of 'meaning' is considered by Wood in his reading of National Forest Management, where he alleges the United States government agencies intended to 'trick' the public with their attempts to "blend with the texture of the surrounding forest" and "screen the building from view." He identifies such practices as mendacious, stating, "This is never an innocent act: the intention is always to deceive." Wood concludes, "The program’s goal, in two words, is to lie and to confuse." However, in his commentary on Wood’s paper Steinitz writes, "I don’t think that their (our?) motivation is to ‘lie and confuse’ (‘rape’? ‘accomplice’?) and I don’t believe that the results of this activity can be generalised as lies and confusion. Sometimes cosmetic? Yes." Wood’s and Steinitz’s positions demonstrate the possibility of multiple readings of meaning. Myths can obscure some of these readings, prioritising one meaning over another; it is through challenging myths that the alternative meanings are revealed.

Yet, even when designers clearly state their intentions, the ambivalence of myth lingers. Barthes writes of the idea of an ‘alibi’ - as Culler summarises, “Myth always has an ‘alibi’ ready, its practitioners can always deny that second order meaning is involved [i.e. connotation], claiming they wear certain clothes for comfort or for durability, not for meaning." It is clear that no conclusions can be drawn regarding meaning where myth is concerned. After all, it is this very ambiguity that allows myth to flourish. As Baker unhelpfully explains, “The fact that intended connotations are indistinguishable from unintended ones ... is precisely why connotations are anarchic.”

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7 ibid, p.192, abstract.
8 Steinitz, p.207.
5.1 Coincidence, conflation and myth

The picturesque myth enters the discourse of the NZILA through various routes, reflecting the particular circumstances of the establishment of the profession and the colonisation of New Zealand. The naturalisation of the picturesque in landscape discourse has been aided by a series of critical coincidences, each of which has contributed to the conflation of the picturesque with parallel events. Whether the connection between the picturesque and corresponding events is simply coincidence, a causal relationship, or they are concurrent because they are both symptomatic of a broader development, the outcome is the same - a conflation of possible meanings or readings. Four myths have emerged from this conflation.

The first coincidence was that the roots of the profession of landscape architecture are entangled with the development of picturesque practice. Capability Brown and Humphry Repton were closely associated with the development of picturesque convention, and as the first 'landscape gardeners' provided a foundation for the profession. The conflation of the picturesque with the profession was compounded by the fact that in America, landscape architecture was founded during the mid-nineteenth-century phase of landscape painting. Crandell notes the connection and concludes, "It is therefore not surprising that the guiding attitudes of these two quintessentially American phenomena are so similar. Indeed, one of landscape architecture's principle (although usually implicit) tenets is that each and every view of the landscape should disguise its dependence on cultural modification, regardless of the extent of that dependence." The first myth to emerge is therefore that the picturesque is landscape architecture.

The development of modern aesthetics in the eighteenth century, with its emphasis on visual aspects, coincided with the origins of the picturesque, and the two were subsequently conflated in the myth that the picturesque is concerned solely with the visual. The rise of landscape painting in tandem with perspective, and concomitant ideas of 'truth,' intensified the myth. Further, the images from the Grand Tour and the imported Chinese paintings bestowed a particular character on the visualisation of the picturesque. Where the first myth (that the picturesque is landscape architecture) is overlaid with this 'visual' dimension, a second myth emerges: that landscape architecture is visual.

The timing of the departure of settlers for the colonies encouraged the development of a third myth, that the picturesque is natural. By the mid-nineteenth century the picturesque was widely disseminated in England, and it was at this time that settlers left for New Zealand. This was probably the single most important factor in the formation of the antipodean aesthetic agenda. The coincidence of a convention

for seeing and designing the landscape in a naturalistic way, with an almost wholly natural landscape reinforced the myth of the natural.

A fourth myth, that landscape architecture is natural, derives from the combination of the myth that landscape architecture is picturesque, and that picturesque is natural. In the New Zealand context this myth is reinforced by the concurrent development of the profession of landscape architecture and the rise of the nature conservation movement in the 1960s and 1970s. During the 1970s and early 1980s majority of landscape architectural graduates from Lincoln College were employed in government departments such as Lands and Survey, Ministry of Works, and the Forest Service, where the myth of landscape architecture as nature was easily served.

5.2 Myth 1: Picturesque = landscape architecture

The myth-like naturalisation of the picturesque within the profession of landscape is evident in the way a 'sleight of hand' operates in a number of landscape architectural texts. In works such as Colvin and Crowe, the structure of the text is first to introduce landscape design by means of a historical survey. These texts informed the profession of landscape architecture in New Zealand, and are referred to in the discourse. For example, an editorial records that "It is almost 20 years since Sylvia Crowe's classic, 'The Landscape of Power' was published," and a booklist directing readers to available texts includes works by Colvin, Crowe, and Fairbrother. In these works 'the Picturesque', or the synonymous 'English landscape style', is presented as one of a procession of styles or movements. Following the historical survey, the texts generally offer a range of guidelines for the practice of landscape design. It is here that the myth of the picturesque as landscape architecture crystallises. The advice which is offered inevitably draws on picturesque principles, magically transformed from just being one of the historic styles, to being the only style. The covertness of the picturesque ranges from the complete naturalisation of conventions, to more transparent usage, such as the quotation of Uvedale Price's use of van Ruysdael's imagery, and the invocation of Repton's Rule on the relationship between architecture and plant forms. Figure 5-2 shows a drawing from Colvin's *Land and Landscape*, illustrating the interventions required to produce 'good' design in the rural landscape. Although not stated, the legacy of the picturesque is clear: even the convention of before and after sketches draw on Repton's precedent. In these obvious references to the picturesque, there is no questioning of the appropriateness of the conventions, they are simply presented as correct.

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12 For example, Colvin, 1970 (original 1947).
13 For example, Crowe, 1958.
15 see for example Fairbrother, 1974.
16 Fairbrother
The conflation of landscape architecture and the picturesque is not confined to the United Kingdom. Streatfield suggests that "it has unconsciously formed the basis for all subsequent theories," and reports,

An historical review of the landscape design profession in America reveals an almost unbroken tradition of design theory based upon the principles of the Picturesque first enunciated at the close of the 18th Century in England which extends to what many designers would acknowledge as a contemporary "theory of landscape architecture".

In the New Zealand context, the evidence of picturesque vocabulary and syntax in the discourse, as outlined in chapter 4, demonstrates the naturalisation of picturesque conventions in landscape architecture. The predilection for the picturesque is demonstrated by the application of the vocabulary of the picturesque, including: muted colours, variety, irregularity and roughness, the appearance of age,

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18 ibid, p.97.
ruins, tree groups and mounding, and the simulation of accident or neglect. Design conventions also draw on picturesque syntax, such as the use of three distances (background, midground, foreground); screening; blending in; framed views; reference to a ‘park-like’ appearance; serial vision; and the concern with looking ‘natural’. The presumption of a pictorial view of landscape also illustrates the way in which the picturesque dominates the discourse on landscape architecture. Salmon suggests, “The concept must invite them to paint their own picture in the landscape,”20 and the New Zealand Forest Service applies a pictorial metaphor to explain the approach to planting design:

Selection of species is important - and everyone responds to variations in colour, form, texture and has preferences, - but this is less important than how they are arranged, the form of the planting and the spaces it defines. A painting may be admired for colour texture, technique and subject matter but ultimately it is how the whole thing is put together which counts.21

The presentation of picturesque conventions as principles of landscape architecture is emphasised in situations where a broad landscape architectural view is presented, for example as a submission or policy statement. The IFLA Guidelines for Coastal Zone Development as reported in The Landscape advised, “Special attention should be paid to the classification and preservation of areas offering aesthetic or picturesque value...”22 Furthermore, the Federation’s belief was that, “Developments serving coastal visitors and tourism should only be planned at a human scale, and control must be exercised to ensure that they are integrated into the landscape...”23 The fact that developments should be integrated into the landscape is used to denote the appropriate landscape architectural response, but as Figure 5-3 suggests, this conflates the picturesque with landscape architecture.

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<th>picturesque</th>
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**Figure 5-3. Landscape architecture as picturesque**

The NZILA, in their submission to the select committee on the original draft of the Town and Country Planning Bill, also presented a landscape architectural statement that could be read as picturesque. They suggested that “Pleasantness could reasonably be considered to involve the proportions of the ‘natural’ in the environment; it is generally a term applied to natural things.”24 These examples, one from the international federation and one from the national institute, hint at the way in which the landscape architectural viewpoint has been conflated with a picturesque viewpoint. The legacy of other design

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22 IFLA, 1976, p.5.
23 ibid, my emphasis, p.5.
24 NZILA Submissions to Select Committee, 1978, p.15.
styles and environmental perspectives is masked by an image of a harmonious, naturalistic landscape, where developments 'blend in' and are 'pleasant'.

5.3 Myth 2: Landscape architecture = visual

The myth that landscape architecture is visual is contingent upon the previous myth, that the picturesque is landscape architecture, combined with the myth that the picturesque is visual. This can be illustrated as a 'string' of myths:

\[
\text{landscape architecture} = \text{picturesque} = \text{visual}
\]

The myth that the picturesque is visual has been reinforced during the last two centuries. Meyer describes how, “Comparisons between current popular usage of this term and previous meanings begin to suggest the devolution of the term from a category rich in tactile, temporal, and emotive associations to, by the twentieth century, one solely concerned with the visual.”25 The timing of the picturesque’s development appears to make this transition inevitable, as Howett explains, “It is significant that the eighteenth century origins of the modern discipline of aesthetics coincided with the development of picturesque theory. The first philosophical formulations of the nature of aesthetic experience consistently reaffirmed a separation between the beholder and that which is contemplated; commitment to the primacy of vision nurtured the notion of a disinterested aesthetic objectivity.”26 The picturesque’s association with landscape art also helped to cast it as a visual convention, and the contemporaneous development of perspective further confused the ideas of vision and ‘reality’, as it “allowed painters to represent a three dimensional world on a two dimensional surface, through a technique which organised represented objects in relation to each other. Yet this technique was regarded not as an artifice, but as a means to revealing truth.”27 Frampton reinforces this point, explaining,

According to its etymology, perspective means rationalized sight or clear seeing, and as such it presupposes a conscious suppression of the sense of smell, hearing and taste, and a consequent distancing from a more direct experience of the environment. This self-imposed limitation relates to that which Heidegger has called a “loss of nearness.” In attempting to counter this loss, the tactile opposes itself to the scenographic and the drawing of veils over the surface of reality.28

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25 Meyer, 1992, p.169
26 Howett, 1987, p.4.
27 Thomas, 1993, p.21
28 Frampton, 1983, p.29.
The linking of this picturesque-as-visual myth to the landscape architecture-as-picturesque myth is evident in Haddad's description of landscape architecture as "a discipline whose method of design has in large part been mired in the safety and preservation of visual representation since the late eighteenth-century advent of the Picturesque. Symptomatic of this quandary is the condition that too many projects are designed to be seen, to be photographed and published as pictorial works in glossy magazines, and not to be experienced in any way that transcends visual stimulation and elicits subjectively perceived emotional content." She points to Gilpin with his definition of the picturesque as "capable of being illustrated by painting" and Repton with his framed views for launching the domination by the visual. Repton's thick frames are described as a 'stoppage' which "impedes transport of his or her imagination into the landscape beyond.... And so begins the cessation of the happening of subjective associations in the experience of Picturesque landscapes."

As Haddad's comments suggest, the landscape architecture as visual myth is seen as a barrier to design. Howett agrees, we are "trapped ... in a tyranny of the visual imposed by an inherited picturesque aesthetic," echoing Wordsworth's critique of the picturesque's "tyranny of the eye." Visual aspects provide a shaky basis for landscape design, as emphasised in Nassauer's observation that "What is good may not look good, and what looks good may not be good." Radmall's comments expand on the fragility of the visual myth, as he notes, "The inferred congruence between the appearance of a planting design and its ecological basis, seems to rely largely on its visual context." Indeed, Ruff and Tregay believe that landscape architecture is "dominated by the visual aesthetic which in the past has been an ecological robber..."

The evidence of the picturesque from The Landscape illustrates the pervasiveness of the visual myth within New Zealand. For example, Bennett used visual assessment in order to recognise which activities would be "in harmony with the character of the landscape and which were appropriate in terms of the landscape's quality." Miskell and Ower in describing their work on the Woolston Cut in Christchurch recount how their priorities were functionality and that the design should be "unified from a visual point of view." And in his work on neighbourhood improvement planning, Bateman mapped "visual

31 ibid, p. 51.
32 Howett, op cit, p.7.
34 Nassauer, 1995, p.16.
37 Bennett, 1985, p.7.
In considering the future of Havelock, a town “at a ‘crossroads’ in its history,” the summary of the multidisciplinary study is presented in reference to visual aspects only:

The visual assessment found that Havelock has more in its favour, in visual terms than most small towns. It is set in a dramatic landscape overlooking a natural harbour. Most of the surrounding hills are reserves and are clad in regenerating bush. The undulating topography, the low promontories, the established trees, the built form of the town, the Port, the curve of the main street combine to give Havelock twelve quite distinctive “visual identity areas”.

The town is also described as having “a quaint charm and considerable character.” The priority given to picturesque qualities such as the setting, the curving street, quaintness, is reinforced by the illustration, Figure 5-4. The taken-for-granted nature of the use of visual information, whether in the description, or in the photograph of the church nestled in the bush and framed by a tree, demonstrates the conflation of landscape architecture and the visual.

Examples of reference to other aspects of the environment - such as spiritual perspectives, or how it feels, smells, sounds, or tastes - are rare in the discourse. Thompson, writing on the influence of Cape Reinga notes, “For some it is primarily visual, but for others it is far more meaningful in its

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41 ibid, p.38.
42 ibid, p.38.
interpretation." Thompson's recognition of other dimensions that are far more meaningful serves to highlight the artificiality of the conflation of design and the visual. As a Maori, Thompson's perspective differs from the European tradition of landscape architecture which lies at the root of the design=visual myth, and as an architect he provides a different professional focus. The Landscape 37/38, a special issue on Maori values and the landscape, further demonstrates the fragility of the visual as a sole basis for design. For example, the Maori belief that "sewage should not under any circumstances be put in the water," is based on their understanding of "water as sacred and precious." Menzies contrasts this with the health, recreational and scenic values which inform the approach to sewage management by "Pakeha local body representatives." She suggests that the primacy of scenic and recreational values is not necessarily at odds with Maori values, and that "Common values are held for environmental quality and the two partners can work together, sharing understanding of the cultural, physical and spiritual landscapes." Whilst this suggests a move beyond the visual with its prioritising of 'scenery', landscape is again conflated with the visual with Menzies' subsequent comments that "Landscape values have also been shown to have common links. A survey being undertaken for the Wellington Maritime Planning Authority on preference for views of the harbour has indicated that preferences are comparable across cultural groups."

In another article in this issue Titchener compares the Maori designers’ aims to "seek design clues from the rich cultural past and to express these in harmony with Nature," with landscape architects who are "already imbued with the philosophy of designing with Nature." Just what this might mean is examined in myth 3, picturesque = natural.

5.4 Myth 3: Picturesque = natural

The connection between the natural and the picturesque is at the origin of the aesthetic, as Graziani summarises, "The theory and practice of the picturesque revolves around how a natural setting is 'staged' in art, that is, how to image the natural as if it imitated art." The apparent absence of artifice in New Zealand has ensured the success of this myth. Arriving in a country which was almost wholly 'natural', the picturesque became an unchallenged language for the natural and the two were seamlessly blended. As a contrast, in Europe, the picturesque was introduced to a vastly modified

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45 ibid, p.12.
46 ibid, p.12.
47 ibid, p.14.
48 ibid, p.14, my emphasis.
49 Titchener, 1988, p.4.
The myth of the picturesque as natural develops from the root myth of the picturesque, denoting nature and having connotations of a specific artistic legacy, Figure 5-5. The naturalisation of this relationship allows the connotative axis to recede, as culture becomes nature. Thus in the "natural" realm of the New Zealand landscape, the picturesque becomes an analogue of the natural, Figure 5-6, with the connotations of artifice momentarily forgotten.

The loss of artifice and the evaporation of the historical connections sees the picturesque perpetuated as myth of the natural, reflecting Barthes' observation, "What the world supplies to myth is an historic reality, defined, even if this goes back a while, by the way in which men have produced or used it; and what myth gives in return is a natural image of this reality."52 (Barthes' "natural" meaning "to be expected", rather than "occurring in nature").

The 'landscape architecture as visual' myth outlined above creates a hegemonic climate in which visual values are privileged above others, and thus it is the appearance of nature which is taken for granted as a design model. As Thayer writes,

For over two hundred years, the theory of the picturesque ... has provided the theoretical grounding for most landscape design. Today, we are still largely guided in our collective landscape tastes by a

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pictorial construct of nature - one composed of "natural" materials and devoid of obvious human influence.\textsuperscript{53}

This presents problems for design, as Nassauer states, "Picturesque conventions seem so intrinsic to nature that they are mistaken for ecological quality."\textsuperscript{54} For example, in identifying a "good" ecologically sound riverbank and contrasting it with a unecologically unsound management regime, Manning's imagery has strong echoes of the illustrations of Knight's \textit{The Landscape} 1794, Figure 5-7.

\textbf{Figure 5-7. Picturesque as nature}

\textsuperscript{53} Thayer, 1989, p.104.
\textsuperscript{54} Nassauer, 1995, p.161.
Hearne's famous pair of drawings illustrate the "essentially unnatural" and the "truly picturesque" landscape. Whether or not the 'good' river bank is actually ecologically sound, or just 'looks' so, cannot be assessed from the photographs. In any case, Mannings's photographs suggest the possibility of a visual expression of ecological soundness. And while Smale points out, "There is usually a fortuitous correlation between our perception of a landscape's visual quality and its ecological integrity," he cautions, "[t]here are some instances where striking visual characteristics derive from a state of advanced environmental degradation."

Two examples from the discourse illustrate the way in which the "natural" is privileged. The first example is of the recommendations made for forestry planting, and the second relates to ecological design. As indicated above, exotic forestry is one area where achieving a 'natural' effect has particularly concerned designers. One designer in particular has tackled this problem in a series of publications which are significant in that their appeal is to an audience beyond the profession of landscape architecture. Aimed at farmers and managers, Lucas's *Woodlots in the Landscape* (1987), and *Landscape Guidelines for Rural South Canterbury* (1980-81), present a series of rules for the siting of forestry plantings, accompanied by drawings bearing a tick or a cross to indicate their compliance. The rationale behind her recommendations is evident in the commentary to the introductory illustration, "A landscape that displays a sense of naturalism has been shown to be preferred to one of neatly squared woodlots and dark parallel shelterbelts unrelated to the contour. It is with this overall aim of ensuring naturalism in our landscapes, that the following guidelines for the design of woodlots have been prepared."

Lucas advises, "Productive rural landscapes should be planned and designed in response to natural patterns. They need not be comprised of geometric, formal, unrelated patterns." A number of other rules are presented, including, "Do not use strictly geometric boundaries," and, "Do not automatically follow fenceline boundaries." The L-diagram, Figure 5-8, identifies the intended denotation of the rule as 'natural', whilst having connotations of..."
picturesque theory. Such imperative advice builds into a prescription for the picturesque, born out of the conflation with the natural.

The questioning of such advice is central to the denaturalisation of the picturesque. One of the most succinct ways in which to highlight the arbitrariness of these absolute rules is to illustrate the types of landscapes that are produced when the rules are not followed. For example, some of the world's most revered, eternal, and frequently photographed landscapes result from conventions which are not 'natural': French bosques and allées, Californian agricultural landscapes, Japanese padi fields. Solomon's work, *Green Architecture and the Agrarian Garden*,\(^5^9\) celebrates the agricultural landscape along with the picturesque landscape. She writes, "There is a formal/agrarian view of making landscapes that are utilitarian and beautiful. This view proudly admits that landscapes, like buildings, are made by men."\(^6^0\) Figure 5-9 illustrates the contrast between the notion of the utilitarian visual language as 'wrong', and the presentation of an agricultural landscape as a 'beautiful' landscape.

As Solomon's work illustrates, productive activities in the landscape need not be governed by the aesthetics of the picturesque in pursuit of a 'natural'

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\(^6^0\) Solomon, 1988, p.105.
appearance. Thayer advises that while the direct borrowing of "analogs from un-peopled nature" is tempting, "the direct transposition of such environments is in many cases a mistake."\(^{61}\) He suggests, there is no need to disguise sustainable landscapes, and refers to Dubos's description of the wet-rice ecosystem of southern China as obviously artificial, but "as stable as any in the world and more productive than most with regard to both quantity and diversity of food."\(^{62}\) He also cites the example of Village Homes in Davis, California, with their "forthright presentation of orchard, vineyard, and vegetable gardens as 'ornamental,' yet productive landscapes."\(^{63}\) Each of these landscapes is the result, not of naturalistic rules, but of bold statements of productivity, of utility and of adaptation of the landscape.

A second example of the natural in the discourse is the apparently innocuous "naturalistic" design of a wetland. At Limeburners Creek Wetland, winner of the 1990 NZILA George Malcolm Award, the intention was "to give the appearance that it had occurred naturally, when in fact it was man made."\(^{64}\) Over time, the judges envisioned, the wetland would "appear entirely natural rather than artificial."\(^{65}\) The wetland's designer, Dennis Scott, describes how "the plant communities generally contain a diversity of species in the image of natural systems."\(^{66}\) The use of "image" has pictorial connotations, and emphasises the artifice involved. Scott recounts how "Stakes and large hardwood tree branches have been placed at the junction of islands and open water areas for birds to perch on."\(^{67}\) This is again presented as evidence of how "natural" the design is, yet recalls the eighteenth century picturesque practice of planting dead trees, which were intended to appear as though struck by lightning. Manwaring describes how Kent was laughed at for carrying imitations of paintings so far as to insert dead trees in the landscapes at Kensington and Carlton Gardens. The paintings which inspired Kent were those of Salvator Rosa, and he is known to have possessed a Rosa.\(^{68}\) Gilpin also describes rotten and dying trees as "capital sources of picturesque beauty."\(^{69}\) So while the eighteenth-century dead trees were intended to denote a ravaged nature with connotations of Rosa, Scott's dead trees are justified on ecological grounds, of designing with nature. But as Seddon suggests, the driving force behind such attitudes, as typified by Ian McHarg's *Design with Nature*, is "the Romantic wish to conceal our interventions in the natural environment."\(^{70}\) He contends that "the romantic impulse is often justified by

\(^{63}\) Thayer, 1989, p.104.
\(^{65}\) ibid., p.7.
\(^{66}\) Scott, 1991, p.15.
\(^{67}\) ibid., p.15.
\(^{68}\) Manwaring, p.131.
\(^{69}\) Gilpin quoted in Meyer, 1992, p.168.
the practitioner in scientific or deterministic terms, often borrowed from ecology, although landscape architects are not noted for their knowledge of this difficult science.\(^71\)

The dead trees at Limeburners Creek could be shown to have connotations of the picturesque, providing an illustration of the way the picturesque is reproduced in the discourse through the sign of the 'natural' (Figure 5-10).

The questions raised over the concern that the wetland be read as natural are addressed by Treib's observation that, "It is difficult to fault the good intentions of restoring disturbed wetlands. But why does the original pattern need to be 'restored', when in fact the reserve serves as much for human recreation as it does for open space preservation? Is it because the 'natural' pattern, masquerading as nature, is less open to question by client or visitor alike?... Or is it a conscious or unconscious harking back to received picturesque values?"\(^72\)

The myth of the picturesque as natural links to Swaffield's identification of a 'landscape' myth of naturalness, where some interviewees in his study associated 'landscape' with 'naturalness.'\(^73\) 'Landscape' was also linked to picturesque ideals, and the three concepts are evidently bound up in a tight, culturally constructed triad:

\[ \text{landscape} \quad \bigg/ \quad \bigg\backslash \quad \text{picturesque} \quad \bigg/ \quad \bigg\backslash \quad \text{nature} \]

This complex of concepts must be recognised and acknowledged in any critical appraisal of landscape design, and calls into question any 'innocent' uses of the terms.

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\(^{71}\) ibid, p.8.

\(^{72}\) Treib, 1995, p.51.

5.5 Myth 4: Landscape architecture = natural

The fourth myth in the discourse is that landscape architecture is natural. This myth is derived from the conflation of landscape architecture and the picturesque, combined with the myth that the picturesque is natural, lies at the root of the development of the profession. This combination of myths can be illustrated as a string:

landscape architecture = picturesque = natural

The resultant myth of landscape architecture as natural was apparent in the work of Olmsted and Eliot, who found that “the more he mastered the elements of the natural style, the more he succeeded in eliminating any sign of his own contribution to the finished landscape.”74 This fusing of landscape architecture and nature was reinforced by the timing of the profession’s establishment in New Zealand. Specifically, as Swaffield explains, "the main impetus for the formal development of the profession of landscape architecture came during debates on scenery preservation in the 1960s. Concern over the impact of public works on the countryside stimulated calls for the use of landscape architects to help fit development into the environment..."75 Therefore, in a climate in which nature was prioritised (rather than profit or efficiency), and developments were required to “fit in” (rather than create contrast), landscape architects began working in the New Zealand landscape. The heightened interest in nature conservation was highlighted by events such as the ‘Save Manapouri’76 campaign in the late 1960s, where huge public support demonstrated the priority placed on the environment. While the links between landscape architecture and nature are generally implicit in the discourse, Rackham states explicitly that there are growing “similarities between nature conservation and landscape architecture.”77

Greenup’s description of the design for The Groynes exemplifies the ways in which landscape architecture and nature are conflated, resulting in an assumption that the involvement of a trained professional will ensure the creation of a natural landscape. Greenup states that the brief for the project was “to design lakes for passive recreation.”78 As a design, The Groynes is unremarkable (Figure 5-11), a picturesque cliché. The catalogue of “gently shelv[ing] lake margins,” “clump of willows,” the loss of

76 Campaign against the construction of a dam to form a lake for hydro-electricity.
77 Rackham, 1987, p.2.
78 Greenup, 1988, p.7.
the "trench-like appearance," and "groves of poplars and willows higher on the banks... left to form a backdrop,"\textsuperscript{79} is presented with a sense of inevitability. The execution of landscape architecture as an act of recreating nature is apparent in the approach to the design. As Greenup explains, the site was "an excavation site for shingle used on various Groynes projects.... One excavation was rectangular, 90m. long and its sides plunged down to a depth of more than 5m."\textsuperscript{80} Any features which might be read as natural - an area in its "natural boggy state" and a "natural hollow upstream" - are retained. However, the rectangular shape was seen as 'wrong', presumably because it does not conform to cultural expectations of 'naturalness'. However, on a flat river plain it could be argued that rectangular forms are most appropriate, and enhance a reading of the landscape through reflecting the cultural origins of the excavation pit, rather than attempting to disguise them.

The 'landscape architecture as natural' myth is reinforced by the myth of design as visual, as the concern is with how natural the design looks. For example, a "trench-like" water course might be just as ecologically sound as a 'natural' looking one. Thayer points out that appearances can often be deceptive, as exemplified by the golf courses in the low-desert area of Coachella Valley, California. The green courses have changed the microclimate of the valley, stretched water resources to the limit, and there has been at least one documented case of a golfer dying from insecticide poisoning. "A certain golf course may be beautiful on one level, but it might kill you."\textsuperscript{81}

\textsuperscript{79} Greenup, 1988, p.9.
\textsuperscript{80} ibid, p.7.
\textsuperscript{81} Thayer, 1989, p.103.
The myth that landscape architecture is nature, as demonstrated at The Groynes, is challenged just one issue of *The Landscape* later. Schwartz surveys a range of cultural influences, including French formal gardens. Referring to Andre Le Notre’s work at Sceaux she proposes “a landscape does not have to have rolling hills and curves to be beautiful;... straight lines can be beautiful.”

The four myths of the picturesque have had a pervasive and profound effect on the perception and practice of landscape architecture. The future of landscape architecture in New Zealand and beyond depends to a large extent on how these myths are addressed. Also contributing to the future of landscape architectural practice in New Zealand is the continued dialogue between the imported language of the picturesque and the indigenous environment. The establishment of a pidgin picturesque, and its development into a creole, is examined in chapter 6.

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Chapter 6 : Pidgin picturesque

All languages change. It is essential that they do. This constant process adapts languages over time to their changing environment.¹

The picturesque myths expressed in The Landscape, as outlined in chapter 5, are not specific to New Zealand. However, there are aspects of the picturesque in the discourse which are specific to New Zealand. The myths are very different from their origins in eighteenth-century England, yet they are still recognisable, despite the evolution of an elided, unique form of the original language. The usefulness of the linguistic metaphor is not confined to simply conceptualising the formulaic nature of the picturesque. It can be extended to explore the way in which the picturesque behaves as if it was a language in a much broader context. When conceptualised as a language, the picturesque has much in common with English. Both were formulated in England, but much of their vocabulary is from Latin and Germanic origins. And, of course, both the English language and the picturesque were transported to the colonies. In their new environments, they have undergone changes ranging from the subtlety of an accent, to more major changes such as the development of a pidgin language.

Pidgins are "rudimentary languages formed when people from diverse backgrounds are thrown together by circumstance."² The qualities of pidgin languages are “a limited vocabulary, a reduced grammatical structure, and a much narrower range of functions, compared to the languages which gave rise to them."³ The pidgin picturesque draws on the qualities of two languages - the imported vocabulary and syntax of the picturesque and an indigenous vocabulary of the natural environment. This derived language can be expected to be simplified - like the New Zild which Mitchell described. New Zild is “New Z’l’d”, referring to the way the New Zealanders speak, “never us[ing] two syllables when one will do, either eliding sounds or contracting words.”⁴ Mitchell explains, “New Zild is a substitute for speech, a verbal shorthand.”⁵

It is evident that design shares with language the sorts of judgements that are made in relation to some ideal or pure form. For example, Mitchell comments that "Elocution teachers sometimes say that New Zild is only lazy speech."⁶ Similar derisory comments are made about New Zealand landscape design, where the differences encountered in this country are seen as compromises rather than opportunities. Lessons can be learnt from language. Crystal argues that pidgins should be viewed not as corruptions, but as “demonstrably creative adaptations of natural languages, with a structure and rules of their own.”⁷ Bryson agrees, advising, “it would

² Bryson, p.18.
⁵ ibid, p.81.
be a mistake to consider these languages substandard, because of their curious vocabularies. They are as formalised, efficient and expressive as any other languages - and often more so. But while Crystal’s and Bryson’s comments emphasise the potential of pidgins, the transitional nature of these languages also brings inevitable tensions.

6.1 Pidgin and the picturesque

Ironically, the interaction of imported conventions with an indigenous environment lay at the very heart of the original picturesque. Andrews calls this collision "Parnassus-upon-Thames," referring to the way the vocabulary of classical symbols and pictorial syntax was incorporated into the English landscape. Hunt explores how this introduced classical language interacted with the local English environment, where, "just as Horace and Homer were required to speak modern English in Pope’s translations, so landscapes like Castle Howard ... felt obliged to honour their indigenous languages of architecture and topography." And he describes how Wray Wood at Castle Howard was "an imitation or representation of nature, but with the full vocabulary and syntax of Renaissance forms mingling with the native, indigenous trees."

In England, therefore, imported conventions interacted with the three factors of indigenous architecture, topography and trees to create a variation on a language. This would have begun as a pidgin and developed into a creole, following the normal pattern of linguistic development, ultimately forming what could be called creole classicism, as it becomes the ‘mother tongue.’ This creole classicism became the picturesque, and as in language, "the switch from pidgin to creole involves a major expansion in the structural linguistic resources available - especially in vocabulary, grammar, and style." This expansion corresponds to the maturing of the picturesque as an aesthetic theory.

New Zealand’s pidgin picturesque manifests itself in a variety of ways. For example, Ronda Cooper’s survey of the landscape in New Zealand literature highlights how much writing on the landscape still reflects the "great 18th-century archetypes". She observes how, "They may sometimes have taken on particularly kiwi colourings, or they may have evolved into deceptively contemporary forms, but it would be difficult to deny their dependence on the cultural and philosophical structures of 200 years ago." In Bruce Mason’s The End of the Golden Weather (1962), for example, the characteristics of the picturesque are fused with a scene which is undoubtedly New Zealand:

10 Hunt, 1992, p.11.
The beach is fringed with pohutukawa trees, single and stunted in the gardens, spreading and noble on the cliffs, and in the empty spaces by the foreshore... Pain and age are in these gnarled forms, in bare roots, clutching at the earth, knotting on the cliff-face, in tortured branches, dark against the washed sky.14

It almost seems that Salvator Rosa was there on the beach at Te Parenga.

The pidgin picturesque is also apparent in the popular realm of television. Describing an advertisement for Apple computers, Perry explains the atmosphere created: “Partly it has to do with lighting, which bounces off European painting canons. Everything is muted, with brown the dominant tone. The pub scene is chiaroscuro, Rembrandt with gumboots, backlit by the late afternoon sun.”15 The vocabulary of the picturesque is evident in Perry’s description. Muted brownness was a key signifier for the picturesque, as Christopher Hussey observes at the conclusion of his work, The Picturesque. Hussey advises: “A test as to whether a picture is picturesque might be found is the extent to which the colour brown is employed. The eye that appreciated landscape through old masters and poetry definitely loved brown.”16 Chiaroscuro is also part of the picturesque’s visual vocabulary, along with the work of Rembrandt; it was to his view that “Holland’s damp and marshy downs ... display’d their mellow browns.”17 But here, in this pidgin picturesque, it is Rembrandt with gumboots.

Perry identifies similar imagery elsewhere. For example in a New Zealand advertisement for Nilverm sheep drench, which attempts to create an atmosphere of ‘Australianness’, a “down-under version of a chocolate box aesthetic” is achieved. As Perry points out, it “might just be read as picturesque.”18

Constable on a kiwi farm, “Rembrandt with gumboots,” “Wordsworth does the Heaphy Track,”19 and maybe even Rosa in jandals20 on the beach at Te Parenga - the collisions within these images evoke the pidgin picturesque, highlighting the juxtapositions which occur when the vocabulary and syntax of the European picturesque encounters the indigenous vocabulary of the New Zealand landscape. Van den Eijkel and Wedde’s montage (Figure 6-1), makes the impact of such collisions quite explicit. The idyllic picturesque imagery of Nicolas Poussin’s *Et in Arcadia Ego* is given a new context with the addition of the undeniably New Zealand icons of Mount Taranaki and a Maori kowhaiwhai21 panel. The panel becomes a Kiwi coulisse, a surrogate for the tree which is an essential picturesque framing device; whilst the mountain parades itself unashamedly above, providing a picturesque backdrop - a perfect stand in for those Italian hills. The mingling of Italian

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14 Mason quoted in McNaughton ,1986, p.23.
15 Perry, 1994, p.75.
17 Knight, 1794, p.69.
18 Perry, 1994, p.66.
20 Jandals are rubber sandals, also called thongs or ‘flip-flops.’
21 Kowhaiwhai panels are painted decorations traditionally used house rafters or canoe hulls. They are usually decorated with scroll ornamentation.
and New Zealand imagery is underscored by the supplanting of Poussin’s original tomb inscription, “Et in arcadia ego”, with the graffiti-ed “Poussin was here”.

Similar collisions occur in landscape architecture. Commenting on the gardens of Tauranga on Palmer's Garden Show, Rod Barnett said, "Oaks, lawns and orchards take us straight back to the colonial era. But although this garden is a European transplant it still manages to reflect something of this region. The ancient bunyabunya, for instance, is not something you'd find in a Constable painting. More likely - in one of his nightmares." Constable's work is a repository of picturesque cliché constructed from the vocabulary and syntax of the familiar and comfortable. It is into this cosy language that Barnett injects the bunyabunya: an unfamiliar utterance within a familiar syntax, a phrase of pidgin picturesque. The interaction between imported design conventions and non-traditional elements (such as the bunyabunya) is one of the key formative processes of the pidgin picturesque.

The discourse of the NZILA contains many examples of pidgin picturesque, both in terms of the elision of the picturesque language and the adoption of new elements of vocabulary and syntax. The elided picturesque is evident in the abbreviated phrases of picturesqueness which are employed to denote ideas of ‘naturalness’ and ‘informality.’ For example, in explaining the Te Anau-Manapouri Farm Park System, Petrie describes how,

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"suitable exotic tree species which are congruous with natives will be planted in random groupings."\textsuperscript{23}

Petrie's description draws on picturesque convention in its most abbreviated form - "random groupings" - and places it in the context of a hybrid vegetation mix.

O'Connor's speculation on the new visual influences for those involved in modifying the land, illustrates the way in which visual languages change:

The growing cult of New Zealand landscape artists has not left blank the walls of New Zealand farm homes and it would also be surprising if the Deans, Badcocks and McIntyres of the relaxing hours did not fire the imagination of the farmers themselves to plough and plant and fence and furrow with an eye to the order in variety which, when seen, pleases.\textsuperscript{24}

The Deans, Badcocks and McIntyres are in themselves utterances of pidgin picturesque: paintings in the formulaic, imported language, but with elements of indigenous vocabulary and syntax. So while the farmers O'Connor refers to may not have Claudes or Constables on their walls, they have New Zealand translations of these works, which as Pound says of the earlier topographical artists, "had sometimes to change the Claudian vocabulary, swapping a nikau palm for an umbrella pine, [but] still kept... the Claudian grammar."\textsuperscript{25}

The attempts to find analogous vegetation is one of the main ways in which the vocabulary of the picturesque adjusted to the new environment. Although, as outlined in chapter 1, the native vegetation was not immediately evocative of the picturesque, it entered the language as a \textit{de facto} element of the language. For example, Clendon explains how settlers "particularly liked the country that looked like English park land (which is what farmland with stands of kahikatea with no undergrowth eaten out by cattle and sheep and

\textbf{Figure 6-2. A curving path, framed view, and native plants in Titchener's garden design (Titchener, 1987, p.9)}

\textsuperscript{23} Petrie, 1974, p.71.

\textsuperscript{24} O'Connor, 1977, p.2.

\textsuperscript{25} Pound, 1982, p.43.
The use of native plants in landscape design represents a stage in the development of the pidgin picturesque. In a show of national pride and expression of ecological awareness, the use of purely natives within the picturesque syntax is apparent in the discourse. For example, Titchener's garden design for a residence in Napier is based around an assemblage of picturesque conventions. The paths are "curved at the corners to enhance the stream-like flow effect," the lawn "flows up the mound in the private outdoor living area," and views are framed and layered (Figure 6-2). The planting ("apart from some quick effect, (remove after five years), peppermint gums") is all New Zealand natives. Despite the tensions between natives and the picturesque, Titchener employs them to "provide privacy from views in and/or to frame views out," and to "create a sense of 'unity and variety'."

The description and illustrations of the landscape management concept for Electricorp's Albany Substation are evidence of picturesque vocabulary and syntax combining with the native plant vocabulary. Figure 6-3 is captioned: "native tree and shrub planting provides unity, screening, reduction of visual confusion and require [sic] only low maintenance," describing a range of picturesque

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Figure 6-3. Albany Substation (Electricorp, 1987, p.58)

26 Clendon, 1983, p.5.
28 ibid, p.9.
29 ibid, p.8.
30 ibid, p.8.
31 ibid, p.9.
conventions. In detail, the picturesque is again apparent (Figure 6-4) with the imported syntax combined with the indigenous planting vocabulary. Flax, cabbage trees, and five finger, all New Zealand natives, form a framed, layered composition that evokes an intimate version of the picturesque. According to picturesque theory, nature should only provide a model for the design and not be translated literally. Price recommends that, "many of the circumstances, which give variety and spirit to a wild spot, might be successfully imitated in a dressed place; but it must be done by attending to the principles, not by copying the particulars."^{33} Specifically, Price explains, "without having water-docks or thistles before one's door, their effect in a painter's fore-ground may be produced by plants that are considered as ornamental."^{34} Yet in the pidgin picturesque of both Titchener's and Electricorp's designs, a conscious decision has been to use natives only, rather than "ornamentals".

The elided nature of the pidgin picturesque is apparent in the use of native plants. Not only is picturesque convention expressed as an abbreviated template, but the native vocabulary is reduced to a limited palette. Despite New Zealand's floristically diverse plant vocabulary only a small range of species is often used, becoming 'signs' of native planting. The distinctive spiky forms of *Cordyline australis* (cabbage tree) and *Phormium tenax* (flax), along with *Pittosporum spp.* constitute many New

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^{33} Price, 1810, p.29.

^{34} ibid, p.30.
Zealander’s idea of native plants. However, increasing ecological awareness is seeing a shift towards an appreciation of the range and regional variation of native flora.

The status of the indigenous vocabulary in the hybrid language of the pidgin picturesque is significant. The desire to use natives, for whatever reasons, appears to be all-consuming in the examples above. Even the obvious presence of exotic pines in Figure 6-3 is veiled by the earnest reference to natives. In her work on the use of Maori words in English, Bauer draws parallels with the use of Latin and French words, which are seen as prestigious languages within the European community. She explains further, “By using close imitations of Maori words, by treating Maori like Latin and French, English speakers are according prestige to the Maori language.” The indigenous elements of the pidgin picturesque are thus not necessarily dominated by the imported conventions, but may have their own status in the hybrid language.

The deck is another element of pidgin picturesque in the discourse of the NZILA. In the winning entry for “Homegarden” at Auckland’s Botanic Gardens, the deck was for “outdoor living and entertainment, a strong link at the same level to the living part of the house; with views out into the adjacent reserve and stepping down into the main garden.” Henderson describes how, in a project in Hawkes Bay, “the soil was graded up to the deck at first floor level, and this markedly reduced the visual height of the house, and permitted a much easier transition from house to garden.” In Halstead Adams’s design for the Guthrie Pool, winner of the 1991 George Malcolm Award, “the pool and decks jut out from the house into the trees with a wonderful view of gardens to the west.” The use of the deck in these examples is analogous to the connection between the house and landscape, most commonly associated with Capability Brown. It is not a terrace to be seen from the house, like the formal French and Italian Renaissance gardens, but is a device for linking the house and garden. Drew suggests that the veranda is a picturesque device which reverses the Renaissance relationship between garden and house “by making the garden attach itself to the house,” where the veranda provides “a frame for and a gateway to the garden.” The deck is a modern-day adaptation of the language, motivated by changes in architecture and lifestyle, but perpetuating the picturesque connection between house and garden.

Another change to the language of the picturesque was the ready admission of pragmatism into the vocabulary. The original eighteenth-century debate in England had circled around the incompatibility of beauty and utility, with Repton criticised for his attempts to combine the two. However, the practicality necessary in the colonies forced a marriage of the two, and it is often found that picturesque elements have more prosaic origins. For

38 The NZILA’s highest award for landscape design.
example, the use of pioneer cottages as garden follies, and the lakes of Canterbury estates which often had been created as firefighting reservoirs. Even Hagley Park, which is described in Bain’s article as ‘picturesque’, is revealed by Challenger to be based on pragmatic concerns. He notes, “It is interesting that this pattern [of planting in Hagley Park], developed under Barker, appears to have been directly related to the boundary and intersecting road lines, rather that any other factors or design concepts.”

Further, “It appears, therefore, that the fundamental structure of footpaths and basic divisions had been created very early, largely as the result of pragmatic solutions of day-to-day problems. These were then subsequently capitalised upon by using the opportunities which their resultants gave rise to, in a simplistic form of ‘genius loci’."

6.2 Emergence of a creole

As outlined above, a creole emerges when a pidgin becomes the mother tongue of a community. No longer the makeshift, transitory assemblage of a pidgin, a creole is an autonomous language that suggests some sense of maturity and identity. The discourse of the NZILA demonstrates the development of the pidgin picturesque, with the jumbled vocabularies and syntax of the imported and indigenous languages, and there are hints of the emergence of a creole.

Manukau Court is an urban square which appears to struggle with the tensions between the conventions of the picturesque and a physical and cultural setting which has little in common with eighteenth-century England. Boffa and Flook explain that "Manukau city is New Zealand’s largest and newest city and unlike most other city centres the area was planned and developed from an open green field site." And in addition the city, "possibly more than any other New Zealand city, has strong cultural connections with Polynesia." As an urban design the square must use a different palette of materials to the usual lawn-and-trees of the picturesque. However, rather than adopt a formal design language, arguably more suited to hard landscape materials, Manukau Court attempts to create a ‘natural’ setting. The water feature is informal and lake-like, asymmetrically placed in the space (Figure 6-5). In addition, “a series of water jets at the head of the pool set in amongst the boulders creates the impression of a white water mountain stream." The “sitting stones” are also a copy of nature, being “an adaptation of the unique and characteristic Moeraki Boulders.” The efforts to draw on the indigenous vocabulary results in a confused utterance of pidgin picturesque. The Moeraki boulders, located on a beach near Dunedin, nearly 1,000 kilometres from Manukau, are expressed in the design as perfect brown spheres. Their relevance to the setting in urban Manukau is questionable, even more so when

41 Challenger, 1979, p.10.
42 ibid, p.11.
44 ibid, p.11.
45 ibid, p.13.
46 ibid, p.12.
their coastal location is transposed to "a turbulent mountain stream strewn with boulders."\textsuperscript{47} The "Moeraki Boulders" are scattered throughout the pool and onto the paving. The tree planting is exotic, while the "shrub planting is mainly native species with exotics being used for special effects."\textsuperscript{48} In addition shade structures (echoing the "City of Sails") act as surrogate trees, providing a sense of framing and layering.

In addition to this jumbled version of nature, there is an enthusiastic embracing of Polynesian culture. There are "details emphasising the forms and patterns of the South Pacific,"\textsuperscript{49} including the profiles of Easter Island figureheads in the sectional form of the terrace walls, and a Polynesian double spiral in the paving. The paving fights the tension between an urban, hard, spiral-based landscape, and the evocation of nature. The solution is to "open[] up the paving around the trees,"\textsuperscript{50} to give an informal edge (Figure 6-6).

The design won the George Malcolm Award in 1988 and was commended for its sensitivity and appropriateness to the cultural setting. The judges suggest the project and the design approach "establish landscape architecture as a strong and relevant force in the making of public urban spaces, and heralds its emergence in what may become a uniquely New Zealand urban expression."\textsuperscript{51} It could be said that amidst the chaos of images of nature and culture, Manukau Court demonstrates the development of a creole. The picturesque and indigenous languages begin to move from the elided hybrid of a pidgin to a more autonomous

\textsuperscript{47} ibid, p.12.  
\textsuperscript{48} ibid, p.14.  
\textsuperscript{49} ibid, p.12.  
\textsuperscript{50} ibid, p.13.  
\textsuperscript{51} NZILA Awards, 1989, p.18.
language. Whilst far from possessing the coherence of a mother tongue, the design language of Manukau Court struggles to achieve some form of communication that is uniquely New Zealand, yet as ‘readable’ as conventional picturesque language. It uses the vocabulary of mountain stream, spherical boulders, and pool as a model of nature, in contrast to an English model of nature. And there is an attempt to tell the stories of living in the South Pacific, rather than retelling imported stories, or often, telling no stories at all. As such it reinvests the picturesque both with its literary origins, and with the idea that the designed landscape could be ‘read’.

The use of materials also responds to the local setting. The hard, clear light of New Zealand is exploited in the smooth spherical forms of the boulders, emphasising form over detail. The planting represents the tension between the indigenous and the imported. While natives make an appearance, their expected failure to fulfil design objectives means they are supplanted by exotics as shade trees and where “special effects” are needed. The tree planting is also in tension between the radial pattern set up by the spiral and the natural clumping required by the image of nature.

Manukau Court therefore represents elements of an emerging creole, moving beyond the simple juxtaposition of native plants and picturesque syntax of earlier pidgin examples. The recognition of the design as successful indicates it demonstrates something of significance to the design community. However, there is an awkwardness to the design, which suggests it has not reached the maturity of the creole. The combination of coastal boulders, mountain stream and pool is unconvincing and seems like the result of an over-enthusiastic grabbing of all that is indigenous.

The jumbled vocabularies and syntaxes of this transitional period may seem less like a comprehensible design language than confused ramblings. Yet it is within these very ramblings that the emerging design language is concealed. Hidden amongst the gibberish are the creative examples of pidgin that signal the way forward for New Zealand landscape design. The recognition of this pidgin picturesque provides a potential strategy for approaching landscape design in New Zealand. As in Frampton’s concept of Critical Regionalism, it addresses the need “to mediate the impact of the universal civilization with elements derived indirectly from the peculiarities of a particular place.”

critical self-consciousness,\textsuperscript{53} which is also true of the creative application of the concept of pidgins and creoles. Through embracing difference in architecture, topography and vegetation, and making a commitment to languages such as the picturesque, New Zealand landscape design can gain an identity. Once there are native speakers of the pidgin picturesque, who understand the vocabulary and syntax of both imported and indigenous languages, we may at last hear the unique language of a Kiwi creole.

\textsuperscript{53} ibid.
Chapter 7 : Conclusions

In any profession, the continuance of existing practice with neither termination nor questioning is numbing and perhaps even dangerous. The picturesque exists as a set of covert conventions in the discourse of the NZILA. It is naturalised and myth-like, with the adoption of picturesque principles seemingly taken for granted in the practice of New Zealand landscape architecture. This has implications for the theory, practice and teaching of landscape architecture in New Zealand, and beyond.

7.1 Implications for theory

In chapter 1, I situated my research at the intersection of two domains: an emerging international concern with theory and critique, and the local context of New Zealand’s development. These two areas of theory both contribute to and potentially draw from the results presented here. In addition, my research adds to the small, but developing, body of theory which lies at this point of intersection: New Zealand landscape architectural theory and critique.

Internationally, landscape architecture is becoming more self-critical and the taken-for-granted approaches to design are increasingly challenged. Meyer’s work has been particularly influential, ensuring that modern landscape architectural theory and practice is “alive and active.” Through focusing on a thread of landscape architectural theory - the picturesque - Meyer demonstrates the theoretical richness which is suppressed both by the profession itself, and its marginalisation by art and architectural discourses. The work of Hunt and Treib is also significant in directing attention to the theoretical dimensions of landscape architectural practice. Hunt documents the loss of the message at the expense of the medium in landscape design, emphasising the impoverished theoretical context of much contemporary design practice. The often iconic works of modern landscape architecture are subjected to critical review in Treib’s work. As both an editor and author Treib has established a sense of rigour in the situating of landscape architecture within a theoretical context, and thus demanding an end to the superficial commentary which has passed for critique in various publications. The work of Meyer, Hunt and Treib emphasises the significance of the development of theory in landscape architecture - that without a solid theoretical foundation it is impossible to engage in informed critique.

Indeed, the picturesque, and arguably the profession of landscape architecture, emerged from the

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1 Treib quoted in Environmentally Speaking, 1991, p.78.
3 for example in Hunt, 1993.
4 Treib, 1993.
eighteenth century period of theorising and criticism, illustrating the advances in design thinking and practice which can occur in such a climate.

My research responds to these calls for theoretical investigation, with the presentation of the picturesque as a 'language' drawing on emerging ideas in landscape architectural thinking. Through using language to develop a model of the picturesque, the metaphor is extended in a systematic form. This theoretical framework provides a tool for undertaking a critique of the discourse, and the unearthing of the fragments of the picturesque language in The Landscape demonstrates the implications of this. Although the discourse may appear superficially concerned with pragmatics or some undefined notion of 'good design', the systematic critique reveals the buried subtext of the picturesque which informs much of the design.

The conceptualisation of the picturesque as a language has implications beyond providing a theoretical framework for approaching a discourse or design example. The notion of pidgins and creoles explores ideas on the importation of the picturesque to New Zealand, its reconstruction here, and the subsequent development of a unique form of the picturesque - a creole. The application of the theory of pidgins and creoles extends to speculation on the movement of design languages in general. How do imported design languages adapt and respond to indigenous environments and existing, vernacular vocabularies and syntax? Do the meanings produced by such hybrid languages reflect their shared origins?

This exploration of the introduction of language to a new country focuses on the second domain - the specific context of New Zealand. There is a growing body of theoretical writing emerging in New Zealand which questions the taken-for-grantedness of the landscape, including the work of Pound, Wedde, Swaffield, Kirby, and Bell. Pound demythologises the apparently benign images of early New Zealand landscape painting, claiming they were far from being 'true' representations of the landscape, but rather heavily dependent on imported stylistic conventions. He states: "Artistic conventions carried to nature determine the way nature is seen, that nature is invisible outside the conventional genres of seeing." Wedde also confronts the assumptions made about landscape, art and nature in the New Zealand setting. Referring to an iconic image in New Zealand painting, Mitre Peak, Wedde writes that, what the painting of Mitre Peak represents in its first instances is not Mitre Peak at all. What the painting represents first and foremost is landscape. It represents the idea that the mountain may be and can be represented; that because the culture contains the idea of a landscape, the mountain is already a representation.

Swaffield's research into the roles and meanings of 'landscape' further expands the theoretical thread of landscape myths in New Zealand. 'Landscape' is shown to have metaphorical, symbolic and functional roles in the context of resource policy. The most dominant symbolic association revealed in the analysis

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5 Pound, 1983, p.11.
of respondents’ comments was a concern for ‘naturalness’. One respondent typifies the myth of landscape architecture as natural, with the comment, “We’ve gone into a phase in New Zealand where native is beautiful, introduced is not so beautiful - landscape architects are the classic champions of this.”

The conflation of nature and culture is also central to Kirby’s investigations of the definitions of heritage in New Zealand. She uses “the term ‘story’ or ‘narrative’ in the analysis of texts [to] emphasise[e] the constructed nature and the inherent variability of the realities deduced from them.” Through examining these masked and veiled narratives she demonstrates how the cultural dimension of heritage has been marginalised or excluded as heritage is portrayed as ‘natural’. The myth of landscape as nature is reinforced by Kirby’s analysis that “the normative objectified landscape, viewed as location and scenery is the place of others, who inhabit it, identify with it, associate personal and community meanings with it and depend on it.” Bell also demythologises the concept of landscape in New Zealand, challenging notions of a ‘real New Zealand’ as portrayed in myths of the rural way of life. In Inventing New Zealand: everyday myths of pakeha identity, Bell exclaims, “New Zealand has heaps of things to mythologise! ... We can read the process as manipulation of nationalist ideology. Representations of the ‘egalitarian’ landscape mask actual inequalities in social life, as tourists are sold the most sanitised version of a place.” The myths that Bell identifies have their roots in the nineteenth century, and thus follow a similar pattern to the picturesque. She searches for ways in which we might move on from the “tired look of so much national imagery,” suggesting that “as large numbers of New Zealanders grow increasingly disillusioned with their society, the myths become transparent.”

Therefore my own explorations the myths of the picturesque connect to the wider theoretical context of landscape myths in New Zealand, and to an emerging concern with landscape architectural theory in New Zealand. Further research has the potential to explore a consolidation of the various myths across a broad disciplinary range, and an examination of potential comparisons with other societies who have experienced similar patterns of settlement.

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8 Anonymous respondent quoted in ibid, p.102.
10 Ibid, p.10.
11 Bell, 1993.
7.2 Implications for practice

The recognition of picturesque myths also has implications for practice, encouraging self-consciousness in design, and prompting a move beyond the cliché and stereotype of an impoverished picturesque. This confrontation of the picturesque provides a foundation for making connections between contemporary practice and historical precedent, addressing the "impoverished understanding that contemporary landscape architecture practitioners have of their own design tradition." While there is considerable critique of the picturesque's persistence in landscape design, it is untenable simply to dispense with it. In fact, as a familiar 'language' it can be used as an aid rather than a hindrance to design. It is one way in which a 'frame' could be provided for a 'messy' design. As Nassauer explains, for an ecological design to be acceptable "it requires placing unfamiliar and frequently undesirable forms inside familiar, attractive packages. It requires designing orderly frames for messy ecosystems." The picturesque is an orderly frame, and it is familiar and attractive. An explicit use of picturesque language in this way avoids the problems of conflating ecology and visual appearance, as cautioned by Howett for example, and capitalises on the enduring appeal of the conventions.

The persistence of the picturesque in the discourse also has implications for resource management and landscape assessment. The protection and conservation of landscape through legislation is problematic. New Zealand's Resource Management Act (1991) relies on the notion of 'amenity' as a frame of reference for landscape quality, without providing any absolute means of assessing it. The complex of myths which sees landscape, the picturesque, the visual, and the natural, all conflated allows the subjective to be framed as objective, the cultural to be seen as natural. This is exemplified in The Landscape and related publications, in the imperative way in which landscape guidelines are presented. For example, "Planting should generally be in groups although occasionally a single specimen can be a feature and provide dramatic contrast," or "Do not use strictly geometric boundaries. Never have the edge of a woodlot running straight across or up a slope." The employment of such a perspective in the assessment of 'amenity' would result in legislating for the picturesque. This is not as ludicrous as it might sound, given that amenity is defined in the Act as "those natural or physical qualities and characteristics of an area that contribute to people's appreciation of its pleasantness, aesthetic coherence and cultural and recreational attributes." Pleasantness and aesthetic coherence immediately suggest picturesque qualities. This in itself is not problematic; it is the presentation of such claims as an absolute standard which is dangerous. An explicit exposition of picturesque principles, outlining their

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origins and enduring appeal, would more directly address the issue of amenity in a legislative context. This would allow the presentation of other, alternative means of assessing amenity that may be more appropriate in particular cultural or topographical settings, and avoid the conflation of culture with nature.

The issue of introducing elements into the landscape illustrates the problems of the persistence of the picturesque. As outlined in chapter 4, the conventions of the picturesque are perpetuated in the fondness for muted colours and blending in. Challenges to these ‘norms’ highlight the fragility of the assumptions behind them. For example, Crandell presents an alternative perspective, in reference to the ancient Greeks, who used contrast rather than camouflage to draw attention to the cultural elements in the landscape and consequently emphasise the natural surroundings. This perspective undermines the taken for granted understanding of the introduction of structures into the landscape, and has profound implications for the notion of ‘amenity’ and assessments of landscape ‘quality’.

As a “land of little landscapes” New Zealand requires a range of responses to the landscape, and the emerging creole needs to recognise this. Park stresses that it is not simply any aspects of the indigenous landscape which should be represented in design, but the “subtle patternings of nature that were here so long before us.” A fragmented creole as the basis of landscape practice is likely to be reinforced by the changing nature of landscape architectural discourse and education in New Zealand. The professional journal, The Landscape, has ended, leaving the institute without a “voice,” apart from the informal Cuttings, a newsletter which is concerned with institutional matters only. The landscape “industry” magazine, Landscape New Zealand, and the academic journal, Landscape Review, which have replaced it indicate a fragmentation of the profession / discipline / industry / trade. This is further emphasised by the establishment of a degree programme in landscape architecture at Unitech in Auckland, meaning Lincoln University is no longer the sole provider of tertiary studies. The emergence of a Kiwi creole is therefore likely to be coloured by another sign of the maturity of language - dialects. The regional effect on design is inevitable and appropriate. Differences in climate, topography, vegetation and culture demand regional responses. Rather than being daunted by the “exceedingly repulsive” Canterbury Plains the language of design must be adjusted to suit.

The picturesque presents a challenge to the use of native plants in landscape design, from the early settlers’ difficulty in translating their form and lack of seasonality into their imported language of the picturesque, to contemporary elision of the picturesque with natives employed as informal green clumps.

21 Hayward and O’Connor, 1981.
The 'problems' are not, of course, with the plants themselves, but with the cultural frames into which they are placed. The visual attributes of native plants do not conform to picturesque convention, as discussed in chapter 1, and if not for a growing 'political correctness' and increased ecological awareness, they might not feature at all. The example of Manukau Court in chapter 6 explored some of the ways in which creolisation is occurring. In the use of Polynesian design influences, and expression of a New Zealand image of nature, it seems that the design is an important step in language transition. Natives and exotics are mixed, suggesting the confidence of a creole. However, the jumbled motifs and lack of conviction in planting highlights the struggles which accompany the development of a language. As Wedde writes of imported poetic influences, "The success of influence seems to depend largely on the confidence of the receiving culture, its ability to find consummation in location."

It is difficult to envisage what a creole design language might look like, just as it is impossible to speculate about developments in language. The loss of distinction between the imported and the indigenous, and the supplanting of these languages by a new form that is simultaneously both and neither, is challenging. Moreover, the fragmentation of language into regional variations, which is occurring concurrently, creates further dynamics. Robinson's development of the concept of plant signatures expresses the synergy between imported and indigenous languages. Through assembling small groups of plants which capture the essence of an area, Robinson explores how regionality might be reinforced through planting design. Rather than exclusively using natives, he recognises the almost seamless blending of natives and exotics in capturing the character of an area. For example, for the Canterbury Plains Robinson suggests a native signature of *Coryline australis*, *Phormium tenax*, *Poa cita* and *Poa colensoi*, along with an immigrant signature of *Populus nigra 'Italica', Salix alba*, plus *Ulex europaeus* clipped hedges. This notion of creating an epitome of an area through planting echoes the conventions of the picturesque, creating "pictures" of nature. The use of the copy is central to the picturesque, with the expression of copies of Italian countryside in England initiating the process of pidginisation, and subsequently the development of a creole.

The confidence and maturity which comes with a creole is significantly different from the unwitting use of an imported language, believing it to be natural. This distinction has important implications for landscape architecture, with the active engagement with the process of creolisation ensuring creativity in the design language, rather than uncritical perpetuation of inappropriate aspects of the imported language.

25 Wedde, 1985, p.27.
27 ibid, p.28.
7.3 Implications for education

As chapter 4 illustrates, evidence of picturesque convention persists throughout the entire discourse. The reproduction of the picturesque occurs simultaneously with reconstruction and reflection. Furthermore, the conventions of the picturesque are constantly adapting and evolving to suit the New Zealand context, in a process of construction. The coexistence of these four strands has implications for education. Meyer suggests that a critical reading of picturesque theory is an important step for “students too eager to attribute naturalness (and freedom, liberty, virtue) to any scheme lacking geometrical forms. Such a reading requires a theoretical perspective that pierces the boundary or contour of the garden or landscape under scrutiny and that situates the work in broader cultural or geographical frame.”

The need is, therefore, for the teaching of a critical history of the profession of landscape architecture, identifying and highlighting the changing relationship between the picturesque and landscape architecture. The catalogue of picturesque language presented in chapter 4, and the subsequent discussion of the myths of the picturesque in chapter 5, indicate the potential content of such a history, providing a window on the development of design practice in New Zealand.

There is, therefore, an apparent need to contextualise the picturesque within the history of design, and not simply present it as a design ‘truth’. The sleight of hand that transformed the picturesque into the correct style is laid open and subject to question. Now the exposed picturesque can be explicitly, overtly, presented as a design language, alongside other design languages. While the picturesque has been seen as a hindrance to design - “hampering,” “miring,” “infecting” - confronting the picturesque is liberating, as it allows an explicit, overt exploration of the conventions.

Challenging the picturesque is one way of demanding more self-consciousness and rigour in design. When encouraged to reflect on the cultural assumptions behind their design decisions, students are empowered to make informed choices, and possibly seek out alternative strategies. The exposure of ingrained myths also has implications for the continuing development of design practice in the profession at large. While continuing professional development programmes tend to focus on technical aspects of the profession, such as legislation or managerial responsibilities, there is little active pursuit of developments in design theory. Regular workshops and critique sessions for practitioners would provide opportunities for bridging the potential gap between theory and practice. The challenge is also

28 see for example Bowring, 1995.
29 see for example Schwartz, 1989; Lister, 1991.
30 Meyer, 1992, p.70.
to relate theory to practice through exposure in practice publications, rather than the comparative
dislocation of conferences and journals devoted to theory.

Through critical histories and continued design critique the ingrained beliefs about 'good' design are
challenged. This is not about an 'exorcism' of the picturesque, but self-reflection on the 'why' of
design. The picturesque can continue to be presented as a design language, but in an overt and explicit
way. The richness of the "tactile, temporal, and emotive associations" is a source of inspiration for
design, largely ignored within the myth of landscape architecture as visual. The critical presentation of
the picturesque would expose the myth as just one of many ways of understanding the landscape, albeit
one that has endured a two-century, trans-global game of Chinese whispers.

\[34\] Meyer, 1992, p.169.
Epilogue

As Calder wrote of his anthology *Writing New Zealand*, "like any documentary, this book is patently civic-minded." Ultimately the goal of this thesis is to contribute to the future of landscape architecture in New Zealand and beyond. Through exposing the picturesque, issues such as the dislike of bright colours in the wilderness can be contextualised, and addressed accordingly. The influence of the picturesque extends far beyond the profession of landscape architecture. The conceptualisation and promotion of New Zealand to early European settlers was couched in terms of the picturesque. The assessment and transformation of the landscape has continued to draw on the conventions of the picturesque. Contemporary New Zealand promotes itself internationally through landscape images which sell "clean green" products and destinations. Mitchell suggests New Zealand is "a land which is virtually synonymous with pristine natural beauty, a nation whose principal commodity is the presentation and representation of landscape..."

The sifting, digging and unearthing of the picturesque is unsettling and even temporarily destructive, but it is essential to the process of confronting the past and exploring the buried aspects of the profession. The demonstration of picturesque principles as facts of culture and not of nature is a creative step, and while it might be tempting to condemn the picturesque because of the way it has masked and veiled nature, it must be recognised that the problem lies in the practice, not in the theory. The prospect of engaging with the fragments of picturesque language presents a challenge and a way forward...

... I hope that "the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction" will result in a shift in the future trajectory of landscape architectural theory and practice."

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37 Meyer, 1992, p.175 (including a quotation from Adrienne Rich)
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