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BRITISH IMAGINATION, COLONIAL IDEOLOGY AND THE
REPRESENTATION OF LANDSCAPE SPACE IN NINETEENTH-
CENTURY SOUTHERN AFRICA

Volume I

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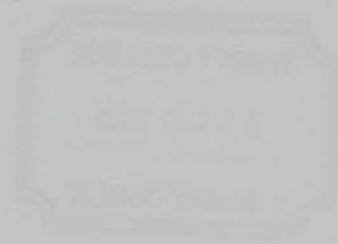
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**BRITISH IMAGINATION, COLONIAL IDEOLOGY AND THE
REPRESENTATION OF LANDSCAPE SPACE IN NINETEENTH-
CENTURY SOUTHERN AFRICA**

2 Volumes

VOLUME I

John McAleer



Thesis submitted in candidacy for the Degree of Doctor in Philosophy

University of Dublin

2005

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ABSTRACT

It has been argued that the very idea of empire in part depended on an idea of landscape, as both controlled space and the means of representing such control, on a global scale. More than any other genre it can, I believe, tell us about British self-definition and the attitudes held by artists, travellers and explorers towards new landscape spaces. Referring to the United Kingdom, Stephen Daniels corroborates this notion: “Nowhere else is landscape so freighted with legacy, nowhere else does the very term suggest not simply scenery and *genres de vie* but quintessential national virtues.” The history of politicised landscape in Britain stretches back to Arthurian legend. The very popularity of landscape imagery in the domestic art market signals its importance as a convenient vehicle for the dissemination of ideas into the cultural bloodstream. According to W.J.T. Mitchell, “landscape is the dreamwork of empire.”

The aim of this study is to add a geographically specific insight into this area of burgeoning academic interest – the confluence and interdependence of text and image, book and illustration, for the description of “colonial space.” The authors and the artists who travelled and explored, describing and depicting the sub-continental region of Southern Africa in the nineteenth century were equipped by their cultural and artistic inheritance with a certain set of strategies for relating the diverse landscape features of the region to a domestic audience in Britain. From the immensity of the Victoria Falls to the minutiae of floral detail on the veldt, these ways of seeing and modes of depiction are inextricably bound up with the issues of European transgression and travel in a landscape that is inherently other, foreign and unusual. The task of depiction resulted in these diverse features becoming bound together in one epistemological ensemble and the creation of an archive of knowledge that relied heavily on pictorial and textual co-operation in order to construct and maintain an “idea” of imperial and colonial space. I do not claim such powers of assimilation or such breadth of amalgamation for my work. Rather, this study will build intellectual bridges and make interconnections between and across chronological periods and between different historical issues and debates, actualising them around the fulcrum of the imagining, imaging and description of the colonial landscape space of Southern Africa in the nineteenth century. Therefore, I hope that Pliny’s oft-quoted dictum will, in this instance, prove more than merely a redundant cliché – *Ex Africa semper aliquid novi*.

“Southern Africa” is geographically massive and topographically diverse. And, then as now, was as equally assorted in the range of native and indigenous peoples who occupied its varied landscape. Put more specifically, Msiska and Hyland argue that “Southern Africa presents a unique and particular supranational geo-cultural unit.” For much of the period covered in this study a sizeable portion of the region was quite literally beyond the boundaries of European knowledge and was a *terra incognita*. The contrast between the fluxive nature of nineteenth-century geography and the fixity of today’s national boundaries helps to demonstrate the exceptional circumstances in which landscape and its spaces were explored, described and analyzed during the period covered by this study. I acknowledge the multiplicity of landscapes and attendant contexts in a region larger than Western Europe, extending from the arid deserts of Namibia to the tropical vegetation around the Zambezi River, from the placid serenity of the Cape to the magnificence and grandeur of the Victoria

Falls. Nevertheless, I will argue that a coherent set of visual and descriptive strategies were first employed by exploring artists and authors in order to reduce or specifically conceptualise the landscape. The landscape space, therefore, despite its rich diversity and regional peculiarities is, or was certainly seen in the nineteenth century as, a kind of blank map upon which Europeans could inscribe and record their impressions.

This study aims to analyse the visual qualities of paintings, engravings and other images produced by artists and travellers in the multifarious contexts of the British military, scientific and social engagement with this region. In the words of Peter Burke, “paintings reveal the variety of values that have been projected onto the land.” My intention in this work is not to establish criteria of aesthetic judgement but to describe the content of these images in relation to the context of the historical milieu in which they produced and to which they were pertaining. Thus, this study builds upon the work of those critics who, like David Matless, have recognized that “the power of landscape resides in it being simultaneously a site of economic, social, political and aesthetic value, with each being of equal importance.”

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A research project of this kind is immeasurably improved by the advice and assistance received by the author in its writing. The person to whom I owe my principal and largest debt of gratitude is Dr Philip McEvansoneya. As my academic supervisor, his support was unstinting and greatly appreciated. His effortless combination of a formidable breadth of knowledge with the most clear-headed practical advice has in no small part contributed to and ameliorated the pages that follow. But, above all, it is for his time, care and personal interest in this work that I am most thankful.

The large amount of information that I garnered from the resources of Trinity College Library was made possible only by the help I received from various individuals in that institution. My thanks go to the staff of the Berkeley Library who facilitated my questions and requests with grace and efficiency. I especially wish to thank Dr Charles Benson and his team in the Department of Early Printed Books. It was here that most of the archival material presented in this study was uncovered and ruminated upon. The various librarians' care and attention to individual researcher's needs always went beyond the mere call of duty. In particular, Shane Mawe never failed to amaze me in locating titles relating to South Africa that even evaded inclusion in the library catalogue! Other institutions also provided me with access to rare books and manuscripts. Among these, I wish to acknowledge the contribution of the British Library, the National Library of Scotland, the Royal Geographical Society and the University Library, Cambridge.

I have been very lucky in being able to travel to South Africa both to carry out and to present research. For this, thanks are largely due to the Department of History of Art and the Graduate Studies Office in Trinity College and the Thomas Dammann Junior Memorial Fund. Whilst in South Africa, I was greatly aided by the staff of the National Library of South Africa, Cape Town. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Fiona Van Wyck and her staff at Rust en Vreugd, Cape Town who granted me privileged access to the watercolour collection of Dr William Fehr. Professor Michael Godby of the University of Cape Town, Dr Chris Venter of the University of Stellenbosch, Michael Stevenson, Ian Van Der Wag, David McClellan, Cathal Seoighe and Xolise Dingane all helped to make my stay in that wonderful country as enjoyable and rewarding as those nineteenth-century interlopers had found it.

As is to be expected, the discussion in the pages that follow has been modified and reworked many times. I have greatly benefited from the input and suggestions of many individuals who each brought a unique and specific area of expertise to bear on my work. As well as Dr McEvansoneya in the History of Art Department, I should thank Dr Peter Cherry and Dr Yvonne Scott of the History of Art Department as well as Professor Ian Campbell Ross and Dr Darryl Jones of the School of English in Trinity College. I have been lucky enough to have the opportunity to present most of the material included in this study at various conferences and symposia in one form or other. I would like to thank those who invited me to speak and who contributed to increasing my understanding of the issues involved. I would also like to acknowledge the various groups of undergraduate and extramural students who listened and added to many of the nascent ideas that would eventually become part of this study.

The logistics involved in compiling the pictures and photographs for this study were perhaps as challenging as writing the work itself and could not have been achieved without the help of several individuals. Once again, Shane Mawe and his colleague John Daly in the Department of Early Printed Books went out of their way to assist me. For their help and patience, Brendan Dempsey and Brian McGovern deserve the warmest thanks.

I extend my thanks to those people who have put up with me and my (sometimes obsessive) interest in nineteenth-century colonial landscape images. Friends and colleagues in the Department of History of Art created the collaborative environment in which scholarship thrives. My friends within Trinity College and without helped me more than they know, particularly Isobel McMullen, Beatrice Whelan, Danielle O'Donovan, Alan McCormack, Alison Kelly, Niall Sloane, Richard Kirwan, Chris Woods, Charlie Larkin and Jane Finucane. Finally, I would like to thank my mother, whose practical advice cannot be overestimated and Johanna whose skill as a proof reader was matched only by her patience, support and loyalty as a friend.

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Plate 96: Captain Henry Butler, “Off-saddled near Death Valley” (coloured lithograph) in Captain Henry Butler, South African Sketches : Illustrative of the Wild Life of a Hunter on the Frontier of the Cape Colony [London, 1841], Plate II, No. 4.

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Preface

The analysis, presentation and contextualization of the texts and images in this study, it is hoped, will prove justification enough for my researching them. It has been my aim throughout to present these cultural artefacts to the reader with as much objective assessment and commentary as possible within the parameters defined by this study.

However, the reader may reasonably expect some explanation of the genesis of the author's own interest in such a topic. It all began with that most dangerous of gifts – a book, or more precisely, the illustration on the cover of that book. It cannot be claimed that my enjoyment and understanding of H. Rider Haggard's King Solomon's Mines is the same today as it was when I first read it, many years ago. As my interest in the visual arts expanded, it transpired that many of the most frequently thumbed books on my shelf such as King Solomon's Mines, Rudyard Kipling's The Jungle Book and Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness all sported paintings on their covers by one artist – a certain Mr. Thomas Baines. The essentially arbitrary decision of which illustration to adorn a new edition of some old favourites would be a dangerously flimsy foundation on which to base any serious academic endeavour. Nevertheless, and with that parental admonition of never judging a book by its cover still ringing in my ears, my interest was piqued. How satisfactorily could an illustration convey the essential themes of the text beyond it? Could visual images actualize the concerns and debates prevalent in the written word? What relationship did art have to travel, exploration and the subsequent task of presenting these activities to a British audience? These questions form the basis of much of what follows.

My focus on landscape space in particular as a contested site of cultural negotiation betrays my art historical background. As an area of much recent academic debate it seemed a natural choice for one interested in how metropolitan culture engaged with a foreign other. Yet, projects similar to this one could be formulated to assess the representation of the native African, British attitudes to her ambiguous involvement in the Slave Trade or even the presence of the European in Africa in the nineteenth century. Ultimately, this study does not have any pretensions to universal application, an undesirable if not downright dangerous outcome of any academic enquiry. This study is written in the manner of a plain tale, simply told, but one that endeavours to reassess the contribution of art and visual images to the intellectual and political process of British imperial expansion in the nineteenth century.

INTRODUCTION

“Altogether apart from its recent troubles, South Africa is an interesting, and indeed fascinating subject of study.”

James Bryce, 1897.

A research study that aims to identify, analyze and discuss the various nuances and subtleties of the travel literature and imagery pertaining to Southern Africa in the nineteenth century might possibly be described by paraphrasing Wildean wit – the unreadable in pursuit of the indigestible. Nevertheless, it is the author’s hope that this examination proves to be informative and academically coherent, as well as a fruitful source of new ideas and approaches in the study of this particular and peculiar area of intellectual concern. At the same time, I trust that this study will add a geographically specific insight into an area of burgeoning academic interest – the confluence and interdependence of text and image, book and illustration, for the description of “colonial space.” The authors and the artists who travelled and explored, describing and depicting the sub-continental region of Southern Africa in the nineteenth century were equipped by their cultural and artistic inheritance with a certain set of strategies for relating the diverse landscape features of the region to a domestic audience in Britain. From the immensity of the Victoria Falls to the minutiae of floral detail on the veldt, these ways of seeing and modes of depiction are inextricably bound up with the issues of European transgression and travel in a landscape that is inherently other, foreign and unusual. The task of depiction resulted in these diverse features becoming bound together in one epistemological ensemble and the creation of an archive of knowledge that relied heavily on pictorial and textual co-operation in order to construct and maintain an “idea” of imperial and colonial space. I do not claim such powers of assimilation or such breadth of amalgamation for my work. I will examine the landscape of Southern Africa as it appeared to British eyes in the nineteenth century and how it was subsequently represented, both visually and textually, to a prospective or actual audience of predominately domestic viewers. However, I trust that the diverse objectives of this study outlined above are facilitated and enriched by

the breadth of analysis. I envisage this work to be one of synthesis – original and challenging – that will explore and illustrate new themes, holding these in suspension, while simultaneously making older themes accessible in new ways. Thus, I hope that this study will build intellectual bridges and make interconnections between and across chronological periods and between different historical issues and debates, actualizing them around the fulcrum of the imagining, imaging and description of the colonial landscape space of Southern Africa in the nineteenth century. Therefore, I hope that Pliny's oft-quoted dictum will, in this instance, prove more than merely a redundant cliché – *Ex Africa semper aliquid novi*.¹

The delightfully vague and sweeping breadth of the title and its implications is a recurring theme in defining the parameters of this study. Indeed, it carries such conflicting drawbacks and advantages for the author and the reader that its choice and its range of interpretations require some discussion at the outset. The time scale, the geographical location and the artistic media employed by the artists treated in this work are equally broad and diverse so as to necessitate some preliminary clarification. In parallel to this, the critical issues incorporated and considered in the compilation of this study and the analysis of the images therein are concomitantly wide-ranging and eclectic. These too call for a modicum of explanation at the beginning of the work. A thorough exploration and discussion of the limits and parts of this study, as well as the language and critical theory used in its writing, will, it is hoped, aid the reader and make the study more useful and cogent from the outset. The way in which I draw on recent work done in the fields of landscape studies, post-colonial theory and the politics of identity will be outlined and related to the corpus of visual and literary material that form the central core of the study. The methodology employed in the visual analysis will also be examined in order both to foreground the importance of this aspect of the work and to illustrate my views as to how I see these cultural products operating in the imperial archive of knowledge that I argue existed in the nineteenth century.

¹ For an interesting and informative discussion of the origin and evolution of this phrase in Western European discourse see Harvey M. Feinberg and Joseph B. Solodow, "Out of Africa" in *Journal of African History*, Vol. 43, No. 2 (2002), pp. 255-61.

The geographical region covered by this study necessitates some comment by way of explanation.² Throughout the body of the text I refer to “Southern Africa” as the significant arena in which these issues of depiction and visualization are played out. The British artistic and aesthetic engagement with this physical and topographical reality forms the basis of the study to follow. However, like many other colonial regions in the nineteenth century, this area of territory is perhaps more usefully thought of as a geographical expression, rather than as a politically homogenous unit.³ The use of the term “Southern Africa” should therefore be taken to refer to the entire sweep of the southern part of Africa covered by this study and not to be confused with any twenty-first century national territory.⁴ The region does have certain unifying factors in relation to how the travelling British artist or author (many interlopers were both) envisaged and subsequently depicted the landscape. There are many similarities in the construction and deployment of landscape imagery throughout the region that permit one to study the area as an interesting whole. However, it should be understood that regional variations did exist which I will preserve, acknowledge and highlight by referring to specific examples and explaining them in the context of the overarching argument. For example, the area around Cape Town was highly Europeanized throughout the period and receives a lot of attention for that reason in the course of the study. In contrast to this, areas in the far interior remained mysterious and almost unknown to Europeans for the duration of the nineteenth century and their description depends on the individual experiences and responses of a handful of intrepid European explorers. Obviously, therefore, the register of meaning applied to the landscape space of these diverse regions and the artistic and aesthetic tools used to accommodate them, were very different and will require individual and specific analysis. Thus, this work will range unapologetically across a huge geographical region, but within the overarching framework and context of the British political, artistic and cultural engagement with this portion of the African continent in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries.

² For more specific geographical information regarding the area covered by this study see Appendix 1.

³ For a comprehensive survey of the historiography of the region see William H. Worger, “Southern and Central Africa” in Robin W. Winks (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire : Volume 5 – Historiography* [Oxford, 1999], pp. 513-40.

⁴ Stephen Gray’s solution to this issue, in writing his literary history of the area, was to use the term ‘South Africa’ “metonymically without any rigid sense of geo-political border;...merely a convenient umbrella term applied for interim ends.” See Stephen Gray, *Southern African Literature : An Introduction* [Cape Town, 1979], p. 3.

The territorial area of this engagement was one where Britain exerted an informal and summary form of political influence up until the end of the nineteenth century (at which time it became solidified and formalized through the so-called European “Scramble for Africa” among the major European powers).⁵ “Southern Africa” is geographically massive and topographically diverse. Then, as now, it was as assorted in the range of native and indigenous peoples who occupied its varied landscape.⁶ Put more specifically, Msiska and Hyland argue that “Southern Africa presents a unique and particular supranational geo-cultural unit.”⁷ However, for the sake of comparison, this study covers areas and discusses landscape spaces that are now encompassed within the borders of the present-day countries of the Republic of South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe (Map 1). The maps included in the appendices to this study will clarify the geographical sweep of the study. They will also help to illustrate the rather fluid and indeterminate geography of a region that was largely unexplored in the nineteenth century in comparison to today’s concrete political realities. For much of the period covered in this work a sizeable portion of the region was quite literally beyond the boundaries of European knowledge and was a *terra incognita*. The contrast between the fluxive nature of the nineteenth century and the fixity of today’s national boundaries demonstrates the exceptional circumstances in which landscape and its spaces were explored, described and analyzed during the period covered by this study.

For most Englishmen at the beginning of the nineteenth century, “Southern Africa” referred to that portion of the subcontinent that subsequently became the Cape Colony – in effect, the southernmost tip of the African continent. The British encounter with, and description of, Southern Africa began at this point with Francis Drake in 1580. Passing the Cape of Good Hope on his voyage around the world, Drake initiated the practice of the comparative description of the landscape of Southern Africa:

⁵ For a discussion of this phenomenon see Thomas Pakenham, The Scramble for Africa 1876-1912 [London, 1991].

⁶ See Christopher Saunders and Iain R. Smith, “Southern Africa, 1795-1910” in Andrew Porter (ed.), The Oxford History of the British Empire : Volume 3 - The Nineteenth Century [Oxford, 1999], pp. 597-623.

⁷ Mpalive-Hangson Msiska and Paul Hyland (eds.), Writing and Africa [London, 1997], p. 1.

The Cape is a most stately thing, and the fairest Cape we saw in the whole circumference of the earth, and we passed it by on the 18th of June [sic].⁸ The first British footprints were made in the soil of the region some forty years later, in June 1620, when Andrew Shilling and Humphrey FitzHerbert laid claim to Saldanha Bay in the name of King James.⁹ However, the British did not take any more political or colonial interest in the region until the very end of the eighteenth century.¹⁰ Throughout that century the area around the Dutch enclave of Cape Town was perceived as just a pleasant distraction on the voyage to India. Nevertheless, despite this politically disinterested stance, the cultural and intellectual engagement of British authors and artists was already advanced by the time that Britain acquired the Cape Colony in 1797. Even in the 1750s, Thomas Astley claimed that there were so many visitors to the region that “there is scarcely any place in the world more frequently described in books of travel than the Cape of Good Hope.”¹¹ And, by 1774, Horace Walpole was remarking that “Africa is indeed coming into fashion.”¹²

The Cape Colony came into British hands via a rather circuitous route, almost one hundred and fifty years after the first European settlers had arrived.¹³ The Cape of Good Hope was first settled by the Dutch East India Company in 1652 when Jan van Riebeck landed at the Cape (Map 5). It remained a Dutch possession until the colony was captured by the British under Sir James Craig in 1797. In May of that year Lord Macartney arrived to take charge of the government. Under the Treaty of Amiens in 1802 the colony was ceded back to the Dutch Batavian Republic. However, it was retaken by Sir David Baird in 1806. Eventually, the Convention of London (1814) officially ceded the Cape to Britain permanently and it remained in British hands

⁸ Quoted in Sidney Mendelssohn, *South African Bibliography*, introduced by Ian D. Colvin, 2 vols. [London, 1910], Vol. 1, p. xxxiii.

⁹ Eric A. Walker, *A History of South Africa* [London, 1928], p. 30.

¹⁰ For an overview of British policy in relation to Southern Africa see Alan J. Guy, “British Strategy and the Cape of Good Hope in the Era of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars” in Peter B. Boyden, Alan J. Guy and Marion Harding (eds.), *“Ashes and Blood”: The British Army in South Africa, 1795-1914* [London, 1999], pp. 32-43.

¹¹ Quoted in Timothy Severin, *The African Adventure : A History of Africa’s Explorers* [London, 1973], p. 134.

¹² Quoted in Christopher Hibbert, *Africa Explored : Europeans in the Dark Continent, 1769-1889* [Harmondsworth, 1982], p. 21.

¹³ For a discussion of the historical peculiarities of the take-over see William M. Freund, “The Cape under the transitional governments, 1795-1814” in Richard Elphick and Hermann Giliomee (eds.), *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652-1840* [Cape Town, 1989], pp. 324-57.

throughout the nineteenth century.¹⁴ In 1779, there were still only 12,000 Europeans in the Cape Colony which was hardly a dramatic increase on the original 350 settlers in 1695.¹⁵ When the British first occupied the Cape, nearly twenty years later, the European population still numbered only 21,000 souls – 6,000 in the vicinity of Cape Town, 7,000 around Stellenbosch and 4,000 each in Swellendam and Graaf Reinet (Map 4; Nos. 2, 7, 13). At the end of the seventeenth century, the European limits of settlement were only about fifty miles from Cape Town. But, by the end of the eighteenth century the Cape Colony stretched eastwards for a distance of almost five hundred miles from the west coast to the Great Fish River (Map 4; Feature 1).¹⁶ In the nineteenth century, the “Eastern Frontier” was a term used to describe that coastal belt between the Sunday and Kei Rivers where colonists and Xhosa were in conflict (Map 4; Features i, n).¹⁷ To the north, the colony was bounded by the Berg River and the Stormberg Mountains (Map 4; Features b, p).¹⁸ This wedge at the foot of Africa, raggedly defined on its northern and eastern boundaries, was the sparsely populated region of ground that, despite ostensible political control, was poorly charted and relatively unknown to the British at the beginning of their tenure in the region. Of course, the regions and the landscape spaces stretching beyond the frontier were even more mysterious and strange – acting as *terrae incognitae* for European epistemological, artistic and authorial imagination. This study seeks to recount the process of filling in the blank spaces on the map; the recording and describing of landscape spaces and features for a European audience increasingly interested in learning more about the far-flung corners of a burgeoning empire. Section I argues for the idea of the Imperial Archive as a useful model within which to situate the various textual and visual products describing the region. It aids our understanding of how cultural products operated in the context of imperial ideologies.

Places like the Kuruman in present-day Botswana, or the Victoria Falls on the border between Zambia and Zimbabwe, may be separated by long distances and national borders but, for the wandering explorer of the nineteenth century, and for the purposes

¹⁴ D. Schrirer, The Cape of Good Hope 1782-1842 from De la Rochette to Arrowsmith [London, 1965], p. 5.

¹⁵ Jeremy Black, Europe and the World, 1650-1830 [London, 2002], p. 79.

¹⁶ Hermann Giliomee, “The Eastern Frontier (1770-1812)” in Elphick and Giliomee (eds.), The Shaping of South African Society, pp. 412-71; p. 421.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 421.

¹⁸ Schrirer, The Cape of Good Hope 1782-1842, p. 3.

of this study, all these phenomena are seen as landscapes of a foreign, strange and inherently alien terrain (Map 3; No. 7 and Map 1, Feature i). Combined with the landscape spaces of more familiar, more Europeanized settlements, like those around Cape Town, the landscape of this region provides an enormous range of examples of the diversity of envisaging and displaying the landscape imagery in a colonial context. This study acknowledges the multiplicity of landscapes and attendant contexts in a region larger than Western Europe, extending from the arid deserts of Namibia to the tropical vegetation around the Zambezi River, from the placid serenity of the Cape to the magnificence and grandeur of the Victoria Falls. Nevertheless, in Section II, I will argue that a coherent set of visual and descriptive strategies were first employed by exploring artists and authors in order to reduce or specifically conceptualize the landscape. The landscape space, therefore, despite its rich diversity and regional peculiarities is, or was certainly seen in the nineteenth century, as a kind of blank map upon which Europeans could inscribe and record their impressions. This process of relating the landscape had, as we will see, profound effects on the subsequent visual and textual imaging of the region that drew on the aesthetic precedents and scientific impulses discussed in Section II.

The nineteenth century is the great period of European infiltration and expansion into the region. Until the mid-1840s the story of European South Africa had been that of the Cape Colony. However, the establishment of the Boer Republics and more adventurous and audacious expeditions and missionary incursions into the interior led to a percolation of European cultural values throughout the region.¹⁹ Thus, by 1865, there were over 210,000 Europeans in the area.²⁰ The inevitable Europeanization of the region also developed at pace.²¹ And with this came a consequent expansion of the interest in the region. So, by the mid-1890s, nearing the chronological limits of this study, Joseph Thomson could suggest that one of the principal preoccupations of the nineteenth century was “that phenomenal interest in all things African.”²² The range of concerns and interests that people brought to bear on this landscape space was almost as varied as the very topography of the terrain itself. The idea of the wasteland

¹⁹ Walker, *A History of South Africa*, p. 203.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 303, n. 1.

²¹ See James Sturgis, “Anglicization at the Cape of Good Hope in the Early Nineteenth Century” in *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Oct. 1982), pp. 5-32.

²² Quoted in H. Alan C. Cairns, *Prelude to Imperialism : British Reactions to Central African Society, 1840-1890* [London, 1965], p. 3.

and wilderness is one that was extremely popular and had great cultural currency at the beginning of the region's exploration. It is frequently written, envisaged and visualized as a complete blank. This is a trope that will recur repeatedly in this study. Section III provides insights into how the visual imperial archive, as it had been collated throughout the nineteenth century, was arrogated to audiences and used to fulfil certain British domestic prerogatives and concerns.

The accretions of meaning that could be built up around the landscape of this region extended far wider than being seen simply as an unknown space. Unlike British India or the Caribbean sugar plantations, the expansion into, and possession of, Southern Africa was territorially immense but relatively economically insignificant.²³ By contrast with these possessions, the Cape Colony was regarded as a hub for military and trading concerns, not altogether unusual in the build-up of the empire.²⁴ Until the end of the eighteenth century, the Cape remained as a kind of pleasurable diversion, in the hands of the Dutch. Vasco da Gama, one of the first Europeans to set foot on the southern tip of the continent merely saw it as being "very pleasant with trees and water."²⁵ Captain Daniell Beeckman called at Cape Town on his way to visit the more important island of Borneo and commented:

This place, for its Pleasantness, Fertility, wholsom Air, and convenient Situation, for the supply of both homeward and outward-bound East-India Ships, is not to be parallel'd; whereof the Dutch, to whom it belongs, are not a little proud.²⁶

As the Quarterly Review remarked during Napoleonic Wars, British "naval superiority rests mainly on colonial strength."²⁷ During the brief British tenure in Cape Town in the late eighteenth century, the author-explorer John Barrow expresses the British attitude to the Cape Colony:

²³ In 1854-7 South Africa bought only 3.8% of total British exports while Australia was the destination for 30.5%. In the same period the quantity of imports from the Oceania region was 13.1% compared to only 3.1% from South Africa. For further details see P.J. Cain "Economics and Empire: The Metropolitan Context" in Porter (ed.), The Oxford History of the British Empire, Vol. 3; pp. 31-53.

²⁴ See Richard Koebner and Helmut Dan Schmidt, Imperialism : The Story of a Political Word, 1840-1960 [Cambridge, 1964], p. xvii.

²⁵ Quoted in Malvern Van Wyk Smith, "The Origins of Some Victorian Images of Africa" in English in Africa, Vol. 6, No. 1 (1979), pp. 12-32; p. 16.

²⁶ Capt. Daniel Beeckman, A Voyage to and from the Island of Borneo [London, 1718], p. 178.

²⁷ A.G.L. Shaw, "British Attitudes to the Colonies, ca. 1820-1850" in Journal of British Studies, Vol. IX, No. 1 (Nov. 1969), pp. 71-95; p. 82.

Of these extreme points [the four 'extremities of the globe'] the Cape of Good Hope cannot be considered the least important, either with regard to its geographical situation, as favourable for carrying on a speedy intercourse with every part of the civilized world...; or as a port solely for the numerous and valuable fleets of the East India Company to refresh at; to assemble in times of war for convoy; to re-establish the health of their sickly troops, worn down by the debilitating effects of exposure to a warm climate; and to season, in the mild and moderate temperature of Southern Africa, such as those from Europe as may be destined for service in the warmer climate of their Indian settlements.²⁸

The Cape seems to have been acquired more as a pre-emptive strike against the advances of Napoleon than for any other purposes. It was, according to Nigel Penn, "conquered for extrinsic rather its intrinsic value."²⁹ Captain Blankett expressed the common fear that "what was a feather in the hands of Holland [the Cape of Good Hope] will become a sword in the hands of France," reinforcing the Cape as a strategic acquisition.³⁰ The relative importance of the Cape Colony can be ascertained from the small proportion of time spent debating issues relating specifically to it in the House of Commons. During the 1830's, an average of forty debates on colonial matters were held every year. Yet, over the ten-year period only seven were related to South Africa, comparing unfavourably with forty-one, seventy-one and one hundred and forty-two relating to Australasia, the West Indies and the Canadas respectively. In the following decade, South Africa could only muster the attention of members for a total of six debates, even though there were an average of thirty colonial debates per annum.³¹

Britain wanted to maintain the Cape of Good Hope in order to protect her communications with the Orient. However, she also began to covet the Cape for its innate merits, as an outright addition to Empire and as a dominion to be settled and

²⁸ John Barrow, *An Account of Travels into the Interior of Southern Africa* [London, 1801], Vol. 1, pp. 1-2.

²⁹ Nigel Penn, "Mapping the Cape : John Barrow and the First British Occupation of the Colony, 1795-1803" in *Pretexts*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Summer 1993), pp. 20-43; p. 21.

³⁰ Quoted in Christopher Lloyd, *Mr. Barrow of the Admiralty : A Life of Sir John Barrow, 1764-1848* [London, 1970], p. 48.

³¹ Shaw, "British Attitudes to the Colonies, ca. 1820-1850", pp. 78-9.

ruled by Britons.³² As early as 1800, Sir George Yonge prophesized the future of the Cape Colony as a trading post: “The importance of the Cape grows in Its every Hour. It is and will become the Centre of Commerce with India, America, and Europe.”³³ The Quarterly Review advocated emigration as a pressure-release valve for domestic overpopulation and unrest earlier in the century, quoting the Bible in capital letters as if to add lexicographical power to its admonition: “BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY : REPLENISH THE EARTH AND SUBDUE IT.”³⁴ Shaw argues that the replacement of trade by emigration as the main *raison d'être* of the formal empire occurred in about 1848.³⁵ Overcrowding and subsequent unrest in Ireland, evictions in Highland Scotland and agricultural unemployment in many English counties combined to give greater currency to a sustained policy of emigration promotion. In 1835, the relatively minor role of the Colony as a recuperation station for ailing servicemen from India is cited by Captain F.B. Doveton, who leaves Madras for South Africa, in order “to renovate my frame.”³⁶ Therefore, the period covered by this study is one of constantly changing attitudes to Africa and its landscape. Various factors such as the desire for agricultural, economically productive land, the need to relocate a burgeoning population, the growth and pervasiveness of scientific curiosity, ease of travel and missionary zeal combined to encourage men to move out into the uncharted territory of Southern Africa. Consequently, these issues, desires and concerns influence the description and image of the Southern African landscape in the nineteenth century and will be examined in detail in Section III.

The geographical latitude of this study is somewhat mirrored by the time frame of my analysis. British involvement with the region had been sporadic since the seventeenth century. However, it was only in the later eighteenth century that artists such as William Hodges began recording the actualities of a journey around the Cape of Good Hope. As British political interest in the area waxed so did artistic and scientific curiosity, thereby encouraging more penetrating trips further inland from the

³² See Anthony Nutting, The Scramble for Africa : The Great Trek to the Boer War [London, 1994], p. 17.

³³ Quoted in Atmore and Marks, “The Imperial Factor in South Africa in the 19th Century” in JICH, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Oct. 1974), pp. 105-39, p. 135, n. 35.

³⁴ Shaw, “British Attitudes to the Colonies, ca. 1820-1850”, p. 85.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

³⁶ Capt. F.B. Doveton, “A Visit to the Cape of Good Hope” in The Colonial Magazine (1845), pp. 1-7, 76-83, 286-94; p. 1.

immediate vicinity of Cape Town. The main focus of this study centres on the British reactions to the landscape of the region from the time of her first occupation. Thus, it uses the convenient chronological brackets of 1797 and 1871 as useful guidelines for exploring these themes of landscape imagery. The study begins with the first British occupation of the Cape of Good Hope in 1797 when British political involvement was formalized. The concluding date coincides with H.M. Stanley's famous encounter with Dr Livingstone in the far interior at Ujiji which has been viewed as a watershed in the transition to new, more militant form of exploitative imperialism.³⁷ The subsequent period is one where Victoria is crowned Empress of India (1877) and a generally more aggressive, appropriative attitude to imperial matters begins to percolate throughout British domestic society.³⁸ J. Scott Keltie recognizes this change in attitude to Africa. He states that Africa may have been a field for missionary labours and geographical exploration throughout the nineteenth century, "but not until Stanley made his immortal journey 'Through the Dark Continent', did the Powers of Europe give serious attention to Africa as a field for industrial, political and commercial activity."³⁹ The timeframe that this study will be dealing with falls within the parameters of what John A. Murray refers to as the "pre-colonial period." In other words the time between 1770 and 1885 when European interest in the continent was piqued but before formal political control was exerted.⁴⁰ The images considered in the body of the text do not conform to what Nigel Leask refers to as the "hawkish" imperatives of Victorian imperialism. In my view, the depictions of the space of Southern Africa are infinitely more complex. For Leask, these images are "more concerned to convince the sceptical readership at home of the truth of their claims than to feed a triumphalist discourse of Empire."⁴¹ The analysis of these claims and their place in the overarching ideology of imperial expansion and in the compilation of the imperial archive will form the basis of this study. Eric Axelson suggests that after this date the main explorations of the region came from the direction of Central Africa. He continues:

³⁷ See Felix Driver, "Henry Morton Stanley: Geography, Expansion, Exploration and Empire" in *Past and Present*, No. 133 (Nov. 1991), pp. 134-66; p. 165.

³⁸ Ian Watt, *Conrad in the Nineteenth Century* [Berkeley, 1979], p. 157; Alan Sandison, *The Wheel of Empire : A Study of the Imperial Ideal in Some Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Fiction* [London, 1967], pp. 9-10.

³⁹ *British Africa*, with an introduction by J. Scott Keltie [London, 1899], pp. xi-xii.

⁴⁰ John A. Murray, *Wild Africa : Three Centuries of Nature Writing from Africa* [Oxford, 1993], p. xii.

⁴¹ Nigel Leask, *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing, 1770-1840* [Oxford, 2002], p. 18.

The day of the explorer was over, his work completed. He was supplanted by the prospector, the farmer, and the administrator.⁴²

However, I have used these parameters as very vague and quite consciously artificial limits. As a consequence, I have not hesitated to incorporate and discuss at length images or issues that fall outside these highly arbitrary chronological borders. Similarly, I have taken the liberty of referring to artists, texts and themes that deal with different geographical areas or time periods where I feel this digression informs or otherwise contributes to the discussion.

The increase of interest in the Cape of Good Hope at the end of the nineteenth century is one that goes hand in hand with both a heightened British political and cultural awareness of the region and an expanding interest in colonial matters generally. British artists and travellers began to see the region as worthy of study and examination according to various aesthetic, philosophical and cultural criteria. They increasingly began to look at and represent the landscape spaces presented within the Colony and beyond its boundaries. This new, essentially alien landscape, the ways in which it came to be seen, imagined and imaged form a fundamental assumption of this study – that landscape and the colonial spaces of Southern Africa, as they were described, recorded and imaged by the British in the nineteenth century, were arrogated and delineated in terms of how they related to predetermined and predefined European experiences of environmental reality. And this attitude was still germane and pertinent to any description of the region well into the twentieth century. Thus, Henry Vollam Morton appears to apologize for relating the landscape, people and customs of the region in a time-honoured way: “I seem always to be comparing South Africa to Europe, but it is inevitable.”⁴³ He is merely following in the footsteps of the narratives and images that had been circulating for nearly two centuries before he made his contribution to the imperial archive of knowledge about this region.

The perhaps glaringly obvious supposition that one always brings one’s cultural heritage and assumptions to bear on new views and vistas has, nevertheless, important implications for the consideration of how the landscape of this region could be seen and how it could then be subsequently manipulated for more specific and ideological

⁴² Eric Axelson, *South African Explorers* [London, 1954], p. xxii.

⁴³ Henry Vollam Morton, *In Search of South Africa* [London, 1948], pp. 113-4.

ends.⁴⁴ Thus, like the more progressive and self-reflexive texts considered in this study, I aim to provide not just an “image of Africa” but also a self-conscious exploration of the imaginings of Africa and the language and tropes of a cross-cultural encounter with the landscape space of Southern Africa.

⁴⁴ I refer to Tim Youngs for a definition of “ideology.” He regards it as “meaning in the service of power.” See Tim Youngs, *Travellers in Africa : British Travelogues, 1850-1900* [Manchester, 1994], p. 2.

The use of landscape imagery to discuss the artistic and textual engagement of British artists and writers with the space of Southern Africa may seem to reinforce the trite, hackneyed and familiar clichés that regard colonial space as an open territory to be envisaged and colonized by Europeans. Even texts that doubted the benefit or even the legitimacy of the European involvement with the colonial landscape can be criticized for eliminating the native and preserving the idea of a pure, uninhabited land. Chinua Achebe complained that Joseph Conrad merely used “Africa as setting and backdrop which eliminates the African as a human factor.”⁴⁵ Mary Pratt regards this tendency to downplay the confrontation with the native as a typical ploy in much travel writing of the era which negates any unpalatable evidence of racial friction due to the concentration on the safe and secure but “considerably less exciting presentation of the landscape.”⁴⁶ Charles Lawrence, in his preface to an anthology of writings about Africa by British authors, remarks that “often the literary stereotype of the Continent consists of breathtaking landscapes, noble beasts, magnificent flora, but no people!”⁴⁷ Nicholas Thomas has analyzed the depiction of the landscape in Australia. He argues that where the aboriginal inhabitants are represented they are never given the same standing as Europeans. In fact, their human existence is negated: “Aboriginal people are never presented as co-viewers of the landscape, but are rather features within it, and elements of its wildness.”⁴⁸ It seems to me that a similar situation exists in depictions of Southern Africa. James Ryan encapsulates the essence of the issue by remarking that geographical discourse that “emptied lived environments of their human presence and isolated indigenous peoples from their habitats” was aided by techniques of cartographic, literary and visual representation.⁴⁹ By concentrating on the landscape, however, I do not mean to sanction this marginalization of the native African population. Rather, I want to assess the British visual and aesthetic involvement on the terms set out by those artists working in the nineteenth century and its context. Indeed, where appropriate, I will highlight how the

⁴⁵ Quoted in Youngs, *Travellers in Africa*, p. 185.

⁴⁶ Mary Louise Pratt, “Scratches on the Face of the Country; or, What Mr. Barrow Saw in the Land of the Bushmen” in Henry Louis Gates (ed.), *‘Race’, Writing and Difference* [London, 1986], pp. 138-62; p. 141.

⁴⁷ Dorothy Hammond and Alta Jablow, *The Africa That Never Was : Four Centuries of British Writing About Africa* [New York, 1970], p. 3.

⁴⁸ Nicholas Thomas, *Possessions : Indigenous Art/Colonial Culture* [London, 1999], p. 82.

⁴⁹ James R. Ryan, “Imperial Landscapes : photography, geography and British overseas exploration, 1858-1872” in Morag Bell, Robin A. Butlin and Michael Heffernan (eds.), *Geography and Imperialism* [Manchester, 1995], pp. 53-79; p. 63.

strategies of landscape depiction not only speak volumes about the European engagement with the physical space of the region but also with the inhabitants of the area.

I would suggest and emphasize the fact that landscape is of considerable importance in assessing any British aesthetic engagement with colonial spaces. Ryan contends “the very idea of empire in part depended on an idea of landscape, as both controlled space and the means of representing such control, on a global scale.”⁵⁰ More than any other genre it can, I believe, tell us about British self-definition and the attitudes held by artists, travellers and explorers towards new landscape spaces. Referring to the United Kingdom, Stephen Daniels corroborates this notion: “Nowhere else is landscape so freighted with legacy, nowhere else does the very term suggest not simply scenery and *genres de vie* but quintessential national virtues.”⁵¹ The history of politicized landscape in Britain stretches back to Arthurian legend.⁵² The very popularity of landscape imagery in the domestic art market signals its importance as a convenient vehicle for the dissemination of ideas into the cultural bloodstream. By the late eighteenth century, over one third of oil paintings exhibited at the Royal Academy exhibitions were of landscape scenes. And, of course, this does not include the considerable trade in prints and engravings.⁵³ The Critical Review of 1763 gives an insight into the state of the market:

If the French are before us in history engraving [sic], we excel the whole world in that of landscape.⁵⁴

Landscape in Britain, therefore, acquired a particular set of meanings and associations. For Kay Dian Kriz, “landscape painting becomes increasingly important

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 74.

⁵¹ Stephen Daniels, Fields of Vision : Landscape Imagery and National Identity in England and the USA [Cambridge, 1993], p. 8.

⁵² See “Nature, fine arts and aesthetics” in Salim Kemal and Ivan Gaskell (eds.), Landscape, Natural Beauty and the Arts [Cambridge, 1993], pp. 1-18, where the editors discuss Bede’s “*Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*” which tells the story of King Alfred identifying himself and his people with the holy spot at Lindesfarne where King Oswald had fallen. This spot was more green, beautiful and fertile than the rest. This is perhaps an early example of the aesthetic beauty of nature being artificially conjoined with the pillars of order and progress in a society.

⁵³ William Vaughan, British Painting : The Golden Age from Hogarth to Turner [London, 1999], p. 183.

⁵⁴ Quoted in Tim Clayton, “The Print and the Spread of the Picturesque Ideal” in Dana Arnold (ed.), The Picturesque in Late Georgian England : Papers Given at The Georgian Group Symposium, 22nd October 1994 [London, 1995], pp. 11-17; p. 17.

as a site for the production of national identity” in the period.⁵⁵ Perhaps the intrinsic exigencies of the genre facilitate the strategic and calculated use of freedom ideologies, vistas where power and authority can be wielded naturally.⁵⁶ This attitude is preserved well into the twentieth century with Stanley Baldwin seeing in the countryside of Britain, its representation and preservation, the embodiment of “those eternal values from which we must never allow ourselves to be separated.”⁵⁷ D.E. Allen elucidates the value-laden character of landscape imagery and theory, “a taste for nature, in fact, seems to arise of its own accord at a certain point in the maturing of civilisations.”⁵⁸ In the case of the domestic territory of the United Kingdom, the representation of landscape had acquired a plethora of meanings and ideological implications by the end of the eighteenth century. Therefore, its deployment in the context of colonial expansion is hardly surprising. Indeed, the employment of landscape as a vehicle for conveying complex sociological and cultural meanings in South Africa is perhaps best seen in the example of Table Mountain (Map 5; Feature d). Brendan Cole claims:

The Mountain [Table Mountain] can be seen to assume the status of an ‘icon’ personifying the whole of the Cape: as homeland, as beautiful natural wilderness, and its liminal position between Europe and the new Frontiers.⁵⁹

More generally, it appears that a taste for exploring and describing unusual, foreign landscape scenes developed at the same time as British interest in the landscape genre itself. Henri de Valenciennes talks about the growing interest in unusual landscape details and the stunning success of William Hodges’ work from the South Seas proves this to be the case.⁶⁰ The Daniells, a family of travelling artists, were also successful in their pictures of Indian scenery more, it was claimed, due to the public interest in the quirky landscape views presented rather than for any inherent merits of style.⁶¹

⁵⁵ Kay Dian Kriz, *The Idea of the English Landscape Painter : Genius as Alibi in the Early Nineteenth Century* [New Haven, 1997], p. 45.

⁵⁶ See Vaughan, *British Painting*, p. 206.

⁵⁷ Quoted in David Cannadine, “Stanley Baldwin and Francis Brett Young” in David Cannadine, *In Churchill’s Shadow : Confronting the Past in Modern Britain* [London, 2003], pp. 159-85; p. 168.

⁵⁸ David Elliston Allen, *The Naturalist in Britain : A Social History* [Princeton, 1994], p. 23.

⁵⁹ Quoted in Nicolaas Vergunst, *Hoerikwaggo : Images of Table Mountain* [Cape Town, 2002], p. 22.

⁶⁰ See Matthew Craske, *Art in Europe 1700-1830 : A History of the Visual Arts in an Era of Unprecedented Urban Economic Growth* [Oxford, 1997], p. 116.

⁶¹ Thomas Sutton, *The Daniells : Artists and Travellers* [London, 1954], p. 143.

And so landscape imagery forms the basis of this study. However, I will employ the theories of those who have moved beyond the merely formal approach to landscape imagery which Ann Bermingham castigates for having “falsely set the art-historical method outside history and outside ideology.”⁶² For her, as for me, “art history is an ideological process of interpretation.”⁶³ As Anandi Ramamurthy has stated:

Images are historical documents. They do not simply reflect the ideological perspectives of an era, but form part of the process through which these ideologies are produced.⁶⁴

Previous studies of landscape painting privileged technical skill and artistic intention. However, it seems to me that images cannot be interpreted solely in terms of their internal structure.⁶⁵ This study will follow recent critical developments in treating the evolution and development of landscape painting more as a matter of the changing social character of perception which has specific peculiarities in relation to Southern Africa in the nineteenth century.⁶⁶ In the words of Peter Burke, “paintings reveal the variety of values that have been projected onto the land.”⁶⁷ Therefore, my intention in this work is not to establish criteria of aesthetic judgement but to describe the content of these images in relation to the context of the historical milieu in which they produced and to which they were pertaining.

This study builds upon the work of those critics who, like David Matless, have recognized that “the power of landscape resides in it being simultaneously a site of economic, social, political and aesthetic value, with each being of equal importance.”⁶⁸ The term “landscape” as used here has “polysemic resonances.”⁶⁹ This study celebrates and acknowledges its important, yet ambiguous status as a site for the intimate and insistent intermingling of those cultural and physical, social and

⁶² Ann Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology: The English Rustic Tradition, 1740-1860* [London, 1986], p. 2. See also John Barrell, *The Dark Side of the Landscape: The Rural Poor in English Painting, 1730-1840* [Cambridge, 1980].

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁶⁴ Anandi Ramamurthy, *Imperial Persuaders: Images of Africa and Asia in British Advertising* [Manchester, 2003], p. 1

⁶⁵ For a well-balanced account about the process of combining visual analysis of works of art and their imperial context see Giles H.R. Tillotson, *The Artificial Empire: The Indian Landscapes of William Hodges* [Richmond, 2000], pp. 4-5.

⁶⁶ For a discussion of the changing trends in landscape painting studies see Charlotte Klonk, *Science and the Perception of Nature: British Landscape Art in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries* [New Haven, 1996], p. 4.

⁶⁷ Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence* [London, 2001], p. 43.

⁶⁸ David Matless, *Landscape and Englishness* [London, 1998], p. 12.

⁶⁹ See Barbara Bender (ed.), *Landscape: Politics and Perspectives* [Oxford, 1993], p. 3.

topographical features that made the Southern African region come to be seen as a “colonial landscape.”⁷⁰ The landscape of a given region is inextricably involved in a continuous process of social and cultural self-examination. They are “texts” and, like any other text, can be read in order to better understand the concerns, desires and preoccupations of those who made them.⁷¹ Landscape, as this study shows, is an ideological construct. It represents, in the words of Denis Cosgrove, “the way certain people have signified themselves and their world through imagined relationships with nature.”⁷² These texts and landscape images are, it seems to me, symbolic of a certain complex set of cultural values and social associations that were projected onto particular localities over a specific span of time.⁷³ This study aims to determine the ideological basis and the aesthetic means of recording these landscape spaces for cultural deployment, as well as the actual use of those views of the environment of Southern Africa to make the space a site of colonial vision.

In the sphere of imperial and colonial studies, W.J.T. Mitchell has argued that “landscape is the dreamwork of empire.”⁷⁴ Nicholas Thomas puts it more succinctly when he suggests that “landscapes, whether peopled or unpeopled, would seem unavoidably implicated in the culture of colonialism.”⁷⁵ Due to its significant symbolic and metaphoric associations, especially in relation to the British landscape, it is hardly surprising that, in the moment of imperial expansion, European countries, particular Britain, would regard the foreign and strange landscapes of their newly acquired territories as prime sites for the moulding and maintenance of a specific set of power relations and dialogic encounters, between Mother Country or imperial metropolis and the peripheral and liminal spaces of Empire. While landscape views, descriptions and depictions certainly plotted physical territory in Southern Africa, the major thrust of this study will aim to disprove Hugh Ridley’s rather ludicrous assertion that “colonial landscape is a morally and politically neutral topic.”⁷⁶ In general, imperial landscapes were more usefully employed by travellers from the

⁷⁰ See Donald Meinig (ed.), *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes* [Oxford, 1979], p. 2.

⁷¹ See Simon Pugh (ed.), *Reading Landscape : Country - City - Capital* [Manchester, 1990], p. 3.

⁷² Denis Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* [London, 1984], p. 13.

⁷³ Meinig (ed.), *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes*, p. 6.

⁷⁴ W.J.T. Mitchell, “Imperial Landscape” in W.J.T. Mitchell, *Landscape and Power* [Chicago, 1994], pp. 5-35; p. 10.

⁷⁵ Thomas, *Possessions*, p. 24.

⁷⁶ Hugh Ridley, *Images of Imperial Rule* [London, 1983], p. 63

metropolitan European centre as media for expressing and solidifying the latent fantasies, aspirations and emotions generated by imperialism, exploration and geographical displacement. The ideologies and accretions of meaning that accumulated around and led to the growth of British landscape painting, such as the power and authority embodied in the ability to visualize, became easily and comfortably transferable to scenes of the colonial unknown.⁷⁷

This study recognizes the cultural construction of the spaces of empire in the nineteenth century as places constituting what Thomas refers to as an “epistemic lack.”⁷⁸ The freeing of the landscape from the shackles of realistic representation allows for the full use of an imperial geographical imagination. Acknowledging this central fact, I understand the pertinence of the study of the landscape and a “sensitivity towards the significance of place, space and landscape in the constitution of the social life” of Southern Africa in the nineteenth century.⁷⁹ I posit the centrality of landscape representation for the understanding of British ideological, political and cultural relations with the territories of Southern Africa.

This leads us to the consideration of what I mean by “colonial landscape” in relation to Southern Africa in the nineteenth century. Having defined the geographical and chronological limits of the study, as well as having outlined the accumulation of meanings around landscape imagery and description, it behoves me to deal with the terminology which I will use to describe and analyze the images and situations being discussed. Landscape, as I have demonstrated, may be defined by our physical perceptions and visual experiences of it. Yet, it also has to be filtered through the mental and intellectual process of contextualization. To quote Marwyn S. Samuels, “landscapes without contexts would be like books without pages and language.”⁸⁰ This study includes a broad and expansive range of landscape imagery that requires placement in the social, literary and aesthetic context of the British engagement with the landscape of Southern Africa in the nineteenth century. Cultural and artistic factors combine to influence its production and must be taken into account when one

⁷⁷ Vaughan, *British Painting*, p. 206.

⁷⁸ Nicholas Thomas, “Licensed Curiosity : Cook’s Pacific Voyages” in John Elsner and Roger Cardinal (eds.), *The Cultures of Collecting* [London, 1994], pp. 116-36; p. 126

⁷⁹ Thomas, *Possessions*, p. 12.

⁸⁰ Marwyn S. Samuels, “The Biography of the Landscape” in Meinig (ed.), *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes*, pp. 51-88; p. 64.

discusses them. I will consequently employ “landscape” as a shorthand term for those semiotic features of an environmental hinterland and the historical, political and social narratives which they generate and which I, in agreement with Mitchell, see as being “tailor-made for the discourse of imperialism.”⁸¹ I will base my interpretation on D.W. Meinig’s definition of landscape as encompassing “an unity, a wholeness, an integration, of community and environment; man is even part of Nature.”⁸² Thus, the “landscape” that I will be dealing with is a broadly defined site of cultural and social significance which may include those elements of flora and fauna that are normally associated with the stereotypical features of the region. I have considered the representation of plant and animal life in the landscape imagery of the region when they seem to me to embody similar or parallel concerns to those expressed in the rendition of the more topographical elements of the landscape. For this reason, I also employ the word “space” as a convenient indication of where “landscape” should be understood as referring to ephemeral things and animate objects existing in the space of the landscape, as well as the more inert and fixed physical panorama of the landscape with its geological and topographical features. In this study, therefore, “space” and “landscape space” conform to what Darian-Smith *et al* define as a “text upon which histories and cultures are inscribed and interpreted.”⁸³ And it is these spaces, where strange, foreign and other (in this case African) landscapes and their inhabitants are brought together for presentation to the domestic European audience, which are sometimes referred to as “imperial” or “colonial” landscapes.

Again, these terms require some clarification, especially when one considers that the word “imperialism” has undergone at least twelve changes of definition since it first entered common linguistic usage in the 1840s.⁸⁴ In many instances one sees the two words used interchangeably. Especially in relation to landscape, one might imagine that both refer to a foreign territorial space which is being viewed with European eyes, recorded in relation to European aesthetic and visual criteria and administered according to European legal and social mores. They should be understood to mean this in this study. Notwithstanding this, nuances exist between these terms in the area

⁸¹ Mitchell, “Imperial Landscape”, p. 15.

⁸² D.W. Meinig, “Reading the Landscape” in Meinig (ed.), *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes*, pp. 195-244; p. 228.

⁸³ Kate Darian-Smith, Liz Gunner and Sarah Nuttall (eds.), *Text, Theory, Space : Land, Literature and History in South Africa and Australia* [London, 1996], p. 5.

⁸⁴ See Koebner and Schmidt, *Imperialism : The Story of a Political Word, 1840-1960*, p. xiii.

of post-colonial studies. “Imperial” is perhaps more meaningful in the context of metropolitan rivalries and in the overt stampede to acquire swathes of land that characterized late-nineteenth-century European political policy. By contrast, “colonial” is a term that is more applicable to the dialogue that took place between Europe and its other; the metropolitan centre and the periphery. Thus, it has the resonance of dealing with the impact of living, travelling and working in another country and landscape on the European and the consequent issues of identity that this raises.⁸⁵ I will employ the term “colonial landscape” as the most appropriate to describe the areas and vistas that I will be discussing in the body of the text.

⁸⁵ Gail Ching-Liang Low, White Skin/Black Masks : Representations and Colonialism [London, 1996].

Having touched upon the plethora of theoretical and methodological concerns that have grown up around the study of landscape painting and imagery and having posited the notion of a “colonial landscape,” I believe that a brief discussion of the theoretical underpinnings of this study will repay some attention. As a study which looks at the issues surrounding landscape representation in the context of the British exploration of, and expansion into Southern Africa through travel writing and visual imagery, this work could be said to have entered a particularly convoluted morass of tricky theoretical issues. Charlotte Klonk warns that “to ask how a culture represents what it knows, and how what it knows affects what it sees, is to open a Pandora’s box of methodological questions.”⁸⁶ Nevertheless, I have shown how landscape imagery is a particular social construct and can, in effect, be regarded as a text. Thus, I would like to tease out the more pertinent issues with regard to my methodological approach before I proceed to show how this can be applied to visual imagery in general and the archive of knowledge about nineteenth-century Southern Africa in particular.

The existence of the British Empire or some metaphysical idea of an imperial project is a basic, perhaps even over-simplistic, assumption of this study. However, as Reill and Miller point out, “empire” and the notions, ideas and theories that that word embodies are in part mental or intellectual constructions.⁸⁷ Quite simply, it is a way of conceiving (and perceiving) the world which accords a privileged status to forms of knowledge, ways of preserving that knowledge and the “canons of rationality” that predominate in metropolitan imperial centres. The central fact of imperial epistemological and strategic control of these spaces is a fundamental factor in the assessment of how landscape imagery that was produced for a domestic, metropolitan European audience operated and will be fully assessed in Section I. In relation to the nineteenth century, Joseph Conrad embodied the central intellectual fact of the existence of Empire in writing to his publisher, William Blackwood. For Conrad, imperialism and its related discourses and repercussions was “the subject of our age distinctly.”⁸⁸ P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkin make the point more forcefully:

⁸⁶ Charlotte Klonk, *Science and the Perception of Nature: British Landscape Art in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century* [New Haven, 1996], p. 5.

⁸⁷ David Philip Miller and Peter Hans Reill (eds.), *Visions of Empire : Voyages, Botany and Representations of Nature* [Cambridge, 1996], p. 2.

⁸⁸ Quoted in Watt, *Conrad in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 139.

Imperialism, then, was neither an adjunct to British history nor an expression of a particular phase of its industrial development but an integral part of the configuration of British society, which it both reinforced and expressed.⁸⁹

And Catherine Hall suggests that “Empire was part of the everyday life of the English, part of their imaginative landscape, part of their sense of themselves, part of their mapping of the globe.”⁹⁰ These concerns are mirrored in today’s critical reappraisal of this drive to empire, by a concomitant impulse to understand the mechanics of empire. And so, the notions of colonial discourse analysis and post-colonial theoretical apparatus become the subjects of our age.

The conjoining in this study of aesthetic objects, produced and assessed according to the criteria of high art, with an appreciation of how these self-same products worked in the field of identity and geo-politics is a relatively new area for academic enquiry. I am interested in the embedded nature of identity in various historical contexts and in the impact of cultural and geographical dislocation and displacement on those notions of identity. In part, these new strategies of assessing identity in relation to geo-political situation are based on the by now canonical status of Edward Said and his work on how Europe perceived, constructed and represented its “Other.”⁹¹ And yet, to ascribe all the methodological nuances approached in this study to a “Saidean” reading is to simply reinforce and perpetuate the very same glib and uncritical epithets, adjectives and definitions that Said himself railed against. For Said’s work is far from perfect in itself and when applied to situations at one remove from his direct area of concern (the Middle East), it is fraught with problems. Jeremy Black, quite correctly in my view, draws attention to some of the limits of Said’s work which “privileged certain chronologies and put stress on power and conflict in relations, thereby failing to give due weight to cultural interaction and its impact.”⁹²

Concentrating on the landscape of the region privileges and elevates this aspect of the colonial encounter above others. However, I focus on this issue of landscape in a way that accounts for its importance in colonial context without losing sight of the political resonances which its representation embodies.

⁸⁹ P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, British Imperialism : Innovation and Expansion, 1688-1914 [London, 1993], p. 46.

⁹⁰ Catherine Hall, “Going a-Trolloping : imperial man travels the Empire” in Clare Midgley (ed.), Gender and Imperialism [Manchester, 1998], pp. 180-199; p.180.

⁹¹ The principal catalyst of this phenomenon was the publication of Said’s book, Orientalism in 1978.

⁹² Jeremy Black, Europe and the World, 1650-1830 [London, 2002], p. 2.

The canonical status of Said's work as a critical and cultural centrepiece of imperial and colonial cultural studies can be explained by the impact of his arguments. The force of his analysis still stands up reasonably well. For him, the imperial engagement of Europe with the rest of the world was to penetrate and influence the cultural products of Europe so much so that the central fact of Empire became part of its "texture of linguistic and cultural practice."⁹³ Colonized peoples and imperial spaces were crucial ingredients in the general construction and consolidation of European identity, its master narratives and its view of itself. However, I expand on this work in both chronological directions. For, to my mind, despite its importance, Said's work is just one landmark on a cultural and critical journey that informs this study of Southern African landscape in the nineteenth century. As Ramamurthy has pointed out Said himself acknowledges his debts to his scholarly predecessors.⁹⁴ Hegel had admonished scholars to question the images presented to us and not blindly accept their veracity without recourse to a more critical examination of the circumstances of their production judging that "truth is not like stamped coin issued ready from the mint."⁹⁵ This view of history and its images holds especially true for cultural products. A thorough investigation of their contextual basis is a prerequisite for the understanding of any images or texts. This is one of the central tenets of Saidean methodology, based on the ideas of Michel Foucault who taught that the constraints of epistemic or discursive determination outweigh any impact of authorial originality.⁹⁶ Nevertheless, it also follows quite naturally from the work of Quatremère de Quincy, writing at the beginning of the nineteenth century who posited the historical specificity of cultural objects and of the necessity, if they are to be understood and appreciated, of seeing them within complex social contexts.⁹⁷ Thus, I agree with Laura Chrisman's view of the position of imperial discourses and their understanding in studies such as this. She posits the complexity and heterogeneity of such

⁹³ Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* [London, 1993], p. 83.

⁹⁴ Ramamurthy, *Imperial Persuaders*, p. 21, n. 14.

⁹⁵ Quoted in Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* [London, 1990], p. 99.

⁹⁶ See Martin Jay, "In the Empire of the Gaze: Foucault and the Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought" in David Couzens Hoy (ed.), *Foucault: A Critical Reader* [Oxford, 1986], pp. 175-204.

⁹⁷ This was forwarded in his "Considerations morales sur la destination des ouvrages de l'art" (1815). See Paul Mattick (ed.), *Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics and the Reconstruction of Art* [Cambridge, 1993], p. 6.

discourses. Her advice to the student of such colonial discourses as landscape imagery is to move away from a consideration of the products as mere images or allegories of otherness. According to her, this will facilitate:

an analysis of narrative structures and processes, attending to the diverse, overdetermined and contradictory formal dynamics and ideological codes which produce certain forms of Othering but which are not reducible to it.⁹⁸

For the purpose of this study, I will be concentrating on a range of cultural products that were inextricably, necessarily and inevitably bound up with imperial concerns, self-projection and definition – those of landscape images and descriptions. I will be performing colonial discourse analysis on these. In other words, the discourse of colonialism and imperialism bound up with these cultural products, images and texts will be exfoliated in order to arrive at a better understanding of the role of visual culture in the construction of an ideology of the landscape. The analysis of these products will be a fruitful way of assessing and explaining British attitudes to the landscape of colonial otherness and, by implication, the value ascribed to the landscape by the metropolitan culture. Many of the images and the majority of the texts considered here were circulated in the context of travel writing. It was a crucial part not only of the nineteenth-century encounter with colonial spaces, but also with the domestic metropolitan patterns of reading and entertainment. Even by the end of the eighteenth century, travel writing was second only to novels in numbers sold.⁹⁹ Beau Riffenburgh has suggested that the most popular and powerful image-makers of unknown lands and potential colonial spaces prior to the media-saturated twentieth century were:

authors of books, both fact (such as expedition accounts and geographical treatises) and fiction (including novels, plays, and epic poems). Books were rarely read by vast numbers of people – the quantity was even more limited than the relatively small literate population – but what they reported gained acceptance far beyond the reading public.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Laura Chrisman, "The Imperial Unconscious? Representations of Imperial Discourse" in *Critical Quarterly*, Vol. 32, No. 3, pp. 38-58; p. 40.

⁹⁹ Dennis Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing* [Princeton, N.J., 1991], p. 26, n.2.

¹⁰⁰ Beau Riffenburgh, *The Myth of the Explorer: The Press, Sensationalism, and Geographical Discovery* [London, 1993], p. 9.

A recent upsurge in interest in travel writing has led to this genre being analyzed using the critical tools of post-structuralism and post-colonialism with the result that many travel accounts can be read as an intricate assemblage of textual and visual practices that “disclose the gestures of an imperial stylistics.”¹⁰¹ And many of the late nineteenth-century adventure novels written by people like Haggard and Conrad, which superseded in popularity the factual travelogues considered in this study, are very much based on similar tropes and concerns.¹⁰² The core issues of writing and imagining the foreign other, in this case in relation to Southern Africa in the nineteenth century, become of paramount importance and concern to many authors and artists across a range of media. This type of writing, travel literature, its fictional adventure spin-offs and its visual cohorts, presents us with a treasure trove of issues and concerns. The exhaustive potentialities of travel writing, description and depiction, as will become apparent during the course of the study, are pregnant with meaning.¹⁰³ For the intricate layering of motifs, the allegorical resonances and the self-reflexivity of the textual encounter with the landscape of the colonial space is, I believe, informed and enriched by its consideration in conjunction with an in-depth analysis of the visual products that were equally implicated in this encounter. In agreement with Simon Gikandi however, I would suggest that by considering the extremities of the Empire, the far-flung spaces of an unusual, alien environment, one can better understand the range of values and distinctive national and aesthetic concerns appended to the landscape imagery by a British audience.¹⁰⁴ This study builds on the work of Said and others who posit the unbalanced nature of the colonial encounter between European traveller and the landscape space of the imperial environment. That this ideological construct should also exist concomitantly in text and image is an assumption of this study.

I envisage my work following the realignment of cultural studies in relation to colonial concerns that has been aided Said’s groundbreaking work. I argue that the

¹⁰¹ James Duncan and Derek Gregory (eds.), *“Writes of Passage”: Reading Travel Writing* [London, 1999], p. 3.

¹⁰² Andrea White, *Joseph Conrad and the Adventure Tradition : Constructing and Deconstructing the Imperial Subject* [Cambridge, 1993], p. 6.

¹⁰³ Steve Clarke (ed.), *Travel Writing and Empire : Postcolonial Theory in Transit* [London, 1999], p. 3.

¹⁰⁴ Simon Gikandi, *Maps of Englishness : Writing Identity in the Culture of Colonialism* [New York, 1996], p. 8.

colonial landscape space was not just a vehicle or a tool used solely to convey European ideas about other landscapes - those potentially fertile fields for colonization and religious conversion. This study highlights how colonial landscape played a fundamental role in the British cultural self-awareness. By a study of the visual products associated with the periphery of empire we can get at some of the core issues of metropolitan social and cultural identity. Whereas Said sees these products as expressive of an imperial drive to control, colonize and exploit, I hope to highlight the insufficiency and one-dimensionality of this approach. David Cannadine argues for the reciprocity of imperial studies and the fundamental part that Britain as an island nation and cultural unit forms within the imperial structure that bears her name.¹⁰⁵ Thus, building on the advice of Cannadine and others, I will show the multiplicity of meanings, the tortuous nuances of applications that can be ascribed to colonial landscape imagery. And in this approach, I feel that I will be performing something more akin to those students of colonial identity politics who see the United Kingdom and her Empire as a complex, organic whole.

¹⁰⁵ David Cannadine, Ornamentalism : How the British Saw Their Empire [London 2001], p. xx.

The range of theory and its application to both images of landscape and issues of colonial engagement is so broad as to facilitate the writing of many theses in itself. The marrying of theories of landscape and the political reality of imperial encroachment is the ultimate goal of this inquiry. And yet, it takes place against the backdrop of, and draws from, an archive of knowledge and is presented in several different media that themselves require some explanation. Drawing on a large corpus of published and unpublished primary material, this study is an innovative and original investigation into historical products, evidence and milieux within the framework outlined above. These objects of aesthetic interest are assumed to be intricately involved in a process of the intellectual and cultural colonization of the territory of Southern Africa and yet are frequently ignored or denigrated by cultural historians more interested in the safer, more secure resource of the archival document.

Peter Burke has usefully characterized this reliance on “sources” by imagining the historian filling her bucket from the stream of truth with the histories, narratives and stories becoming ever more pure, uncontaminated and “historically accurate” the nearer one penetrates to the origin.¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, one cannot have the objective of analyzing the circumstances of the past and the complex cultural relations that existed, even in a geographically limited and relatively underpopulated area like Southern Africa in the nineteenth century, without recourse to some primary material. Any analysis, visual or aesthetic, of the pictures and prints from this region cannot hope to inform the reader of the complex, multifarious role occupied by the landscape in the British colonial encounter without considering and assessing some historical evidence. This study analyzes the place of visual culture in the construction of an imperial archive of knowledge that also included fictional and factual travel writing. My conception of history is one where cultural products form a vital part in informing our knowledge and understanding of the mechanics of imperialism. I assess this theoretical postulation in greater depth in Section I where I relate the compilation of a visual and textual archive of knowledge to the specific circumstances of Southern Africa in the nineteenth century.

¹⁰⁶ Burke, *Eyewitnessing*, p. 13. The Dutch historian Gustaf Renier (1892-1962) suggests that this idea of “sources” might be better understood if it were to be replaced by the more pragmatic goal of trying to identify traces of the past in the present.

This virtual archive contains texts, fictional and factual, travelogue and narrative, which are written in parallel to and mirror many of the concerns that I identify in the visual images considered in this study. As Yuri Lotman argues, the “question of the influence of the text on historical knowledge cannot be avoided.”¹⁰⁷ Moreover, I would suggest that by virtue of the nature and status of many of the images, the textual basis of the colonial encounter with Empire is crucial. This study works to discredit Stephen Bann’s assertion that “the visual image proves nothing – or whatever it does prove is too trivial to count as a component in the historical analysis.”¹⁰⁸ It will go some way to stemming the “pantextuality” – the notion that our only access to the past is through texts and that the study of texts is the only genuine and justifiable subject of historical enquiry – that can pervade historical analyses.¹⁰⁹ Many of the images considered here were created as illustrations for books of travel, hunting narratives or as scientific specimen drawings to be explained by an accompanying textual account. In this, they will be seen to conform to Olive Schreiner’s assessment of the value of images: “Words are gases which need to be condensed into pictures.”¹¹⁰ This process, involving the linking of literary art with visual objects has been shown to have existed in the case of Gainsborough. According to Marcia Pointon, his work owes as much to contemporary English literature as to the more commonly cited pictorial precedents in Dutch and Flemish landscape art.¹¹¹ In real terms, therefore, the verbal or textual account – that which employs words and phrases – forms a symbiotic relationship with the visual impressions of the same landscape space. They work hand in hand to open up, visualize and describe the space of an unknown region. These textual accounts will be employed to buttress and support analysis and evidence of the pictorial historical sources. By co-relating and reorganizing the characteristics and conventions of the various media that were available to explorers and travellers, we can achieve, in the words of Duncan and Gregory, a more comprehensive “triangulation of the space of representation.”¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ Yuri Lotman, “Historical Laws and the Influence of the Text” in Yuri Lotman, *Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture*, translated by Ann Shukman [London, 1990], pp. 221-44; p. 221.

¹⁰⁸ Burke, *Eyewitnessing*, pp. 183-4.

¹⁰⁹ See Nicholas Jardine and Emma Spray, “The natures of cultural history” in Nicholas Jardine, Jim Secord and Emma Spray (eds.), *Cultures of Natural History* [Cambridge, 1996], pp. 3-13; p. 9.

¹¹⁰ Olive Schreiner, *The Story of an African Farm* [1883; Mineola, NY, 1998], p. 158.

¹¹¹ Marcia Pointon, “Gainsborough and the Landscape of Retirement” in *Art History*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (Dec. 1979), pp. 441-55; p. 442.

¹¹² Duncan and Gregory (eds.), *Writes of Passage*, p. 4.

Thus, both text and image should be seen as part of what I term the “imperial archive” of knowledge about the imperial space of Southern Africa.

The textual primary sources that I employ are therefore generally not those mouldering old parchments found in libraries and state archives that purport to forensically reconstruct the minutiae of historical reality. Rather, I rely for a large part on those texts that, although very rare and difficult to retrieve today, had much cultural cachet value in the nineteenth century. These are books of travel writing relating to Southern Africa. We have seen how the Cape of Good Hope was presented as a well-trodden territory for the writer even in the mid-eighteenth century. Nevertheless, some texts considered here had a very small circulation. For example, the edition of just 350 books for Captain Henry Butler’s work, as confirmed in August 1842, was not unusually small.¹¹³ Baron Rothschild’s book was published for private circulation amongst friends.¹¹⁴ My fortune in having the vast resources of Trinity College Dublin Library at my disposal explains the large number of books which I have retrieved and identified relating to Southern Africa. Its status as a copyright library since 1801 makes it perhaps the best, if not the only feasible place to study the kaleidoscope of texts dealt with in this work. This consideration of history with reference to books as sources provides us with a new insight into the circumstances of historical identity formation. The use of these travelogues to support my analysis may grate against the traditional archive-based historian. And yet, in his bibliographical compendium devoted to Southern Africa, Sidney Mendelssohn had already acknowledged and affirmed the appropriateness of this methodology for the student of Southern African history:

Now it is true that the book is not generally so satisfactory a source of history as the archive; the traveller is often prejudiced, he often repeats gossip without sifting it, he is prone to form views without sufficient information. All this should make the historian cautious, patient, analytic in his temper. But so proceeding he will gain much from contemporary authors that he will not find in Documents of State. He will get the colour of the life of the time; he will get

¹¹³ I will be dealing with the archive material that relates to Butler in the Trinity College Library, filed in Box OLS x-2-171. Hereafter it will be cited as TCD and according to correspondent, addressee, date and position in that file. Butler to Ackermann, 27th August 1842; TCD, No. 30, p. 4.

¹¹⁴ Baron Ferdinand Rothschild, *Three Weeks in South Africa. A Diary* [1895, printed for private circulation].

the popular view; he will get habits and customs; details of dress; glimpses into character; dramatic incidents; a thousand and one things which gives vividness and veracity to history – without which history is bleached, desiccated, lifeless, dull.¹¹⁵

It is the prejudices and cultural assumptions in relation to landscape vision and topographical usage that interest me most here. The vivacity and vitality evident in books destined for public consumption betrays the kinds of attitude to landscape, and the way that ideas about environmental surroundings fitted in with the general cultural, aesthetic and intellectual existence of the European travelling, working or living at the periphery of the British Empire in the nineteenth century. Mendelssohn's paean to the interest which such travel literature has is quite true. Despite the seemingly endless tomes that I needed to wade through in order to discover the attitudes to landscape and environment amongst Britons in Southern Africa, no two were the same. Each brought its own peculiarities and its own sense of the joy of discovery to the reader. Thus, the finished text of this study may somewhat misrepresent the true nature of these "sources." They are ever-varying, diverse and endlessly interesting both for what they tell us about the culture of exploring, settling and administering Southern Africa in the nineteenth century but also, for what they tell us about those Europeans who went travelling in new imperial spaces and of the values, concerns and assumptions they took with them into these *terrae incognitae*. Mendelssohn's apology for the use of contemporary textual sources in the study of history seems appropriate:

They [books] all bring their tributes, large or small, to the treasure-house of our history; we must sift them and winnow them no doubt; but if we treat them fairly and particularly we shall have our abundant reward – that is, if the real life of the past – in its form, its colour as it was lived – is what we seek to know.¹¹⁶

Having taken the textual basis of this study to incorporate and encompass the travel literature of the nineteenth century, it follows logically that those accounts not based solely on fact, but having equal pertinence for the student of colonial landscape, must also be assessed. Gail Ching-Liang Low makes the point that "boundaries between

¹¹⁵ Sidney Mendelssohn, *South African Bibliography*, introduced by Ian D. Colvin, 2 vols. [London, 1910], Vol 1, p. xxiv-v.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. xxv.

different forms of writing – travel narratives, adventure genres and scientific treatises – were more fluid than perhaps we have been accustomed to thinking.”¹¹⁷ Stephan Gray observes that the peculiarities of the South African situation led to “many mixed genres [being] created.”¹¹⁸ And the authors of a major work on the British textual relationship with Africa, its people and its landscapes, The Africa That Never Was, see no need to consider the two separately. For them, as for me in this study, “there was no need to treat fiction and non-fiction separately since both are governed by the same tradition.”¹¹⁹ The status of novels and fictional accounts in relation to the landscape of Southern Africa may be more widely known than the images or texts associated with the earlier part of the century. Yet, I would argue that they are congenitally related and emanating from the same cultural fountainhead. Hayden White makes the important point, which I hope this study goes some way towards redressing:

the very distinction between imaginative and realistic writing and between fictional and factual discourse, on the basis of which historiographical writing had been analysed since its disengagement from rhetoric in the early nineteenth century [needs] to be reassessed and reconceptualized.¹²⁰

The textual primary sources for this study will be used in parallel with detailed visual analysis of images pertaining to the colonial encounter with the African landscape. In visual terms, these paintings, drawings and prints, although non-verbal signs, are still bathed by, suspended in, and cannot be entirely segregated from the elements of speech. The status of images as reservoirs from which to retrieve the evidence of the historical past has been somewhat overshadowed, both by the pervasiveness of literature relative to Southern Africa, as noted by Thomas Astley above and also by the privileged status of the text in Western epistemology. However, Niall Ferguson makes an important point regarding the status of the visual in the expansion of imperial consciousness among the metropolitan populace:

The iconography of Empire was no less ubiquitous [than textual tales of Empire], from the romanticized battle scenes rendered on canvas by Lady

¹¹⁷ Ching-Liang Low, White Skin/Black Masks, p. 2.

¹¹⁸ Gray, Southern African Literature, p. 8.

¹¹⁹ Hammond and Jablow, The Africa That Never Was, p. 7.

¹²⁰ Hayden White, “‘Figuring the nature of the times deceased’: Literary Theory and Historical Writing” in Ralph Cohen (ed.), The Future of Literary Theory [New York, 1989], pp. 19-43, p. 23.

Butler and exhibited in grandiose new museums, to the imperial kitsch that advertised everyday articles of consumption.¹²¹

Jeffrey Auerbach discusses this phenomenon and concludes that “synthetic, analytical literature on the art of the Empire pales in comparison with that on its other aspects [and] the history of the art of the British Empire remains to be written.”¹²² Alfred Gordon-Brown has catalogued the limited number of artists working in Southern Africa during the nineteenth century.¹²³ Therefore, the images that I use are inexorably related to and dependent on those textual accompaniments. Yet, this dependency should not blind us to the fact that visual images were still quite widespread and not necessarily secondary to the text. Indeed, the work of the British landscape painter who travelled abroad was one of the principal means by which the Victorian public’s mental image of places such as Africa, India and Australia was formed.¹²⁴ John Bonehill has recently suggested that imagery with a colonial theme may have actively been sought after by exhibition organizers in order to satiate the “appetite of metropolitan culture for knowledge of its colonial interests.”¹²⁵ They could be stand-alone independent images without any textual accompaniment whatsoever. My analysis will include all these various types of images, using the accompanying text where appropriate and applying and relating diverse textual accounts to images where I feel that this informs the argument. The Daniells commented upon the huge trade in visual images in India illustrating the pervasiveness of the visual.¹²⁶ And, even in unpromising Cape Town, Thomas Baines was kept reasonably busy by selling the “never-failing ‘Cape Town with Table Bay and Mountain.’”¹²⁷ Therefore, this study will use images, in an unapologetically

¹²¹ Niall Ferguson, *Empire : How Britain Made the Modern World* [London, 2004], p. 256.

¹²² Jeffrey Auerbach, “Art and Empire” in Robin W. Winks (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire : Volume 5 – Historiography* [Oxford, 1999], pp. 571-83; p. 571.

¹²³ See Alfred Gordon-Brown, *Pictorial Africana* [Cape Town, 1975]. In this survey text Gordon-Brown estimates that among the artists working at the Cape between 1795 and 1875 there were 136 professional painters, 154 professional engravers, 136 military draughtsmen, 21 civil servants, 41 missionaries, 30 visitors from India, 64 local amateurs, 23 travellers and 20 botanists with the remainder being made up of various regional amateurs (pp. 12-13).

¹²⁴ See Tim Barringer, “Imperial Vision : Responses to India and Africa in Victorian Art and Design” in John M. MacKenzie, *The Victorian Vision : Inventing New Britain* [London, 2001], pp. 315-333; p. 317.

¹²⁵ John Bonehill, “‘This Hapless Adventurer’: Hodges and the London art world” in Geoff Quilley and John Bonehill (eds.), *William Hodges 1744-1797: The Art of Exploration* [London, 2004], pp. 9-14; p. 10.

¹²⁶ Sutton, *The Daniells*, p. 21.

¹²⁷ Thomas Baines, *Journal of Residence in Africa, 1842-1853*, edited by R.F. Kennedy, 2 vols. [Cape Town, 1961-64]; Vol. 1, p. 9.

inter-disciplinary setting, in order to explain the British cultural and intellectual appropriation of the landscape of Southern Africa in the nineteenth century.

The range of professions involved in visual image-making and identified by Alfred Gordon-Brown points not only to the fact that the recording of the landscape of Southern Africa was practised by a wide and diverse proportion of the European population, but also that the concerns and issues relating to the each profession would necessarily influence the portrayal of the scenery – each bringing his or her own ideas about why a landscape ought to be recorded and how that might be effected.

Therefore, different ideas impinged upon the artistic recording of the landscape. In this, the artistic and visual representation of Southern Africa conforms to Auerbach's notions about the historiography of the art of the British Empire. For him, this has "not only paralleled and reflected changes in the Empire, but can be expressed in terms of the Empire's changing needs and functions."¹²⁸ This notion about the role and place of the art of the Empire negates its aesthetic qualities and concentrates on what it can tell us about the contemporary political and social circumstances and will be further explored in Section III. In many ways, this approach was pioneered by Bernard Smith who dealt with the British representation of Australasia and the Pacific Ocean. He emphasized the links between art, economic developments and social change, rather than concentrating solely on their aesthetic merits. Smith chronicled the attempts of European artists to attune their perceptions to a new environment and in effect posited that all perception is heavily preconditioned by training and culture.

In the 1834 advertisement for their Oriental Annual, the Daniells express the hope that their visual products, their drawings and prints, will prove to be as useful in the library as in the drawing-room. For travellers on the periphery of Empire it seems that images were, or should be seen to be, more than a "mere elegant trifle." The same applies to the art produced in the context of Southern Africa. In launching his book, The Kafir Wars and the British Settlers in South Africa, Thomas Bowler attempted to appeal to a variety of tastes:

The artist submits his work to the British and Colonial public in the hope that, if not found very useful in the library among more exhausting [sic] books of travel, it will be thought ornamental in the drawing-room.¹²⁹

¹²⁸ Auerbach, "Art and Empire", p. 572.

¹²⁹ Thomas Bowler, The Kafir Wars and the British Settlers in South Africa. A Series of Picturesque Views from original sketches by T.W. Bowler [London : Day and Son Ltd., 1865], Preface.

In a similar vein, one of the correspondents with Captain Henry Butler lauds the Irishman's achievement in presenting an illustrated book of hunting scenes. Thus, Charles Coxe writes, in a letter preserved in the TCD archives:

Allow me before concluding this to express my admiration of the work which is well worthy a place on every Drawing-room Table.¹³⁰

The role of visual imagery in the representation of the landscape of Southern Africa was not seen solely as aesthetic interest in topographical novelty. Dr William Fehr, one of the doyens of nineteenth-century South African art, maintains, in describing the work of Thomas Bowler:

By painting topical events of the moment, he arouses their curiosity in much the same way as we enjoy topical photographs illustrating our daily news. We may well owe it to this circumstance that many of his pictures are not merely the history of painting in his day, but are also the painting of history.¹³¹

Another important professional artist of the period, Thomas Baines, cultivated a similar image of himself as a mere journalistic recorder of the landscape. Wallis, one of his first biographers, tells us that during a lecture at Highgate Literary and Scientific Society, Baines said: "I am simply an artist telling them what I have seen as truthfully as I know how."¹³² His published material and those journals and diaries he intended for public consumption follow the same pattern. His Journal of Residence is a typical example of this disavowal of aesthetic considerations:

...from my want of artistic education, my sketches must possess many defects of which at present I am perhaps unconscious. The only merit I claim for them is that of being as faithful to the character of the country as my ability will permit.¹³³

And this critical view of his artwork recurs at the turn of the twentieth century, where he is described in his works as:

[bringing] vividly before his readers, both with pen and pencil, the most striking characteristics of the races, the flora, and the fauna of the more southerly portions of the vast continent of Africa, before that partition amongst

¹³⁰ Coxe to Butler, 25th July 1841; TCD, No. 31.

¹³¹ Quoted in Frank and Edna Bradlow, Thomas Bowler of the Cape of Good Hope [Cape Town, 1955], pp. 12-13.

¹³² J.P.R. Wallis, Thomas Baines of King's Lynn, Explorer and Artist, 1820-1875 [London, 1941], p. 240.

¹³³ Baines, Journal of Residence, Vol. 1, p. 1.

the European Powers which has taken place in the last few years, and has done so much to obliterate native characteristics.¹³⁴

This trend continues with R.F. Kennedy asserting in 1950 that Baines' sole objective was "to reproduce faithfully that which he saw."¹³⁵ Therefore, in the critical comment about his work Baines is seen to have achieved his stated objective of truthfulness. Similarly, the images being assessed in this study were seen as reflections of the times and clear indicators of the historical truth.

The concern for realism and the variety of amateurs recording the landscape leads to some fundamental questions. The predilection for truthful representation and the use of visual imagery for ostensibly documentary means heralds what Barbara Stafford calls the "art of fact" and a substitution of the romantic and fantastical ideas of the early nineteenth century with a set of aesthetic notions altogether more realistic and concerned with the perceptual and phenomenological actuality of the surrounding world.¹³⁶ And yet, in visual imagery, as least as much as the travel literature which it so often accompanies, one finds ambiguity and ambivalence. Indeed, Dennis Porter argues, in a statement that could as easily be applied to colonial landscape imagery as to text, "Nowhere perhaps as much as in the field of travel writing, in fact, is the fundamental 'ambiguity' of 'representation' more apparent." He continues, "to represent the world is a political as well as an aesthetic-cognitive activity."¹³⁷ The deciphering of this relationship between aesthetic products of a visual nature, their textual companions and the historical context of their production is the fundamental objective of this study.

I will suggest that colonial conquest and control were not just based on the power of superior arms. Rather, it was facilitated and strengthened by cultural technologies of rule. John MacKenzie acknowledges this fact:

¹³⁴ N. Bell, *Heroes of Discovery in South Africa* [London, 1899], p. 230.

¹³⁵ Quoted in Jane Carruthers and Marion Arnold, *The Life and Work of Thomas Baines* [Vlaeberg, 2000], p. 23.

¹³⁶ Barbara Maria Stafford, *Voyage into Substance : Art, Science, Nature and the Illustrated Travel Account, 1760-1840* [Cambridge, MA, 1984], p. iv.

¹³⁷ Porter, *Haunted Journeys*, pp. 14-15.

Many people use art as a way of coming to terms with their environment, with religions or political ideas, and with social relations. This is particularly true of colonial systems.¹³⁸

Obviously, the narratives of travel were crucial to this, especially in Southern Africa. And, as Nicholas Thomas suggests, visual material was not considered as an accompaniment or addendum but rather as an integral part of the exposition of the foreign landscape: "Voyage publications were extremely popular [and] engravings were considered crucial to the success of such works."¹³⁹ Even today, Alain De Botton acknowledges that "perhaps the most effective way in which our sense of what to look for in a scene can be enriched is through visual art."¹⁴⁰ The interplay between text and image had become an increasingly important part of British artistic culture, acknowledged even by the custodian of Fine Arts himself, Sir Joshua Reynolds.¹⁴¹ Robert G. David makes the compelling case for reading, analyzing and interpreting literature, art and photography together in order to better understand the travel archive and the information that it can tell us about the imperial processes of the nineteenth century.¹⁴²

This study does not attempt to restrict itself within the boundaries of traditional art history. It is an art historical work that draws on the tools and strategies and evidence provided by related disciplines in order to offer a more informed and insightful consideration of the visual products of the British encounter with the Southern African landscape in the nineteenth century. It cannot be easily pigeon-holed. Its uninhibited scope to range across modern disciplinary boundaries should not be regarded as a drawback. In fact, I hope that this approach will serve to present a more truthful and rounded appreciation of the whole issue under discussion and as a way of preserving to some degree the original strategies, techniques and cultural assumptions of the creators of the texts and images. These people would have considered it quite natural to have their drawings and paintings used in conjunction and collaboration with written descriptions. The direction of such visual products at audiences perhaps

¹³⁸ John M. MacKenzie, "Art and the Empire" in P.J. Marshall (ed.), *The Cambridge Illustrated History of the British Empire* [Cambridge, 1996], pp. 296-316; p. 296.

¹³⁹ Nicholas Thomas, "Licensed Curiosity", p. 118

¹⁴⁰ Alain De Botton, *The Art of Travel* [London, 2003], p. 187.

¹⁴¹ Vaughan, *British Painting in the Golden Age*, pp. 9-10.

¹⁴² Robert G. David, *The Arctic in the British Imagination, 1818-1914* [Manchester, 2000], p. 2.

more interested in the realistic, scientific or informative aspect of the work than in its aesthetic value would also have been quite normal.

As outlined above, the role of art is central to the construction of an ideologically loaded imagining of a non-European landscape. The visual qualities of a work may be seen solely in terms of how they were conditioned to reflect and highlight the dominant and overriding political and economic context. However, this underplays the role of the visual in the intellectual process of familiarization and cultural appropriation. Again, Auerbach makes the valid point that many studies devoted to an analysis of art in the context of the British Empire descend to the level of “narrativity, [being] overly concerned with issues of art production at the expense of thematic and critical analysis.”¹⁴³

This study benefits, I believe, from a rigorous visual analysis of the works dealt with. The virtues of close observation and prescient critical comment should not be mutually exclusive with an inter-disciplinary approach. The unique qualities of an art historical analysis can yield much that is of interest to the student of the ideological role of the landscape in Southern Africa in the nineteenth century. In order to highlight this, and by way of introducing some of the salient points of an art historical visual analysis, I would like to show how a visual analysis can be combined with a reading of the work which sets it in its imperial and ideological context. I will show how an appreciation of the compositional nuances and particularities of pictorial construction might be used to corroborate some of the theoretical points discussed above. MacKenzie concludes:

members of the dominant group invariably use art as a device to explain and justify their power, to express the mystique of rulers, and to illustrate their knowledge and command of the natural world.¹⁴⁴

Landscape views are particularly susceptible to ways of regarding the environment according to theoretical and ideological ends. Landscape painting is, according to Julian Thomas, a representation of a place which alienates the land so that it can be appropriated by the gaze which looks in from the outside – the European interloper and artist.¹⁴⁵ Landscape painting co-exists with the emergence of linear perspective which allowed painters to represent a three-dimensional world on a two-dimensional

¹⁴³ Auerbach, “Art and Empire”, p. 577.

¹⁴⁴ MacKenzie, “Art and the Empire”, p. 296.

¹⁴⁵ Julian Thomas, “The Politics of Vision and the Archaeology of Landscape” in Bender (ed.), *Landscape : Politics and Perspective*, pp. 145-167.

surface, creating a hierarchy of arrangement based on a relational position and dependent on the outsider's position. Simon Ryan and Maria Pratt have independently analyzed this phenomenon in relation to the European depiction of the imperial landscape. These writers suggest that the colonial artist employed this technique and also added to the ideological import by elevating the viewpoint. The world is transformed into a "text" laid out before the viewer.¹⁴⁶ Pratt elucidates the fact that such visual compositional construction gives the eye an implicit "command" over that which falls within its gaze, as the country opens up (or, rather *is opened up* by the artistic strategies) in order to present a highly-mediated landscape vision.¹⁴⁷ It is the point of view, the hypothetical elevation of the viewer above the world below, that imparts the imaginative and ideological power to this work. Michael Rosenthal corroborates this reading of the mechanics of landscape composition by asserting, that these prospects "at a glance, show that [the patrons] had few aspirations to high art but were concerned with making a detailed record of appearance."¹⁴⁸ The resonance of economic wealth, social status and political authority conferred on the viewer by his position as "monarch of all he surveys" could easily translate into the colonial ideology of mastery and domination over potential colonial space.¹⁴⁹ James Turner has shown how "the prospect from a high place was well-established as an image of political foresight and inquiry."¹⁵⁰ The construction of this view would be characterized by the acute angle of vision and the looking down from a superior site at the prospect spread out below. The horizontal view, on the other hand, involves the depiction of a broad plain with a horizontal, demarcating line running across the picture, generally at one-third the way up the image.¹⁵¹ This strategy abjures the opportunity to glory in the mastery of physical space before one. However, by way of compensation, the observer is presented with sweeping vistas and expansive prospects. The retreat of the eye towards the horizon has the dual effect of inviting the imperial gaze to survey all that falls between subject and horizon, and simultaneously

¹⁴⁶ Simon Ryan, *The Cartographic Eye : How Explorers Saw Australia* [Cambridge, 1996], p. 16.

¹⁴⁷ Pratt, "Scratches on the Face of the Country", p. 143.

¹⁴⁸ Michael Rosenthal, *British Landscape Painting* [Oxford, 1982], p. 21.

¹⁴⁹ Youngs, *Travellers in Africa*, p. 127.

¹⁵⁰ Quoted by Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque : Landscape, Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain, 1760-1800* [Aldershot, 1989], p. 63.

¹⁵¹ Edward Dayes advises the budding artist that "the height of the horizon should seldom exceed one-third of the picture." See Edward Dayes, *The Works of the Late Edward Dayes* [London, 1805], p. 287. Dayes himself was an important engraver of colonial scenes, particularly of Australia and India, for the English market.

implying an almost never-ending opportunity for colonization by suggesting the continuation of the view beyond the frame of the picture. The land is laid out in front of the viewing eye and can be unveiled by the eye which scans across the painted surface at will, without any impediment. It is important to appreciate that the term “prospect”, such as that used to denote such colonial vistas, also refers to a view into the future.¹⁵² Therefore, the view or “prospect” perceived by the observer was constructed to mean both a spatial view and a temporal one. In other words, the empty, hostile landscapes presented to Europeans were meant to be understood as such, but also in terms of a capitalist future, with the possibilities and “prospects” of the European colonial enterprise encoded in the resources to be exploited, land to be tilled, sites to be developed and so on.¹⁵³

The import of these diverse methods of envisaging the landscape is related to the fact that both rely for their impact on the perspectival construction of space. The Cartesian split between viewing subject and the object surveyed, that is between the fully subjectified eye (“I”) and the represented Other, has been the fundamental basis for Western art from the Renaissance up until Cubism.¹⁵⁴ The constructive technique of linear perspective, which all of the nineteenth-century representations of Africa explored here adhere to, is inextricably bound to an imperial vision of landscape. In it, the convergence of numerous views on the single position of the viewer necessarily privileges that position. Thus, although anterior to the scene stretching out before or beneath him, it is he who orders and arranges the objects of the landscape in relation to his perceiving consciousness. Reality is frozen, removed from the flux of time, and rendered the property of the observer, forever captured in his visual record of the moment. The logical corollary to this is the control of space exercised by the viewer/artist and the subsequent transferral of this mastery to the viewer of the picture. The central role which pictorial images played in the process of imperialism is borne out by the necessity of all the components being structured and directed towards the eyes of the viewer in order for one to claim ownership of the vista.¹⁵⁵ Richard Terdimann relates this perspectival approach to landscape to the creation of

¹⁵² See Stephen Daniels, “Goodly Prospects : English Estate Portraiture, 1670-1730” in Nicholas Alfrey and Stephen Daniels (eds.), *Mapping the Landscape : Essays on Art and Cartography* [Nottingham, 1990], pp. 10-19.

¹⁵³ Maria Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes : Travel Writing and Transculturation* [London, 1992], p. 57.

¹⁵⁴ See Ryan, *The Cartographic Eye*, p. 14.

¹⁵⁵ Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape*, p. 30.

the Other in colonial discourse.¹⁵⁶ Landscape painting and imagery thus becomes the representation of place which alienates land so that it may be appropriated by the gaze which looks in from outside.

A cursory survey of the material written about the Cape Colony suggests some of the ideological implications following on from these theories. John Barrow, in his role as secretary to the Governor, was to express some of the most blatantly imperialistic attitudes of the day. He says that the arduous ascending of Table Mountain is only relieved by “the recollection of the great command given by the elevation; and the eye, leaving the immediate scenery, will wander with delight round the whole circumference of the horizon.”¹⁵⁷ The beauty of the landscape, seen by John Campbell from a hill outside Melapeetzee, renders the scene “charming.” However, “what essentially contributed to add lustre to the scene, in the estimation of thirsty travellers was the windings of the Malalarean River in the front of the hills.”¹⁵⁸ Thus, the resources of the territory are mentally appropriated by the act of viewing from an elevated vantage point. William Burchell seems to confirm the view of modern theorists by asserting:

In surveying from this high eminence so great an extent and such a variety of objects, sensations are produced of a very agreeable kind, not at all connected with the idea of picturesque scenery. They seem rather to arise from a feeling of superiority and command.¹⁵⁹

The testimony of Lady Barnard, as she recorded her climb to the top of Table Mountain with John Barrow, quite explicitly links the dominant viewing position with an almost divine command of the landscape laid out beneath:

I was glad on this pinnacle to have had a bird’s-eye view of the country, the bays, and the distant and near mountains. The ‘coup d’oeuil’ [sic] brought to my awed remembrance the Saviour of the World presented from the top of ‘an

¹⁵⁶ See Richard Terdimann, “Ideological Voyages : Concerning a Flaubertian Dis-Orient-Ation” in Francis Barker (ed.), *Europe and its Others*, 2 vols. [Colchester, 1985], Vol. 1, pp. 28-40; p. 28.

¹⁵⁷ Barrow, *Travels into the Interior of Southern Africa*, Vol. 1, p. 37.

¹⁵⁸ John Campbell, *Travels in South Africa undertaken at the Request of the Missionary Society* [London, 1815], p. 325.

¹⁵⁹ William John Burchell, *Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa*, 2 vols. [London, 1822-4], Vol. 1, p. 47.

exceeding high mountain' with all the kingdoms of the earth by the devil.

Nothing short of such a view was this.¹⁶⁰

Robert Semple gives a lengthy analysis about the effect of height on the perceptions of the observer. He too recounts his experience from atop the Table Mountain:

Whence arises this pleasure which I feel in my breast, when I recal [sic] to my remembrance what I have seen? Why does the current of my blood glide so swiftly through my heart, from the recollection of material objects? I have enjoyed an extensive prospect from a lofty mountain. I have seen beneath my feet earth, and sea, and clouds...I have been contemplating huge mountains, whose cloud-covered tops seemed to raise me nearer to Heaven, and I admired His power.¹⁶¹

Later in the century, when the so-called "Scramble for Africa" was driving European foreign policy, Henry Morton Stanley overtly connects the elevated gaze and the exploitative opportunities for colonization: "It is a spot from which, undisturbed, the eye may rove over one of the strangest yet fairest portions of Africa." Likening himself to a god, sitting upon his "lofty throne," Stanley combines, in a typically kitsch and populist fashion, the whole raft of ideological baggage that went to make the elevated gaze a principal tenet for the depiction of landscape imagery in Africa.¹⁶²

When Thomas Baines shows himself off-saddled and seated on the side of a hill, assiduously sketching a "View of Pretoria" (Plate 1), he not only expresses how one gained the best possible viewing position for recording the landscape. He also symbolically represents the inherent European colonial instinct for raising its own cultural and intellectual status above the reality of the knowable landscape. Looking across the valley, Baines could select and present a view which his (literally) heightened and improved point of view conferred. The frontispiece to Freeman's missionary account also adopts an elevated point of view (Plate 2). The gaze of the observer/reader is from the Winterburg range of mountains at the Philipton Settlement, on the Kat River (Map 4; Feature iv). The European figure who gesticulates beyond the picture plane is a choric appendix to the view, tantalizing the

¹⁶⁰ Lady Anne Barnard, *South Africa A Century Ago : Letters written from the Cape of Good Hope (1797-1801)*, edited by W.H. Wilkins [London, 1901], p. 69.

¹⁶¹ Robert Semple, *Walks and Sketches at the Cape of Good Hope*, 2nd edition [London, 1805], pp. 67-8.

¹⁶² Quoted in Youngs, *Travellers in Africa*, p. 125.

viewer with prospect of a view existing outside the confines of the plate. The panoramic vista implied by the pose and stance of the figure is confirmed by the narrative:

We looked down on the village of Philipton, and from thence across the country to an amazing distance including Bothas Hill, which immediately overlooks Grahamstown, about sixty miles distant.¹⁶³

The gesticulating figure is a functional visual element, replacing the textual description of the scene which is not encountered in the book for well over an hundred pages. This impression of wide open spaces free for colonization is a recurring trope in relation to Southern Africa and one that influences later writers. For Arthur Conan Doyle, the landscape surrounding Salisbury in Rhodesia was “magnificent savannah, a green carpet stretching unbroken to the blue line of the horizon” (Map 6; Feature iii).¹⁶⁴ Henry Morton preserves the idea of being able to range over the landscape at will and without impediment – the classic colonial fantasy. As well as the colour, Morton is particularly impressed by the space:

Away we went into the sunlight and the wide spaces of the veld, and I looked at this country and knew that its attraction is twofold: its colour...and its resemblance to the sea; for the eye is constantly roving to the horizon as it does at the sea, searching and probing into the distance and finding there refreshment, peace and freedom.¹⁶⁵

Barbara Maria Stafford contends that the horizontal impulse was derived from the employment of naval draughtsmen to make detailed profiles of the coastline.¹⁶⁶ These were commissioned to provide a succinct indication of the shape of unmapped land. By the inclusion of its geological structure, its vegetation and contours, the transverse view was eminently suitable to a horizontal format and the consequent imparting of the idea of a wide expanse of landscape. John Webber accompanied Captain James Cook on his third voyage to the South Seas.¹⁶⁷ His album of drawings, now in the

¹⁶³ Joseph J. Freeman, A Tour of South Africa with Notices of Natal, Mauritius, Madagascar, Ceylon, Egypt and Palestine [London, 1851], p. 127.

¹⁶⁴ Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Our African Winter [1929; London, 2001], p. 164.

¹⁶⁵ Morton, In Search of South Africa, p. 9.

¹⁶⁶ Stafford, Voyage into Substance, p. 28.

¹⁶⁷ John Webber was employed on Cook's 3rd voyage which set out to discover a Northern passage between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. See Bernard Smith, European Vision and the South Pacific [1960; 2nd edition New Haven, 1985], pp. 108-111.

British Library, shows how closely interlinked marine views and the horizontal format actually are. In his view of the north point of Karrakakooa Bay, Owhyee, Webber states that it is taken from the anchoring place. The composition of the drawings is dominated by the overwhelmingly horizontal disposition of the scenery and coastline across the breadth of the paper. Indeed, sometimes he required a pull-out format where the horizontality is doubled in length in order to better express his observations.¹⁶⁸ In the few sketches executed at the Cape of Good Hope, Webber conforms to Hodges' precedent, rendering the great mass of Table Mountain as a horizontal barrier to the free-roving gaze of the observer.¹⁶⁹ Even before the British penetration into the interior, the Dutch were collecting material which when seen now conforms to that idea of horizontality and expansiveness in visual recording. As a watercolourist and a cartographer he made many drawings and pictures of the scenery that he encountered, Morton remarks on the impression made by them and by the fact that they are horizontally disposed:

Some of the panoramas, notably those of the Orange River and the Cape coast, are over thirty feet long and are best examined on the floor.¹⁷⁰

Another interesting example of this horizontality in practice is found in the account of Captain James Tuckey. Tuckey includes plates delineating his discoveries whilst navigating the Congo River. However, one finds that his surveys often require three separate engravings on one plate in order to accurately encompass the breadth and expansiveness of the scenes witnessed. This occurs, for example, when he delineates the "Slate Hills, near Giddee" (Plate 3). He describes the landscape thus:

The most striking features of the country we passed over are the extreme barrenness of the hills near the river, the whole being composed of slate with masses of quartz and sienite.¹⁷¹

The geological accuracy of his research is compounded by the suggestiveness of the three sketches which taken together form one continuous image of the area surveyed. The inherent unsuitability of the folio page to accommodate the breadth of the

¹⁶⁸ Add MS 17,277, British Library, London.

¹⁶⁹ Plates 56, 57 and 58 in Add MS 15,514, British Library, London.

¹⁷⁰ Morton, *In Search of South Africa*, pp. 55-6.

¹⁷¹ Capt. James Kingston Tuckey, *Narrative of an Expedition to Explore the River Zaire, usually called the Congo, in South Africa, in 1816, under the direction of Capt. JK Tuckey, RN* [London, 1818], p. 138.

landscape is here employed to highlight and draw attention to that very expansiveness and European command of it.

Even when not on active duty, it appears that servicemen were mentally conditioned to dispose their landscape views as decidedly horizontal and layered vistas. Such is the evidence from the sketchbooks of Sir Charles D'Oyly. Of the one hundred and eighteen drawings in the two sketchbooks donated to the Government Archives in Cape Town by Mr. Montrose Cloete, seventeen could be described as having that horizontal impulse to survey and record the landscape, as well as the peculiar quality of suggesting recession over vast plains and unlimited opportunities for lateral expansion.¹⁷² This is among sketches of numerous subjects not just landscape so that the percentage of landscape representations in this mode is quite high and would appear to have occupied an important place in the artistic and visual imaging of South Africa for D'Oyly. Quite symbolically, and not altogether unexpectedly given what we know about the political implications of lateral visioning, the albums begin with such a "wide-screen" panorama view of the ubiquitous "Table Bay and Table Mountain" (Plate 4). However, it is in the pair of sketches (Nos. 23 and 24; Plates 5 and 6) where D'Oyly depicts the view obtained looking from Protea Hill looking first South and then North, that one can appreciate the impulse for command and control that goes along with the horizontal view. This compositional technique allows the artist to literally encompass the entire landscape and to symbolically suggest to the viewer his complete command of the landscape on all sides of the position from which he is sketching. The lateral magnitude and invariability suggested in any horizontal profiles is often presented to an extreme degree in images of Africa and becomes almost a leitmotif later in the century when Cecil Rhodes describes South Africa to his Aunt Sophe: "Really this country is without change and is merely a Dead Sea Plain."¹⁷³ The vastness of space and its covert invitation to explore and commandeer it is a subtext to many of the wide, panoramic views depicting and describing the landscape.

¹⁷² The sketchbooks were donated to the Government Archives in 1936 by a great-nephew of General Sir Josias Cloete, the person to whom D'Oyly gave his sketches originally.

¹⁷³ Antony Thomas, *Rhodes: The Race for Africa* [London, 1996], p. 66.

These methods of seeing the landscape, partially derived from cartography, would become fundamental building-blocks for all artists wishing to convey an idea of the colonial African landscape. The elevated point of view or horizontal format were not just places set apart, outside the world or above it. Ideally, they were positions from where one could see all and yet not be seen. The photographer, invisible beneath his black cloth as he eyed the world through his camera's gaze, in this respect typified the kind of presence desired by the European in colonial landscape. The ability to see without being seen confirmed one's separation from the world, and constituted at the same time a position of power.¹⁷⁴ The orientations of vertical or horizontal views which provide the basic framework for almost all of the renditions of the Southern African landscape in this study are laden with ideological import. These visual techniques become what James Ryan calls "tools of *naturalisation*, of rendering the familiar and the unknown."¹⁷⁵ They converted complex environments into constituent parts which could be analyzed according to the European scientific, aesthetic and representational vocabularies which will be examined in Section II. These visual codes yielded a methodological and theoretical framework on which to graft more complicated ideological landscape statements that occur later in the history of the nineteenth-century British encounter with Africa and this issue forms the basis of Section III.

The basic ideas of pictorial format and visual composition mean something greater in the colonial context of the representation of landscape. I will now elaborate on this visual analysis in the main body of the text. I begin by outlining the theoretical precepts upon which I base much of the subsequent discussion – the notion of the "Imperial Archive." It seems to me that this idea is particularly apposite for one engaged in uncovering the overarching influence of imperial concerns on text and image and of examining how these operate together in an elaborate network of connections. In Section II, I analyze how this imperial archive was compiled and created specifically in relation to the Southern African landscape. I argue that various philosophic notions and aesthetic templates were used in order to "capture" or record the landscape of the region. These different aesthetic criteria employed severally by

¹⁷⁴ See W.J.T. Mitchell, "Orientalism and the Exhibitionary Other" in Nicholas B. Dirks (ed.), *Introduction: Colonialism and Culture* [Ann Arbor, 1995], pp. 289-317; p. 306.

¹⁷⁵ Ryan, "Imperial Landscapes", p. 62.

writers and artists in their work could be used in compiling, arranging and maintaining a suitably imperial archive of information about Southern Africa and British incursion into that space. Finally, in Section III, there will be discussions of different representations and re-presentations of the landscape as it was influenced by the dominant political and cultural concerns of the day. I posit how the envisaging of landscape in certain specific ways could be employed for particular ends – goals and objectives that were, it seems to me, at the heart of the British colonial engagement with the landscape.

SECTION I

Chapter 1: The Imperial Archive

“A fantasy of knowledge collected and united in the service of State and Empire.”

Thomas Richards, 1993.

This study is one about knowledge – knowledge and its role in the British colonial encounter with Southern Africa. It explores how information on the colonial landscape and frontier was collected, modified, manipulated and subsequently disseminated by artists and writers. This study argues that paintings, visual images and textual descriptions are collected and arranged according to specific aesthetic criteria and modified to accommodate pressing social and political concerns in the colonial context. It is underpinned, like most contemporary critical evaluations of this subject, by the monolithic Foucauldian maxim that knowledge is involved in an inextricably symbiotic relationship with power. Knowledge helps both to clarify and construct the relations of power set up by the political situation and its presence in the media of artistic representation and textual rendition requires deciphering in order to unravel how these artistic media can be employed in specific political contexts. Richard Drayton has argued:

Knowledge, linked in complex ways to religion, identity, to the solution of practical difficulties and the pursuit of Mammon and power, was thus a fundamental aspect of British imperial expansion.¹

However, recognizing the inherent instability of any overarching theory, it does not pretend to be the definitive guide to the place of knowledge in the social, cultural and visual history of the colonial moment in Southern African history. It recognizes the fact that the story of knowledge in colonial, and indeed any, history is one that can be recounted in many different voices and discussed with reference to many diverse

frameworks and examples. Knowledge, and the names, lists and taxonomies that it engenders, was, according to Jonathan Lamb, the “plunder” of the late-eighteenth and nineteenth-century European engagements with the wider world beyond its narrow confines.² For the explorers of the eighteenth century, it was knowledge and its collection that was the great driving force behind the fervour for discovery that energized European powers as the century drew to a close. Marie-Noelle Bourguet explains the intellectual foundation of this craze:

Knowledge seemed the instrument of progress; it was an opening up, a break-up of the old enclaves, a first form of circulation and commerce. Thanks to knowledge Europe was already peacefully disseminating a universal model of civilisation.³

This view, forged in the heat of Enlightenment zeal, would influence nineteenth-century exploration and the European engagement with the colonial environment. Indeed, the desire to accumulate knowledge grew steadily throughout the century. So much so, in fact, that the Quarterly Review compared the situation in 1850 to that at the turn of the century in the following terms:

The nation at large [did not] take a tithe of the present interest in purely intellectual subjects. Few comparatively thirsted after knowledge or hungered after education – the modern panacea.⁴

Contemporary writers acknowledged the place of knowledge as one of the most crucial factors in facilitating European mastery, dominance and control over the landscape. Thomas Baines, the explorer and artist, is a central figure in any examination of the role of knowledge gathering and dissemination in the history of nineteenth-century Southern Africa. He recognized the high status accorded by Europeans to the role and importance of information in the process of exploration. In the introduction to his handbook for

¹ Richard Drayton, “Knowledge and Empire” in P.J. Marshall (ed.), The Oxford History of the British Empire : Volume 2 - The Eighteenth Century [Oxford, 1998], pp. 231-52; p. 236.

² Quoted in Kathleen Wilson, The Island Race : Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century [London, 2003], p. 57.

³ Marie-Noelle Bourguet, “The Explorer” in Michel Vovelle (ed.), Enlightenment Portraits, translated by Lydia G. Cochrane [London, 1997], pp. 257-315, p. 265.

⁴ Quoted in Richard Altick, The Shows of London [London, 1978], p. 27.

Europeans contemplating a venture into the wilds of unknown and foreign spaces, co-written with W.B. Lord, Baines makes an apology for the contents of the book:

These do not consist of jewels, gems, gold, or furs; no piles of costly merchandise do we lay at the reader's feet as offerings from distant climes, but simply the experiences of two roving Englishmen who have roughed it.⁵

The subtle but insistent yoking together of objects of material wealth with the knowledge and empirical experience of travelling, makes the point that the intellectual capital set forth in the text was equally as valuable as the mineral wealth that often followed in the wake of colonial exploration. While monetary gain and the exploitation of natural resources may ultimately have been the motivation behind, and outcome of, exploration of colonial spaces, there was also a necessity for detailed, reliable and quantifiable knowledge about these spaces. This led to the acknowledgement of organized information and data as a primary resource for the European colonial interloper. Therefore, this is a study concerned with examining just how this knowledge about a newly explored outpost of the British Empire – Southern Africa – was collected, manipulated and transmitted to an audience of nineteenth-century viewers and readers. And, I would suggest that this was done in a manner that would represent an image of Africa that conformed to the dominant cultural concerns of the time.

Knowledge about this space of imperial activity came through various media such as lectures, exhibitions and industrial shows. However, it seems to me, that much of this knowledge came through the media of the textual accounts and visual records made by Europeans travelling through the region. The implicitly artistic character which our twenty-first century sensibilities may accord to these products should not blind the reader to the fact that, in the nineteenth century, text and image were very much part of the imperial process of intellectual and cultural domination and appropriation that laid the ground work for the political and economic subjugation to follow. Any status that these products may have had as objects of aesthetic merit must always be assessed in conjunction with their undoubted role in the process of information gathering and

⁵ W.B. Lord and Thomas Baines, Shifts and Expedients of Camp Life, Travel and Exploration [London, 1876], p. 1.

dissemination in the colonial context. Therefore, I will examine how literary products and visual representations work in tandem to co-opt knowledge of the African landscape for the reader and viewer, both in the newly settled colonial regions and at home in the domestic metropolis. Text and image, having a mutually informative relationship, form part of that cultural milieu that engaged in a process of image construction in relation to Africa with shifts and continuities consonant with nineteenth-century British metropolitan ideas of Empire. I will examine how travelogues, illustrated books and visual representations such as prints and oil paintings worked together in the knowledge gathering process and could then be further employed to project a specific and highly coherent view of Southern Africa.

Firstly, however, it is necessary to assess the status of knowledge as an essential constituent of the imperial process. I situate my analysis within the framework of Thomas Richards' theory of the "Imperial Archive." By arguing for the consideration of illustrated books, travelogues and various visual products as integral components of the system of imperial intellectual control implied by Richards' theory, I relate the colonial experience, and indeed much of European contact with the rest of the world, to what Thomas Richards terms an "imperial archive." This refers to the notion of an "archive," at the heart of Empire, whereby the visual "facts" and textual records of foreign spaces, as well as other material and ephemeral objects connected with the colonial encounter, are collected and collated at the imperial metropole. This process is initiated in order to bring the unknown colonial "Other" into an intelligible framework of European epistemological cognition.⁶ The colonial landscape, and its mysterious spaces and inhabitants, embodies an "epistemic lack" for the European explorer which requires completion and explanation through Western discourses of knowledge and classification.⁷ The visual and textual records of these spaces were bound together in order to become part of an extensive network – what Richards terms "a fantasy of knowledge collected

⁶ I use the word "other" advisedly, conscious of its overdetermined critical status and aware of the numerous caveats attached to its usage. See Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Theory* [London, 1998], pp. 169-71 for a fuller discussion of this issue.

⁷ See Thomas, "Licensed Curiosity", p. 116.

and united in the service of state and Empire.”⁸ This is in contradistinction to “information” with the implied overtones of scattered remnants and disembodied fragments of fact as opposed to “knowledge” which provides the prospect of a superintending unity of fact and purpose emerging.⁹ Richards’ seminal work on the way that imperial powers, and particularly the British Empire of the nineteenth century, created and sustained a complex matrix of intelligence in their service is a fundamental influence on this study. I employ it as a vital tool to be used in assessing how knowledge gathering and disseminating media such as text and image worked in the imperial context.

In this section I attempt to set the illustrated reports, visual documentation and artistic evocation of the Southern African continent, at the moment of its initial exploration, exploitation and colonization by Europeans, within the broader context of an intellectual appropriation of the landscape of the region. According to this theory, the associative vacuum that existed in these other lands, literally *terrae incognitae*, meant that European travellers had to construct their physiological and psychological reactions in accordance with specific European aesthetic and philosophical debates. Therefore, through what Richards calls “the process of semiotization,” these constructions of knowledge served to draw the foreign landscape within a European epistemological framework and rendered the potential colonial landscape intelligible for both traveller and domestic audience by making its strangeness familiar.¹⁰ Umberto Eco makes a similar point, with regard to how Europeans from the time of Marco Polo onwards explored the world. According to him, “we [Western Europeans] travel with preconceived notions of the world, derived from our cultural tradition.”¹¹ This linguistic and intellectual process follows Homi Bhabha’s explanation of colonial power as one that “produces the colonized as a fixed reality which is at once an ‘other’ and yet entirely knowable and visible.”¹² By transposing awkward, alien and indecipherable forms of knowledge into a code of Western epistemology,

⁸ Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive : Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire* [London, 1993], p. 6.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

¹¹ Umberto Eco, *Serendipities: Language and Lunacy* [London, 2002], p. 71.

¹² Homi K. Bhabha, “The Other Question: difference, discrimination and the discourse of colonialism” in Francis Barker (ed.), *Literature, Politics and Theory* [London, 1986], p. 156.

Europeans manipulated and took command of that which had previously evaded their grasp. It allowed the traveller to present his adventures in the form of signs, be they textual or visual, which would be both intelligible and attractive to the reading and viewing public. Landscape, and the data pertaining to that landscape space, was transformed into a digestible commodity by its fixing and translation into typically European linguistic, artistic and philosophical terms. It is the parameters of these terms that will be analyzed and set in context by this study. The renowned contemporary South African writer and academic, J.M. Coetzee, has remarked how impenetrable the space at the colonial periphery can be without a suitable template in which to fit it. For him “the landscape remains impenetrable until a language is found in which to win it, speak it, represent it.”¹³ These signs were very often couched in the artistic clothing of landscape representations of the colonial space. I wish to peel away the accretions of aesthetic rumination and to analyze the way these signs operated in the imperial context of familiarizing a reading and viewing public with the strangeness of colonial periphery.

The filtering medium of the published narrative, the exploration travelogue and the finished oil painting, acts as a kind of safety net, securely removed from the site of danger, and through which European domestic audiences could gaze at newly explored landscapes without the attendant risks encountered by the travelling authors and artists. Africa becomes available for critical scrutiny and appreciation according to Western criteria, terminology and visual vocabulary. The recording of distant landscapes in a published text or print gave Europeans an implicitly superior position of intellectual power and control. In effect, through the textual and pictorial representation of the landscape of Southern Africa, the European writer created the “imperial archive” that, according to Richards, worked to lay the intellectual and philosophical foundations for the subsequent political and institutional domination of the continent.¹⁴ In support of this theory Edward Said notes:

¹³ Quoted in Liese Van der Watt, “Thomas Baines and the Colonization of Space” in *de Arte*, Vol. 48 (Sep. 1993), pp. 23-31; p. 28.

¹⁴ See Richards, *The Imperial Archive*, p. 6.

The simple fact is that between 1815 when European powers were in occupation of approximately 35% of the earth's surface, and 1918, when the occupation had extended to 85% of the earth's surface, discursive power increased accordingly.¹⁵

The proportional relationship between political control and intellectual appropriation is one that I hope to explain and set in context by a deep and thorough analysis of how that intellectual control was established, organized and in what terms it was subsequently transmitted to its audience.

European concern with knowledge and its material expression stretches back to the very earliest days of European voyages of discovery. Jeremy Black suggests that for Europeans, the globe was understood as a product of these voyages and the cartographic conceptualizations they subsequently engendered.¹⁶ For Black, the European does not just get to know the other land. Rather he does so through the mediating filter of his own prejudices, concerns and intellectual background – what Umberto Eco calls the influence of “background books.”¹⁷ We can, I believe, deduce from this that travel narratives, and the kinds of visual products that emanate from them, tell us more about the colonizer, his culture and values than they do about the country being explored. Simon Gikandi suggests that the trope of travel generated narratives that were acutely concerned with the idea of self-realization in the spaces of the Other, and that the European excursion and incursion into colonial space is one of the most important vehicles by which Europe is re-created.¹⁸ The raft of visual and textual material that was produced during the colonial encounter bears ample testimony to the fact that it was a very self-referential project. Therefore, it was dependent as much on, and as much a product of, the concerns of the European explorer and his culture as objective rendering of an unknown colonial space. Nicholas Thomas suggests:

Depiction and documentation – through media such as colonial reports and artefact collections as well as actual painting, drawing and photography – did not

¹⁵ Edward Said, *The World, the Text and the Critic* [London, 1991], p. 222.

¹⁶ Jeremy Black, *Europe and the World, 1650-1830* [London, 2002], p. 22.

¹⁷ Eco, *Serendipities*, p. 71. Eco maintains that “the influence of these background books is such that, irrespective of what travellers discover and see, they will interpret and explain everything in terms of these books.”

¹⁸ See Gikandi, *Maps of Englishness*, p. 8.

merely create representations that were analogous to practices and reality, but constituted political actualities in themselves.¹⁹

Thus, Thomas articulates one of the central tenets of this study – that visual, artistic and textual products partook in the political manifestations of a process of intellectual imperialism.

Europe, in comparison to the rest of the world, foregrounded cultural practices that were inherently visual in their orientation. For centuries, the performance of spectacle and ritual defined European values for travellers to that continent.²⁰ This visual dimension to European knowledge gathering and presentation was especially marked in the latter part of the eighteenth and throughout the nineteenth century. According to Barbara Maria Stafford, the “creation of galleries, museums, libraries, and natural history cabinets was grounded in a visual encyclopedism.”²¹ The rise of the public exhibition, as Richard Altick has shown, was a very prominent manifestation of the desire to have a visual and tangible means of making concrete and specific that which was vicarious and ephemeral. In particular, the role of spectacle and exhibition was one that supplemented the rather more high brow, socially-exclusive status of books and could illustrate informational literature to a general public such as the narratives of travel and exploration that we encounter in this study.²² This reasoning can be applied to the various colonial exhibitions that were held for the benefit of illustrating the various colonies to the home-based audiences that were financing their exploration and settlement. These formed part of what James Ryan has characterized as forming part of:

¹⁹ Nicholas Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture : Anthropology, Travel and Government* [Cambridge, 1994], pp. 111-2.

²⁰ For example, in Arabic accounts of Europe, one reads about a place that subscribed to the overarching principal that the view was paramount – Europeans seemed to be preoccupied with what one Egyptian author referred to as “intizam-al-manzar,” the organization of the view. See W.J.T. Mitchell, “Orientalism and the Exhibitionary Other” in Nicholas B. Dirks (ed.), *Colonialism and Culture* [Ann Arbor, 1995], pp. 289-317; p. 295.

²¹ Barbara Maria Stafford, “The Visualization of Knowledge” in Barbara Maria Stafford, *Good Looking : Essays on the Virtues of Images* [London, 1997], pp. 20-40; p. 33.

²² Altick, *The Shows of London*, p. 1.

a thriving popular culture of exhibitions in the mid-nineteenth century [whose] display was a central element in the imperial project to capture the world ‘under one roof’ and to transform colonial spaces into exhibition-like landscapes.²³

An example of this is the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, opened by the Prince of Wales on the 4th July 1884. According to Paul Greenhalgh, this spectacularly successful show was “the seminal cultural event of the later nineteenth century” attracting an attendance of 5.5 million people.²⁴ The accompanying catalogue begins its resume of the events and exhibits with a detailed plan of the exhibition space along with informative notes on the produce of each contributing colony (Plate 7). The ground plan highlights the well-organized layout of the space and is related to earlier exhibitions in concept and design. However, while these had been primarily industrial in emphasis, the specificity of this show, allows one to extrapolate just how the metropolitan concern with display, conjoined with knowledge gathering, might have impacted upon the colonial encounter. The catalogue and indeed the exhibition itself presents a space, at once conceptual and hypothetical, that can be reduced to Western forms of knowledge, in this case a variant of the cartographic impulse that would so influence the representation of the colonial landscape. Therefore, it is structured and arranged according to Western metropolitan ideas and ideals of organization in which a visual element plays a prominent part.²⁵ The reader of the catalogue is presented with an easily legible, highly detailed guide to the event – one that encompasses all the pieces of information required to appreciate the exhibition. Each part of the Empire is allotted a specific location and amount of space in the exhibition.²⁶ In many ways, this example serves as the perfect metaphor for the entire colonial project as it developed and evolved throughout the nineteenth century and which I will explore in this study. The reduction of the diverse, alien forms of knowledge on

²³ James R. Ryan, “‘Hunting with the Camera’: Photography, Wildlife and Colonialism in Africa” in Chris Philo and Chris Wilbert (eds.), *Animal Spaces, Beastly Places: New Geographies of Human-Animal Relations* [London, 2000], pp. 203-21; p. 204.

²⁴ Paul Greenhalgh, “The Art and Industry of Mammon : International Exhibitions, 1851-1901” in MacKenzie (ed.), *The Victorian Vision*, pp. 265-79; p. 273.

²⁵ On the exterior of the exhibition hall, there were five synchronized clocks showing the time in Greenwich, Cape Town, Sydney, Calcutta and Ottawa. Suggesting the synchronized rhythm of the world, “underscored by empirical practice” this indicates the value placed on measuring and marking and the place of knowledge in the celebration of progress. See Jonathan Sweet, “The World of Art and Design : White Colonials” in MacKenzie (ed.), *The Victorian Vision*, pp. 335-49; p. 336.

²⁶ Frank Cundall (ed.), *Reminiscences of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition* [London, 1886], p. 3.

display at the exhibition to the two-dimensional plan renders the immensity of the Empire, as it swelled during the course of the century, both portable and comprehensible for the domestic viewer. Any unsavoury forms of colonial knowledge or information are effectively neutralized by their presence in the overall scheme of the exhibition, embodied in the simplified, two-dimensional form of the plan. For the British visitor to the exhibition or reader of the catalogue, the epistemological familiarity of the layout functions to sanitize the foreignness and otherness of the exhibits on display. My thesis forwards the argument that authors and artists pursued an analogous approach to the colonial landscape. It will be my objective to clarify this process and its consequences in relation to Southern Africa in the nineteenth century.

The trend for co-opting the material realities of the Empire into a European network of intellectual control and regulated viewing was one that permeated the European encounter with the colonial landscape. Representing, as it did, the most immediate and visible contact with the colonial and “other” for the European in Southern Africa, the landscape, its inhabitants and vegetation stood to be most affected by the epistemological appropriation of this territory. This is most obvious in the construction of the material archives of the objects and specimens found in that landscape by European explorers. For example, the botanical and zoological novelty of the newly explored lands was particularly suitable for arrangement in the Eurocentric archive, with its indices, reference numbers and Latinized nomenclature. This classification and systematization of knowledge, brought within the ken of scientific learning by the Swede Carl Linnaeus (1707-78), was a defining characteristic of European epistemology at this time. He had claimed in 1754 that “the earth is nothing else but a museum of the all-wise Creator’s masterpieces, divided into three chambers.”²⁷ His influence was particularly strong in Britain, who had led her European neighbours in the collection and display of natural history specimens since the seventeenth century.²⁸ The trend for this type of collecting is a defining characteristic of the imperial process throughout the nineteenth century. John

²⁷ See Lisbet Koerner, “Carl Linnaeus in his time and place” in Jardine, Secord and Spray (eds.), *Cultures of Natural History*, pp. 145-62; p. 153.

²⁸ For example, John Tradescant’s “Ark” was acknowledged as the finest and largest natural history museum in the world in the mid-seventeenth century. See Altick, *The Shows of London*, p. 11.

Buchanan, a settler in South Central Africa, gives a more detailed explanation of the mechanics involved in removing specimens from Africa and making them part of the imperial network of data and information:

During my stay in the Shire Highlands I have collected nearly one thousand distinct species of plants, including all kinds. There yet remains a good deal to be done, which I hope to be able to undertake. Those collected I presented to the Herbarium of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh where they were transmitted to Kew, and classified by Professor Oliver and his associates. Many of the species were new and interesting botanically.²⁹

His comments illustrate the material process of physical removal and displacement that went hand in hand with European exploration. Professor Wahlberg of Stockholm University was another who added to the stock of zoological specimens in European collections and contributed simultaneously to a more comprehensive knowledge of these regions. His hunting trophies were widely distributed throughout the continent. Thus, “while lake N’Gami was almost unknown to the general public, specimens of its natural history, sent home by him, were spread over all Europe and America in the cabinets of men of science.”³⁰ The missionaries John Edwards and James Archbell were also concerned with collecting specimens during their travels in what became the Orange Free State. They retrieved a pair of poisoned arrows and a piece of gnu skin from the local Bushmen which they sent back to the missionary museum in Paris hoping that it would “illustrate the contrast between the present state of these peoples” and the civilized Christian values espoused by the interlopers.³¹ The missionaries used the display and acquisition of knowledge as a device to highlight the implied superiority of their home culture. So pervasive is this attitude to knowledge collection and classification that it becomes an accepted trope to be deployed and reused as motifs in the fiction of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. In his novel, *The Explorer*, first published in 1907, W. Somerset Maugham acknowledges this didactic role for the specimens collected at the outposts of Empire. The hero, Alec MacKenzie takes his sweetheart Lucy Allerton

²⁹ John Buchanan, *The Shire Highlands as Colony and Mission* [Edinburgh, 1885], p. 86.

³⁰ Andrew Murray, “Review of Chapman’s *Travels in South Africa*” in *Journal of Travel and Natural History*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (1868-9), pp. 201-225; p. 208.

to view some of these material facts of imperial expansion in order to bring the reality of African exploration to life for her:

Then he took her to the Natural History Museum, and his conversation, in face of the furred and feathered things from Africa, made the whole country vivid to her.³²

Therefore, the material specimens gathered by these men made a very real impact upon public knowledge and gave support to the process of giving Europeans a position of superior knowledge over these potential colonial landscapes. At a personal, but no less impressive level, William Burchell, the South African traveller, author and polymath, returned to the United Kingdom from the colonial periphery with over 63,000 objects. These were drawn from every branch of natural history, “including 40,000 botanical specimens, 120 skins of quadrupeds, comprising 95 distinct species, and 205 different birds.”³³ And of course, all of this was sanctioned by the Enlightenment enthusiasm for enquiry, its faith in empirical knowledge and the supposedly value-neutral epistemological territory that it occupied. Thus, Burchell could legitimately claim that all this scientific bounty was the result of travels that “were undertaken solely for the purpose of acquiring *knowledge*.”³⁴ Real specimens could also be supplemented by drawn or painted facsimiles – a prime example of the intricate and interdependent network of art, science and exploration that will be examined in more detail later. Visual records were often vital in the transmission and preservation of these specimens. Many of the great botanic gardens – themselves evidence of an imperial concern to quantify and evaluate the vegetative wealth of the imperial landscape – employed draughtsmen to immortalize the discoveries made within their ambit. For example, by the 1890’s the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, at the heart of the imperial metropolis, had an archive of 106,000 botanical illustrations and specimens from all corners of the Empire, contained in 464 portfolios.³⁵

³¹ John Edwards and James Archbell, “Two Exploratory Journeys (1833)” in Karel Schoeman (ed.), Early White Travellers in the Transgariap, 1819-1840 [Pretoria, 2003], pp. 43-66; p. 53, n. 145.

³² W. Somerset Maugham, The Explorer [1907; London, 1980], p. 61.

³³ William John Burchell, Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa, edited and introduced by Isaac Schapera [1822-4; reprint London, 1953], p. x.

³⁴ Burchell, Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa, Vol. 1, p. v [my emphasis].

³⁵ Donal P. McCracken, Gardens of Empire : Botanical Institutions of the Victorian British Empire [London, 1997], p. 155.

Another intrepid pioneer on the frontier of British Southern African who furthered this kind of tangible archival project was Frederick Courteney Selous. One of the most renowned hunters in nineteenth-century Africa, he also conformed to the idea of returning to the imperial centre with material evidence of the colonial periphery. At Heathside, Surrey, where he eventually settled, he built a large outbuilding to house his collection. What was in effect a trophy room, Selous called his “museum.” It contained various mementoes of hunting and zoological collecting, including his gem of gems, the forty-five inch horns of a kudu bull.³⁶ Leyland, yet another hunter in the wilds of Southern Africa, sold many of his hunting trophies to the Earl of Derby who subsequently gave them pride of place at Knowsley Hall.³⁷ Indeed, Leyland recalls with evident relish the various specimens that he recovered in a three-month expedition from Graaf-Reinet to Algoa Bay:

The proceeds of our hunting tour consisted principally of a number of Black-gnoos, Brindled gnoos, Blessbocs, Hartebeests, Reit-bocs, Duikers, and other small animals, also various kinds of birds, including Bustards, Herons, Bitterns, Egrets, Ibis’s, Eagles, Barbits, Grosbeaks, Sun-birds, Wax-bills, King Fishers, Bee-eaters, Hawks, Guinea-fowls, Wild geese, Ducks, Grouse, and Doves. Some of these are very rare.³⁸

This exhaustive list of zoological artefacts garnered from the territory through which Leyland’s expedition passed illustrates how the colonial environment itself was actively constructed as a great depository where one could come across interesting specimens at will and return with them to the imperial metropolis. Charles Andersson’s explorations in South West Africa were undertaken in a region that included the Kalahari Desert and

³⁶ Stephen Taylor, *The Mighty Nimrod: A Life of Frederick Courteney Selous, African Hunter and Adventurer, 1851-1917* [London, 1989], p. 245.

³⁷ J. Leyland, *Adventures in the Far Interior of South Africa* [London, 1866], p. 25. The Derby Collection was subsequently presented to the Corporation of Liverpool, becoming part of the Liverpool Museum. See Clemency Fisher (ed.), *A Passion for Natural History: The Life and Legacy of the 13th Earl of Derby* [Liverpool, 2002], pp. 10-12.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

which was seen as a veritable “museum of specimens” for the anthropologists, botanists, ornithologists and artists that were involved in its exploration.³⁹

These elements of natural history are inextricably linked and interconnected with the colonial process of appropriation and classification. The landscape was constructed (quite literally in the case of Leyland and Andersson) as a type of museum or gallery to be analyzed by the European and to be modified at the whim of the settler. These modes of seeing the landscape drew the exotic world of South Africa flora and fauna within a universalizing (European-devised) network arranged on the basis of a hierarchy of values. Captain Henry Butler, one of the many army officers whose opinions will be encountered in this study, suggests that the hunter facilitates this process. In an unsigned letter in the archives of Trinity College we find a friend advising Butler that if he could arrange “to pay the transfer of freight from the Cape [of Good Hope] you might be able to have some of the antelope horns” which he presumably acquired on his hunting trips into the interior.⁴⁰ Hunting is thus connected with the altruistic goal of garnering scientific knowledge. The temptation of the unexplored plains of the “dreamy interior” kindles the zeal of the European and “the ardour of the sportsman receives a fresh impulse in the ambition of advancing the cause of geographical science and aiding the researches of the naturalist.”⁴¹ By yoking these European systems of knowledge to sporting pursuits, Butler signals the appropriative ideology that impelled all three phenomena in their quest to achieve intellectual and physical domination over the colonial landscape. The claims made by writers, botanists and zoologists for the veracity of their depictions were a contribution to the epistemological and discursive power of natural science as it developed in the nineteenth century. Mary Louise Pratt discusses this phenomenon, stating that natural history, as practised by the European explorer, takes “possession without subjugation and violence.”⁴² Yet, despite its ostensibly peaceful methods, the classification of natural history could still be envisioned as an indicator of European

³⁹ Charles John Andersson, Notes on the Birds of Damara Land and the Adjacent Countries of South-West Africa, edited by John Henry Gurney [London, 1872], p. 8.

⁴⁰ Unsigned letter [fragment] to Butler (undated, ca. 1840) in Trinity College Library Dublin, Box OLS x-2-171, No. 24.

⁴¹ Capt. Henry Butler, South African Sketches : Illustrative of the Wild Life of a Hunter on the Frontier of the Cape Colony [London, 1841], p. 5.

physical dominance and often provoked authors to use the analogy of hunting to describe their activities. For example, Johann Reinhold Forster, one of the principal naturalists aboard Cook's vessels, described his expectation that he will "find great collections ready for me...[and that he] will carry every spoil possible from the Cape."⁴³ Gikandi argues that travel, impelled by the infant science of natural history, was more than merely a sentimental journey to the outer reaches of empire, but rather was driven by "what Fabian has called 'a project of observation, collection and classification, and description.'"⁴⁴ And the success of the process of imperial expansion was mirrored by the success of individuals and institutions in acquiring specimens from the African landscape to add to their collections. Thus, Fred Selous remarks in a letter written in the early years of the twentieth century:

I am afraid there is not much to be done in the way of getting orders for specimens of animals for museums. I got the cream of this work and made over £2,000, minus expenses by it, but now all the museums in England are full, and the Americans are sending out their own collectors.⁴⁵

But, the desire for specimens and artefacts which Selous describes as being almost sated by the beginning of the twentieth century, was not the only means by which Europeans could transpose knowledge about the imperial landscape into their systems of classification and analysis. The idea of collecting actual physical specimens, part of the material reality of the colonial landscape, finds an interesting parallel in the textual and visual records of the colonial encounter that form a major part of the imperial archive discussed by Thomas Richards.

⁴² Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 57.

⁴³ Johann Reinhold Forster, *The Resolution Journal of Johann Reinhold Forster 1772-1775*, edited by Michael Hoare, 4 vols. [London, 1982]; Vol. 1, p. 101.

⁴⁴ Gikandi, *Maps of Englishness*, p. 91.

⁴⁵ Selous to Denis D. Lyell, 19th January 1906; Quoted in Denis D. Lyell, *African Adventure: Letters from Famous Big-Game Hunters* [London, 1935], p. 9.

Libraries and archives along with other depositories of information form a bridging point between the physicality of tangible, material evidence described above and the kind of ethereal and intellectual evidence that was just as important in the construction of an imperial archive and the subsequent analysis and interpretation of colonial landscape space. They occupy an important and formative position in the European involvement with its colonial possessions. The anti-hero of J.M. Coetzee's recent novel, Youth, a young South African working in London in the 1960s, soliloquizes on the role of the library in promulgating knowledge about the place of his birth. He sits in the Reading Room of the British Museum;

And allows himself the luxury of dipping into books about the South Africa of the old days, books to be found only in great libraries, memoirs of visitors to the Cape like Dapper and Kolbe and Sparrman and Barrow and Burchell, published in Holland or Germany of England two centuries ago.⁴⁶

Thus, the library of the great institution at the heart of the imperial metropolis is constructed as the place where knowledge garnered and organized has been deposited. Indeed, the narrator seems to suggest that this type of material is only to be found in such great foundations of knowledge.

In another example at the imperial epicentre, the library of the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) was at the heart of an organization that reached its apogee during the golden age of British exploration in the nineteenth century. Founded in 1830, the RGS had a key role in promoting, advertising and supporting exploration in arenas of potential colonial activity all round the world.⁴⁷ As intrepid explorers pushed back the boundaries of the unknown world, and returned with their findings to Europe, the library, archives and map room of this institution, began to swell with the accumulated fruits of their endeavours. The founders of the Society had envisaged its map room acting as some sort of depository of knowledge, its object being:

⁴⁶ J.M. Coetzee, Youth [2002; London, 2003], pp. 136-7.

⁴⁷ For more details on the Royal Geographical Society and its role in the colonial enterprise see David, The Arctic in the British Imagination, pp. 63-80.

to accumulate a complete collection of maps and charts from the earliest period of rude geographical delineations to the most improved of the present time.⁴⁸

A major and undiminished aspect of its work was the publication and dissemination of knowledge. And so, the Journal of the RGS could be described as “the fountain-head, the source from which all information subsequently filtered down.”⁴⁹ Ian Cameron continues the story, describing one of the society’s publications very much in terms in which its editors, contributors and readers would like to have seen it:

Pick up any one of the Society’s nineteenth-century Journals, and you will find a cornucopia of information: a treasure trove, in which some remote corner of the earth is spotlit and for the first time examined by the beam of scientific appraisal. It is like holding up a jewel to the light.⁵⁰

Much critical ink has been expended on discussing the map as a prime example of the European impulse to reduce colonial spaces to a manageable, portable and useful format. By a process of careful observation and recording the European could transcribe the features of the colonial landscape to a two-dimensional sheet of paper. This could then act as a synecdochical replacement for the place itself and therefore facilitate the imperial appropriation of distant territory.⁵¹ The creation of maps and their subsequent depositing in the various institutes and organs of imperial organization constitute an important part of the creation of the “imperial archive.” For example, in the case of the RGS, the importance of its extensive collection of maps, as tools for research, debate and discussion on colonial matters was recognized by the annual subsidy of £500 granted by the government in 1854 in order to maintain the public map room, as well as ongoing accessions and additions to its extensive library.⁵² The number of maps held by the RGS grew from just 10,000 in 1850 to 100,000 by the turn of the century.⁵³ It was used for imperial planning and strategizing, most famously in advance of the West African

⁴⁸ Ian Cameron, To the Farthest Ends of the Earth : The History of the Royal Geographical Society, 1830-1980 [London, 1980], p. 207.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁵¹ D. Graham Burnett, Masters of All They Surveyed : Geography, Exploration and the British El Dorado [Chicago, 2000], p. 23.

⁵² Robert A. Stafford, Scientist of Empire : Sir Roderick Murchison, Scientific Exploration and Victorian Imperialism [Cambridge, 1989], p. 22.

⁵³ Roy Bridges, “Nineteenth-Century Exploration and Mapping : The Role of the Royal Geographical Society” in Patricia M. Larby, Maps and Mapping of Africa [London, 1987], pp. 9-13; p. 12.

Conference, held in Berlin from November 1884 to February 1885.⁵⁴ Thus, it became a repository at the heart of the imperial metropolis, in the middle of London, where vast swathes of the globe were accessible to the imperial planners.

The library in Cape Town is another contemporary example of this concern with the capturing and co-option of knowledge for its delectation and analysis by a European audience. In this instance, however, that audience is placed in the colonial environment, closer to the frontier between European knowledge and extra-European mystery. The library at Cape Town acted as a kind of a vault where Western knowledge and learning could be deposited for safe keeping for the colonists. Its presence in South Africa clearly illustrates the European settlers' concern to maintain a link to the accrued knowledge and culture of their European origins. It also acted as a kind of safe interface with the colonial frontier where new settlers could learn about the unusual landscape and actualities of the continental interior in the secure confines of that most European of institutions. Thomas Baines spent many hours in the reading room igniting the flames of his wanderlust.⁵⁵ The effect of this on the impressionable young artist can be assessed in the light of Alfred Cole's reference to the library as "the glory of Cape Town, which exceeds any other [library] in Great Britain's dependencies with fifty or sixty thousand volumes."⁵⁶ Baines whetted his appetite for adventure by absorbing the accounts of such literary luminaries as William Cornwallis Harris, to whom he repeatedly refers in his journals.⁵⁷ Evidencing a form of common intellectual property, the removal of colonial knowledge, albeit cunningly sequestered in the leaves of a travelogue or hunting narrative, acted to wrest control of this native landscape and to place it under the critical scrutiny, and by implication, under the intellectual control of the Western imperial powers.

David Miller has noted the effect of these various methods of capturing and presenting the imperial knowledge:

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 12.

⁵⁵ Wallis, *Thomas Baines*, p. 45.

⁵⁶ Alfred W. Cole, *The Cape and the Kafirs : or, Notes of Five Years' Residence in South Africa* [London, 1852], p. 20.

⁵⁷ See Baines, *Journal of Residence*, Vol. 2, pp. 54, 101.

Museums and to a greater extent popular exhibitions shared with travel narratives the aspirations to make distant lands present; given that spatial and temporal distance are forms of absence, for which the presentness of the artifact [or narrative] itself must compensate.⁵⁸

However, in the imperial mythology promoted by the custodians of the Empire, the archive was less a specific institution than an entire epistemological complex for representing a comprehensive and highly mediated knowledge within the domain of Empire.⁵⁹ The textual and visual archive built up through illustrated books, travelogues and hunting scenes was a vital component in the imperial process of capturing and appropriating this foreign landscape. Indeed, the writing up, translating and illustrating of accounts of travels and voyages were very real weapons in the wars for empire and imperial domination.⁶⁰ To these one must add and emphasize the visual qualities of art – the composition and delineation of a landscape or hunting scene - that could carry a weight of ideological import too. The textual and visual descriptions of landscape of Southern Africa under scrutiny in this study were, it seems to me, articulated according to, and framed within, discourses of knowledge and information that permitted the European to appropriate that landscape through intellectual and epistemological assimilation. In the nineteenth century and its manifold cultural products, the pursuit of knowledge was, in the words of Thomas Richards, “in the vanguard of the pursuit of power.”⁶¹

This process of collecting, analyzing and examining at the imperial metropole the various physical and material effects of the Empire and its spaces establishes the direction of the intellectual current during the period covered by this study. Furthermore, it highlights the intellectual and ideological footprints left by Europeans as they removed knowledge, whether in the form of physical specimens or metaphysical textual and visual records, from the imperial landscape and laid it before a European audience. The logical corollary of this concern with the recording and intellectual appropriation of the landscape is the

⁵⁸ D.P. Miller, “Joseph Banks, empire and ‘centres of calculation’ in late Hanoverian London” in Miller and Reill (eds.), *Visions of Empire*, pp. 21-37; p. 30.

⁵⁹ Richards, *The Imperial Archive*, p. 14.

⁶⁰ Wilson, *The Island Race*, p. 58.

emphasis on books, published narratives and the recording of one's experiences in a textual form that can be transmitted to posterity. Books were the major promulgators of colonial knowledge in the nineteenth century and have received much critical attention. Alec MacKenzie's achievements in imperial exploration are seemingly measured by his popularity in the world of print and text. On his return from another intrepid and successful sortie abroad:

publishers telegraphed offers for the book which they surmised he would write; newspaper correspondents came to him for a preliminary account of his travels.⁶²

This fictional account mirrors the real situation in the nineteenth century where the acceptance of one's exploratory achievements was in part measured by one's success in having one's adventures published. Reading through the letters sent by James Chapman to his patron in Britain, Sir George Grey, one sees the way that travel literature, as a literary form, was a highly mediated expression, very much dependent on the whims of individual publishers and editors. In a letter of 24th April 1862, Chapman professed that he would, "after I reach my journey's end, throw the whole into the most tempting form for another volume with which to tempt Mr. Bohn," his prospective publisher.⁶³ The Portuguese author and explorer J.J. Monteiro writes with evident relish from RGS headquarters in 1860 to Richard Thornton, a British geologist who accompanied Livingstone's Zambezi Expedition in order to inform his friend that "a book by me on Angola is soon, I expect, coming out. Murray has it and will no doubt publish it."⁶⁴ David Livingstone was another member of Murray's African "stable" and he too records his delight at having his work published as a record for posterity. In a letter to James Stewart, he recalled his pleasant surprise at Murray's response to his university lectures of 1857:

⁶¹ Richards, *The Imperial Archive*, p. 5.

⁶² Maugham, *The Explorer*, p. 119.

⁶³ Chapman to Grey, 24th April 1862; Quoted in James Chapman, *Hunting and Trading Journeys from Natal to Walvis Bay & Visits to Lake Ngami & The Victoria Falls*, edited and introduced by E.C. Tabler, 2 vols. [Cape Town, 1971]; Vol. 2, p. 211.

⁶⁴ Monteiro to Thornton, 5th July 1860; Quoted in Richard Thornton, *The Zambezi Papers of Richard Thornton: Geologist to Livingstone's Zambezi Expedition, 1858-63*, edited by Edward C. Tabler, 2 vols. [London, 1963]; Vol. 2, p. 226.

I did not expect a *volume* from the lectures, but thought that Mr. Murray would issue a cheap edition. If it does good it's all right (his italics).⁶⁵

Therefore, Maugham's fictional creation stands as testimony to the actual circumstances in the nineteenth century whereby a publication could enhance one's reputation and sanction one's travels. Indeed, the importance of books in cultural matters was acknowledged in the nineteenth century itself. In April 1852 the anonymous author of an article in the Westminster Review contended, "the facts connected with the production and distribution of books, though little heeded by the public, are nevertheless, of great social and political importance."⁶⁶ The consideration of the production and compilation of books was, in the imperial context, a central issue for the construction and maintenance of an imperial archive.

The written word and its accomplice, the visual image, were employed in all manner of ways in order to further European hegemony whether that be in the form of describing the evils of slavery, promoting emigration or simply revelling in the chase. In Joseph Conrad's classic novella of imperial disintegration and colonial discontent, Heart of Darkness, one of the most striking episodes occurs when the narrator stumbles across a tattered old book in a riverside hut, "fifty miles below the Inner Station;"

It had lost its covers, and the pages had been thumbed through into a state of extreme dirty softness.... Its title was, "An Inquiry Into Some Points of Seamanship", by a man, Tower, Towson – some such name – Master in His Majesty's Navy. The matter looked dreary reading enough with illustrative diagrams and repulsive tables of figures, and the copy was sixty years old.... Not a very enthralling book but at first glance you could see there was a singleness of intention, an honest concern for the right way of going about things, which made these humble pages, thought out so many years ago, luminous with another than professional light.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Livingstone to Stewart, 26th January 1860; Quoted in James Stewart, The Zambesi Journal of James Stewart, 1862-1863; with a selection from his correspondence, edited by J.P.R. Wallis [London, 1952], p. 207, No. 1.

⁶⁶ Anon., "The Commerce of Literature" in Westminster Review (April 1852), pp. 511-54; p. 512.

⁶⁷ Joseph Conrad, "Heart of Darkness" in Heart of Darkness and Other Tales, edited by Cedric Watts [1899; reprint Oxford, 1996], p. 189.

For Conrad, the book is a symbol of the luminous light of civilization abandoned by the exploring European who proceeds to penetrate and eventually become subsumed by the dark penumbra of the jungle. The title of the work is a typically prosaic nineteenth-century description of the various forms of knowledge that were circulated among travellers to foreign climes.

The gathering of knowledge and information about the tropics and the far-flung outposts of empire took place primarily through the medium of books and the illustrations that accompanied them. Narratives of exploration enjoyed their hey-day in the mid-nineteenth century, proving to be vastly popular amongst many of the newly-literate.⁶⁸ In reviewing the British exploration of West Africa in 1848, Captain William Allen emphasized the link between exploration, the dissemination of knowledge and a culture of reading for the coterie of people likely to be conversant with imperial matters:

Mungo Park's simple and touching narrative is so well known to all *who read*, that it will be only necessary to refer to the achievement which has placed him at the head of African travellers [his emphasis].⁶⁹

Southern Africa was no exception to this and inspired the plethora of texts in the nineteenth century that form the archival basis for this study. However, even in the latter half of the eighteenth century, the prospect of publication had motivated one of the travellers on board Captain Cook's voyages of discovery to withhold his impressions of the country for a separate account, which he presumably intended to lay before the public at a later date. On entering Table Bay in HMS *Resolution*, Johann Forster wrote:

Here I break off my Journal at the Cape of Good Hope, as I intend to put my remarks on the Cape of Good Hope all together, & will there describe the Country, Town, Government, Manners, etc.⁷⁰

Forster summarizes the issues that the "typical" travel narrative, as it had evolved in the literary universe of eighteenth-century Britain, would be expected to encompass. It built upon and added particular cultural and societal imperatives to the type of text that

⁶⁸ See Robert A. Stafford, "Exploration and Empire" in Winks, Robin W. (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume 5 – Historiography* [Oxford, 1999], pp. 290-302; p. 291.

⁶⁹ Capt. William Allen, *A Narrative of an Expedition...to the River Niger in 1841*, 2 vols. [London, 1848], Vol. 1, p. 9.

recounted travellers' tales and which had been a staple of the literary market for centuries. These texts and their successors both relied on a conjunction between image and text to illuminate the thrust of the narrative.

Travel literature was an educative experience and a tool for initiating the reading public into complicity with the process of imperial expansion by regaling them with tales of adventure and excitement in distant lands. In the mid-nineteenth century, J.A. Froude penned an article entitled "England's Forgotten Worthies" in which he likened Hakluyt's voyages to "the prose epic of the modern English nation.... What the old epics were to the royalty or nobly born, this modern epic is to the common people."⁷¹ This eulogy to empire building and its concern to co-opt the mass population to the work of travel and expansion would manifest itself in direct proportion as Britain expanded her overseas trade and political empires in the late nineteenth century. However, even by the end of the eighteenth century, travel literature was second only to novels in numbers sold.⁷² The book of travels was a constant cultural reference point. With regard to the eighteenth century, Captain James Cook's voyages were a raging success. But other travellers, and their adventures in Africa, shifted the emphasis to this continent. According to John Lowes the adventures of James Bruce in Ethiopia caused quite a stir. Admired by Samuel Taylor Coleridge amongst others:

There was one book of the day which everybody who read at all was reading – Bruce's 'Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile.'⁷³

Indeed, the published travel narratives of explorers, hunters, traders and missionaries to the peripheral outposts of Empire form one of the richest sources of nineteenth-century impressions, views and opinions about the imperial landscape available to the cultural historian today. They were also a staple of the mid-Victorian reading public's literary diet – a domestic audience that was becoming increasingly interested in the events at the colonial frontier of a newly acquired and burgeoning Empire.

⁷⁰ Forster, *The Resolution Journal*, Vol. 4, p. 731.

⁷¹ Quoted in Anthony Payne, "'Strange, remote and farre distant countreys' : the travel books of Richard Hakluyt" in Robin Myers & Michael Harris (eds.), *Journeys through the Market : Travel, Travellers and the Book Trade* [Folkestone, 1999], pp. 1-37, p. 1.

⁷² Porter, *Haunted Journeys*, p. 26, n. 2.

The book formed an integral part in the process of collating and collecting nuggets of information relating to the colonial space. It had the additional advantage of editing and arranging these nuggets according to the criteria of an author educated in Western epistemological and philosophical tradition in order to create a self-contained archive of colonial knowledge. The fact that books – be they travelogues, hunting narratives or illustrated guides – were so crucial in building up a store of knowledge relating to the colonial experience is evidenced in the number and frequency of the inter-textual references that one encounters while reading through any of the texts concerned with the imperial space of the nineteenth century. The published account forms part of that archive of information that was used to further consolidate the process of intellectual appropriation of the landscape. The physical object of the book was one that provided a tangible link between the physical space of the imperial frontier, the ephemeral process of exploring that space and the appropriative process of placing the knowledge garnered at the heart of an imperial metropolis and at the disposal of European audiences.

Books could also be used as convenient reference points, providing epistemological stanchions against which to assess, analyze and relate new discoveries. There is a large amount of cross-referencing in many of the texts that relate to colonial penetration. One frequently encounters references to texts and publications that are employed in order to help to inform one's reading of the text at hand. Sometimes the author recounts her or his experiences by using the cultural anchor of a familiar and well-known book. This acts to illuminate the author's reactions to what she or he is seeing, and relate it to the reader in comprehensible terms. Lady Sarah Duff Gordon employs the name of that avatar of exploration, Captain James Cook, in order to orientate her impressions of the country for the reader of her letter. She was resident at the Cape of Good Hope in the middle of the nineteenth century, yet she still felt the need to organize her impressions of the landscape around the published works of a man who had travelled in the previous century. The use

⁷³ Quoted in Miles Bredin, The Pale Abyssinian: A Life of James Bruce, African Explorer and Adventurer [London, 2000], p. 204.

of such a name conjures up the associations of unknown landscape and successful exploration that she wished to impart to her reader:

To those who think voyages and travels tiresome, my delight in the new birds and beasts and people must seem very stupid. I can't help it if it does, and am not ashamed to confess that I feel the old sort of enchantment and wonder with which I used to read Cook's voyages, and the like as a child.⁷⁴

The overwhelming success of Cook's book and the interest it stimulated meant that the use of Cook's name and references to his book were a common occurrence. This monolith of the literature of exploration added apparent authenticity and credibility to one's work. Selous displays his familiarity with his literary heritage when describing a camp-side scene after a day's hunting:

[It] recalled to my mind the pictures, in an old book at home of Captain Cook's voyages, of the South Sea Islanders dancing round the fire during the preparation of a savoury meal of human flesh.⁷⁵

The insertion of a title of a book or the name of an explorer goes some way towards assisting the reader in the intellectual process of familiarizing themselves with the terrain described. It gives the reader and the author a common base reference point from which the subsequent outpouring of unusual, perhaps sometimes incredible, new information, can be set. It allows the two components of the process of the transmission of knowledge – the reader absorbing and the author imparting – to have a common cultural foundation with which to underpin the transaction of colonial knowledge. In other words, it places the recording and recounting of colonial information within a safe European forum which encompasses this knowledge and marks it out as just another part of that complete and comprehensive global system of knowledge that was the great hope of nineteenth-century Europe.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Lady Sarah Duff Gordon, *Letters from the Cape*, edited by John Purves [London, 1921], Letter X (22nd February 1862), p. 123.

⁷⁵ Frederick Courteney Selous, *A Hunter's Wanderings in Africa* [London, 1881], p. 70.

⁷⁶ Richards, *The Imperial Archive*, p. 7.

Travel writing in the words of Steve Clarke, is “collective and incremental, rather than singular and aesthetic.”⁷⁷ It relies on a gradual process, building upon the advances made by previous travellers and the impressions recorded and published by them, and situating one’s work within this archive of knowledge. It supposes a store of knowledge in its reader that will allow it to draw upon, make reference to and contradict other published accounts already in the cultural bloodstream. In 1827, George Thompson makes apologies for writing about the Cape and lauds the achievements of his illustrious predecessors - Barrow, Lichtenstein, Burchell and the mysterious “Civil Servant of 1822,” in order to place himself and his narrative in this network of references.⁷⁸ However, he uses this strategy to imply that his account builds on this store of knowledge by maintaining that much remains to be discussed which is “certainly not uninteresting to Englishmen, if full acquaintance with the dependencies of the empire is to be considered necessary or desirable.”⁷⁹ Another instance of this is the concise, forty thousand word history of the Cape Colony written by Thomas Baines while he was perusing the library at Cape Town. This piece of academic telescoping deals with the colony from its inception as a Dutch outpost in 1652 right up to the War of the Axe (1846-8), drawing upon an enormous and impressively eclectic range of source material which is helpfully included as footnotes.⁸⁰ The huge range of learning evidenced in the footnotes and the unpublished account in general, serves not only to advertise Baines’ ability as an author but also highlights the type of information available in the library and the way in which this material was used by authors in the nineteenth-century colonial context. Information lodged in public archives like libraries was consulted and trawled for useful nuggets that might further the colonial process. However, this knowledge was malleable and contingent on the advancement of the imperial project. Thus, it might also be disproved as learning and exploration advanced. And so, in the letterpress for his Victoria Falls album of lithographs, Baines refutes the spurious public perception of the African interior

⁷⁷ Clarke (ed.), *Travel Writing and Empire*, p. 1.

⁷⁸ George Thompson, *Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa* [London, 1827], p. viii.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. viii.

⁸⁰ Among Baines’ sources were Moodie’s *Record*, Chase’s *Natal Papers*, Lichtenstein, Philips’ *Researches*, Barrow, Appleyard’s *Kafir Grammar*, the *Christian Watchman*, Thompson, Latrobe, Pringle, Boyce’s *Notes on South African Affairs*, the Blue Book of 23rd June 1851, the *Grahamstown Journal* and MS records in the Brigade Office in Grahamstown.

as being a “vast desert.”⁸¹ He refers to further misconceptions arising from the unquestioning acceptance by the public of works such as Ogilby’s *Africa* (1670) and the *Atlas Geographus* (1714).⁸² Thus, Baines’ work takes its place alongside these accounts as another stepping stone on the way to gaining complete knowledge of a colonial space.

The physical object of the book is used in these circumstances in order to place the author within a network of epistemological power and intellectual supremacy. The ability of the author to quote from other texts advertises him as a cultured and educated individual.⁸³ It also implies that the author is conversant with the overarching European teleological process of steadily accumulating, arranging and structuring alien forms of knowledge into a metanarrative with its organizing force in European imperial metropolises. These quotations have the effect of increasing the status and credibility of the author in the mind of the reader. He is understood as being in the illustrious company of his literary forebears. Thus, one appreciates his discoveries and his literary outpourings not only for their intrinsic interest but also as a contribution to the collective epistemological enterprise that formed the basis of the imperial archive.

The process of writing up knowledge and placing it in a book was of central importance to most of those explorers who set out on the imperial trail. The idea of transcribing one’s experiences into a journal with the intention of subsequent publication was of central importance to those engaged in the process of exploration. The hero of Rider Haggard’s novel *The Yellow God*, Major Alan Vernon, corroborates the factual accounts quoted above. He stumbles upon the unpublished and partially illegible journal of his uncle and it is this discovery which leads to his setting out for Africa:

Alan drew it out...the centre pages, however, not having been soaked, could still be deciphered, at any rate in part, also there was a large manuscript map, executed in ink, apparently at a later date, on the back of which was written: “I purpose,

⁸¹ Thomas Baines, *The Victoria Falls, Zambezi River, sketched on the spot by Thomas Baines, FRGS, 1862* [1862; reprint Bulawayo, Rhodesia, 1969], p. 1.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁸³ In one of the most extreme examples, there are references to over thirty-five different explorers in Darwin’s published account of his voyage in the *Beagle* and some of these are mentioned up to a dozen

D.V., to re-write at some convenient time all the history of my visit to the unknown Asiki people, as my original notes were practically destroyed.”⁸⁴

Haggard seems to combine many of the impulses adduced for colonial exploration. The account left by the Rev. Henry Austen stimulates Alan’s thirst for adventure. However, it is the near annihilation of that record of the journey and the prospect of adding to the knowledge collected on that journey that is incentive enough for Alan to retrace the steps of his uncle. The prospect of losing the knowledge gleaned by the uncle, the Rev. Henry Austin, acts as a strong impulse for Alan to return to the “unknown people” alluded to by his uncle. The late nineteenth-century adventure fiction, of which this example forms a part, constructed an imperial subject and a colonial landscape that was greatly influenced by the travel narratives that abounded in the previous hundred years or so.⁸⁵

This example illustrates how the final product of the published account seemed to give inherent sanction and verification to the traveller’s actions. It ennobled the whole activity of exploration by setting it up as providing a contribution to the knowledge being steadily accreted from the time of the Enlightenment and progressing through the nineteenth century. Abbé Prevost pointed out that, for Frenchmen undertaking travel and exploration, the writing down of their experiences was a duty:

A true voyager must work for posterity as much as for himself and make his writings useful to everyone.⁸⁶

The physical act of recording is elevated to occupy a position which has a similar position to the actual act of exploring itself. The process of recording and publishing is the inherent guarantee of truthfulness and veracity for the reader. The narrator of *Youth*, alludes to this conundrum by questioning the very existence of peripheral colonial space without the book:

Were it not for this handful of books, he could not be sure that he had not dreamed up the Karoo yesterday.⁸⁷

times. See John Tallmadge, “From Chronicle to Quest : The Shaping of Darwin’s *Voyage of the Beagle*” in *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (1979-80), pp. 325-45; p. 337.

⁸⁴ H. Rider Haggard, *The Yellow God : An Idol of Africa* [1909; London, 1973], pp. 109-10.

⁸⁵ Andrea White, *Joseph Conrad and the Adventure Tradition : Constructing and Deconstructing the Imperial Subject* [Cambridge, 1993], p. 9.

⁸⁶ Quoted in Bourguet, “The Explorer”, p. 296.

Therefore, the actual physical space of the Southern African desert becomes dependent upon its recording in a published narrative. Its existence is conditional and attendant on a textual account written by European explorers. The book and the forms of knowledge that it organizes, codifies and disseminates is an integral process in creating the identity and impression of the Southern African landscape for a domestic audience reading about this landscape at the imperial metropolis. Indeed, for him, the South African landscape only has existence through these textual accounts. William Burchell's travels provide this callow young man with further fodder for thought. The evidence for his travels and explorations is provided solely through the medium of the published narrative:

Burchell and his men may be dead, and their wagons turned to dust, but they really lived, their travels were real travels. The proof is the book that he holds in his hands, the book called for short *Burchell's Travels*, in specific the copy lodged in the British Museum.⁸⁸

It was vital that people who were travelling should get their experiences recorded in some physical form for posterity and to commit their experiences to the imperial archive. Books, as we have seen, partook in the process whereby knowledge of the colonies was systematically exported from the periphery to the metropolis where it was categorized and ordered for public consumption. Miller notes:

It might not be an exaggeration to claim that the accumulation of knowledge in the travel narrative (usually based on a redaction of field journals) was seen to provide the sole philosophical justification for the moral and physical risks of distant travel. Whatever the romantic appeal of the heroic traveller/explorer in an imperial culture, the contribution made to visions of empire and to imperial expansion depended crucially on seemingly mundane tasks undertaken in centres of calculation, including the travel writer's rhetorical success in encompassing distance in the published travel account.⁸⁹

The exhilaration and enthrallment derived from books of travels was coterminous with a desire to extract some scientific or educational instruction from the observations of

⁸⁷ Coetzee, *Youth*, p. 137.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 138

worldly-wise travellers. In relation to the landscape of the peripheral colonial space, the use of text to record and to analyze was very apposite.

Travellers were apparently determined to record their experiences in order to transmit them to posterity. They were acutely aware of the position of their texts in the role of creating an imperial archive. They advertise their texts as containing such useful information as was required to further the imperial project. Thus, they frequently abnegate any aesthetic value in favour of highlighting the informational and documentary qualities of their works. The recording of information that could be of use to future travellers, also engaged in a colonial process of expansion and exploration, was a prime motivating factor in the desire of authors to codify their travels in published form.

Thomas Baines, in his journal relating to his adventures in South-East Africa, claims that he wants his work to be “a reliable compendium of information” from which travellers and readers could glean information.⁹⁰ In a letter to Sir George Grey, James Chapman describes his expedition in the 1860s to the Victoria Falls on the Zambezi River in a journal sent home to Britain. It is accompanied by the enjoinder that “I should like myself to see parts of it published, such as may be of use to other people, viz. notes on lungsickness, inoculation, the poison grub etc.”⁹¹ In the preface to the narrative that was eventually published, Chapman lays the evidence at the feet of the reader:

Care has been taken ... to preserve, with scrupulous fidelity, whatever constitutes an addition, however seemingly slight, to the facts of geographical science, or to the truths of natural history – the latter more especially the favourite object of the Author’s regard, and his contribution to which will, it is believed be found one of the most attractive features of his work.⁹²

And, in his introduction to the work of Frederick Selous, the then president of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt (himself an avid hunter), posits the book as a kind of epistemological building-block, adding to the store of knowledge about various aspects of the colonial periphery of Southern Africa:

⁸⁹ Miller, “Joseph Banks, empire and ‘centres of calculation’”, p. 23.

⁹⁰ Thomas Baines, *The Gold Regions of South-Eastern Africa* [London, 1877], p. 1.

⁹¹ Chapman to Grey, 24th April 1862; reprinted in Chapman, *Hunting and Trading Journeys*, Vol. 2, p. 212.

⁹² James Chapman, *Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa*, 2 vols. [London, 1869], Vol. 1, p. vi.

His book is a genuine contribution alike to hunting lore and to natural history. It should be welcomed by every lover of the chase and by every man who cares for the wild, free life of the wilderness.⁹³

The text is therefore actively presented to the reader as a depository of knowledge that can be relied upon by the domestic audience and to which they can have recourse in order to answer any questions of information relating to the colonial periphery dealt with by the authors in their works.

The role of language and its physical application in books and texts, in the imperial project that I have outlined above accords with the experience of V.S. Naipaul, the Trinidadian writer, who acknowledged that “the knowledge I brought to my setting was linguistic.”⁹⁴ Simon Pugh introduced a selection of essays on landscape imagery, proposing that “landscape and its representation are a ‘text’ and are, as such, ‘readable’ like any other cultural form.”⁹⁵ The complicity of text and language in the construction of the metropolitan idea of colonial landscape was a highly useful one for the colonizer. However, as Edward Said suggests, “in any instance of at least written language, there is no such thing as a delivered presence, but a re-presentation, or a representation.”⁹⁶ Therefore, in this study, I will attempt to analyze and explain the various modifications made to the colonial landscape by artist, authors and travellers as they gathered, recorded and disseminated that information.

⁹³ Frederick Coustney Selous, *African Nature Notes and Reminiscences* [London, 1908], p. xix.

⁹⁴ V.S. Naipaul, *The Enigma of Arrival* [Harmondsworth, 1987], p. 12.

⁹⁵ Pugh (ed.), *Reading Landscape*, pp. 2-3.

⁹⁶ Quoted in Youngs, *Travellers in Africa*, p. 1.

In suggesting that the textual accounts recorded and subsequently published by travellers, explorers and others connected with the exploration of the colonial periphery, one must take account of the vital role played by the visual image in this process. The printed word was aided by the visual image in transmitting knowledge about new places. Paintings, engravings and other images added visual force to written accounts of colonial exploration. Indeed, as Altick has noted, during the nineteenth century “graphic art became almost as influential a disseminator of information as was language.”⁹⁷ The visual documentation of the landscape of Southern Africa, as an example of peripheral colonial space, is symbiotically connected with the textual appropriation of this space into a documentary imperial archive. The role accorded to the visual image, its construction as forming part of that imperial archive and the lengths to which travellers went in order to ensure that there was a visual record of their explorations and impressions of the colonial space through which they were passing will now be investigated.

Artists and those who drew were vitally connected with the recording of landscape and other information about the colonial periphery. Knowledge could be as equally valuable in visual form as in text. Many of the concerns relating to the visual depiction of the colonial landscape and its role in the accumulation of an imperial archive can be identified in the example of Marianne North. In her gallery of 848 oil paintings, deposited at Kew, there is much of interest to the colonial historian. Many of the plants and botanical specimens portrayed by this late Victorian artist incorporate many depictions of unspoilt, barely explored landscapes. These were crucial records of a type of landscape that was disappearing before the relentless onslaught of colonialism and the attendant industrial and commercial expansion. At the opening of the Picture Gallery, the Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sir Joseph Hooker, observed that such scenes were vanishing before “the ever-advancing settler and colonist. Such scenes can never be renewed by Nature, nor when once effaced can they be pictured to the mind’s eye, except by means of such records as these.”⁹⁸ And this construction of the visual record as central

⁹⁷ Altick, *The Shows of London*, p. 25.

⁹⁸ Quoted in McCracken, *Gardens of Empire*, p. 155.

to the process of collecting and preserving knowledge and information about the Empire was a pattern that had been developed and cemented throughout the nineteenth century. Artists partook in the grand, overarching and totalizing process of codifying and intellectually appropriating the landscape and peoples of the colonial space. Their role was less aesthetic and more concerned with documenting and recording accurately.

William Burchell also evidences this approach despite his working at the beginning of the century. He felt that the visual record that his sketches provided was a useful exercise and would counter the encroachment of civilization with all its corrective tendencies. Thus, his art “prevents it [the landscape of Southern Africa] from falling into oblivion.”⁹⁹

Writing a few years later, Captain Henry Butler was of the same opinion with regard to his book. It provides perhaps one of the first recognitions of the historical and ecological fragility of the area and an awareness of the European impact on it. Butler records:

each successive party [of hunters] comes down with the intelligence that the game is more wary and less numerous; and perhaps, in some short years, a few bleaching horns and these poor Sketches will be all that will remain to rescue from oblivion the memory of their once countless numbers.¹⁰⁰

Butler seems to imply that it is only his Sketches, both textual and visual in this case, that will rescue the memory of this area from sinking into the miasma of history. Butler contributes to the process that he laments while simultaneously elevating his book to a privileged status as an artefact containing precious and near-extinct knowledge about the Southern African environment.

And visual records could be used to explain and describe landscapes, scenery and events to people who would otherwise have had to rely on the contingent and perhaps unreliable evidence of text. In an advertisement for the lithographs of the Victoria Falls paintings the publisher, Day & Son, includes tributes by various members of the scientific establishment. One, Sir Roderick Murchison, occupied the influential position of President of the RGS. He is quoted as addressing the society:

⁹⁹ Burchell, Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa, Vol. 2, p. 212.

¹⁰⁰ Butler, South African Sketches, p. 13.

With an artist like Mr. Baines, who has sent home such admirable coloured drawings of South African scenes, particularly of the Falls of the Zambesi, those who are destined never to penetrate into the southern part of Africa may quite realize to our mind's eye the true character of that grand continent.¹⁰¹

And even at the end of the century, with the advent of photographic records, the role of visual images in recording, codifying and preserving for posterity did not diminish. As Susan Sontag commented, "to collect photographs is to collect the world."¹⁰² James Ryan suggests that "photographs need to be understood not simply as visual repositories of some frozen history, but rather as complex moments in historical processes of representation."¹⁰³ An excellent example of this is a collection of photographs of South Africa from the end of the nineteenth century. This compilation of one hundred photographs answers a want that "has often been expressed by new comers" to the country. According to the preface:

In the volume here presented, every view has been selected after the most careful deliberation, and it has been our aim to get together a thoroughly representative series, illustrating all the most interesting features of South Africa, and the life of its people.¹⁰⁴

And the author acknowledges the same role for the photograph – a relatively new medium of visual transcription – as that occupied by illustrations and other visual images throughout the period examined in this study – that of commemoration:

Besides its value as a picture of things as they are to-day [sic], in after years this book should be of service as a sort of mark from which future improvements in the country may be measured, and its photographs will then be of the greatest interest as a permanent actual record of bygone days, which, in a rapidly changing and advancing country like South Africa, it is as well to have.¹⁰⁵

Photographs of landscape were not alone in forming part of the imperial archive. Images of the zoological inhabitants of the landscape also came to take the place of drawings and paintings in the search for the most truthful representation of the colonial space. Carl

¹⁰¹ Advertisement; RGS Archives, London.

¹⁰² Susan Sontag, *On Photography* [London, 1978], p. 3.

¹⁰³ Ryan, "Imperial Landscapes", p. 55.

¹⁰⁴ *Photographs of South Africa* [Cape Town, 1894], p. i.

Schillings was adamant that such visual records as are published in his book were “biological documents of the highest importance.”¹⁰⁶ And their place, as part of that imperial archive of information and data, was acknowledged by Professor Lambert of Stuttgart, whom Schillings quotes as declaring:

These pictures are of the greatest importance. In them the wild animals of Africa will live on long after they have been sacrificed to the needs of advancing civilisation.¹⁰⁷

During his long and eclectic career, Thomas Baines explored the limits of cartography while simultaneously making oil paintings, watercolours and sketches of the landscape through which he passed. Baines’ work often occupies the intermediate zone between art and more scientific, less subjective records. His suggestions to the prospective artist-traveller are worth quoting in this context. Remarking on the best approach to adopt when sketching landscape, Baines asserted:

It conduces very greatly to the correctness if the bearings of distant hills are taken by compass and noted in pencil on the upper margin of the sketch (as it becomes then) while nearer features are simultaneously noted at the bottom – if the estimated distance in miles is added, this enhances greatly the value of the sketch, as it becomes then a geographical record, in addition to its merits as a work of art.¹⁰⁸

Thus, Baines posits the idea that art and an aesthetically pleasing record of the landscape of the colonial space need not be inherently conflicting with an accurate and truthful portrayal of that space.

Visual records could be at least as effective in transmitting knowledge and an impression of the colonial space to the domestic audience as the written word. Just as books and unforgettable written passages could stick in the memories of impressionable young readers so a visual image could have a similar effect. Michael Brander claims that the

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. iv.

¹⁰⁶ Carl G. Schillings, With Flashlight and Rifle: A Record of Hunting Adventures and of Studies in Wild Life in Equatorial East Africa, translated by Frederic Whyte, 2 vols. [London, 1906], Vol. 1, p. 25.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 25.

drawings of Bewick and especially his “eccentric figure of a gnoo” simultaneously fostered Captain Cornwallis Harris’ artistic leanings and his interest in Africa.¹⁰⁹

Frederick Selous was transfixed not by the many accounts of hunting endeavours in the veldt that he would become so famous for lording over. Rather, he was taken by a visual image in one of those many books (Plate 8):

I remember even today, and with perfect distinctness, though I have not seen it for many years, a certain picture in Gordon Cumming’s well-known book on African hunting, and the fearful fascination it always had for me when I was a small boy. That picture represented a great gaunt lion in the act of seizing one of the hunter’s Hottentot servants – poor Hendrik – as he lay asleep by the camp fire.¹¹⁰

The visual image worked in tandem with the written word in order to build up a store of knowledge. Thus, in relation to Southern Africa, Chapman sent home “upwards of 1,200 pages of closely written foolscap (28 lines to the page), several sketches by Mr. [Charles] Bell, my large map by Esselin, and other sketches by Esselin, Baines and Bowler.”¹¹¹ All this diverse material - textual, graphic and visual - would be incorporated into the final product of a book of travels that would fulfil Chapman’s stated educational and instructive aims for his text as quoted above. The roles of art and text in illuminating foreign, especially colonial, lands are intimately intertwined. The use of illustrations in these travel texts was almost a given and even a prerequisite of their popular success. In these instances the visual accompaniment was not just illustrative of the text - it was a serious and essential component of the holistic argument for educating and familiarizing the public with the scenes of colonial enterprise. Anne Godlewska argues in relation to another colonial project, the Napoleonic conquest and codification of Egypt in “Description de l’Egypte” that “sketches and maps were not designed to illuminate but to share the load of description and analysis.”¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ Lord and Baines, *Shifts and Expedients of Camp Life*, p. 629.

¹⁰⁹ Michael Brander, *The Big Game Hunters*, [London, 1988], p. 33.

¹¹⁰ Selous, *African Nature Notes and Reminiscences*, p. 47.

¹¹¹ Chapman to Grey, 30th September 1863; Quoted in Chapman, *Hunting and Trading Journeys*, Vol. 2, p. 222.

¹¹² Quoted in Burnett, *Masters of All They Surveyed*, p. 110.

Authors of books illustrative of the colonial periphery, by definition an unknown and uncharted space, frequently recognized the important role played by art and the visual image in their works. For example, Captain Lucas referred to the role of the letterpress in his Pen and Pencil Reminiscences as “being, as it were, more to set off the pattern of the plates than to afford any serious enlightenment.”¹¹³ Even writers who made claims for the scientific veracity of their letterpress were quick to credit the persuasive and affecting power that a well-chosen, carefully delineated image could contribute to a scene or episode. Hillhouse warned the scientific doyens and colonial explorers of the Royal Geographical Society in 1832:

Another qualification is indispensable – a ready pencil in watercolours; this saves the annoyance and expense of a companion, and the pencil is a faithful and creditable witness, without which the pen is too often held as the mere tool of traveller’s stories. It is my firm belief that no man can narrate an intelligible and faithful description of any object in nature, except that he can also make a drawing of it.¹¹⁴

The explorer David Livingstone exemplifies the way the divergent media of text and image were complementary resources in the European quest for dominion over Africa. Sending a report back to the newly-appointed Foreign Secretary, Lord Malmesbury, in December 1858 Livingstone included visual images by Thomas Baines and photographs taken by his brother, Charles Livingstone, who had been appointed to the expedition. In his explaining his diverse dispatch, the leader of the Zambezi Expedition commented, “I had thought this [was] the best way of conveying a clear idea of my meaning.”¹¹⁵ The documentary power of the visual image is here firmly united to the written description of the explorer’s travails.

However, some went even further and claimed that art and the visual record was even more suitable to the conveying of knowledge and information regarding the colonial

¹¹³ Capt. Thomas Lucas, Pen & Pencil Reminiscences of A Campaign in South Africa [London, 1861], Preface.

¹¹⁴ Quoted in Burnett, Masters of All They Surveyed, p. 110.

¹¹⁵ Quoted in James R. Ryan, Picturing Empire Empire : Photography and the Visualization of the British Empire [London, 1997], p. 36.

space being explored and delineated for a domestic audience. This was acknowledged by many travellers and tourists. For example, the great German poet, Goethe, claimed:

We ought to talk less and draw more. I, personally, should like to renounce speech altogether and like organic nature, communicate everything I have to say in sketches.¹¹⁶

And this attitude had been a commonplace of imperial adventure and exploration from its beginnings. The overt employment of art for the purpose of recording is apparent in the instructions given to William Hodges, the artist on Cook's second voyage to the South Seas, by the Board of the Admiralty, which required him:

to make drawings and paintings of such places in the Countries you may touch at in the Course of the said Voyage as may be proper to give a more perfect idea thereof than can be formed from written descriptions only.¹¹⁷

In the Journal of the Royal Geographical Society (JRGS), a scientific periodical, Colonel Julian Jackson, secretary to the society, advises travellers on the correct means of presenting their adventures for public consumption. He agrees that "for many objects of the material kind real pictures or plates convey more and better at a single glance than the most accurate description, and the want of these is frequently a defect in many books of travels."¹¹⁸ However, Jackson does not completely sever the link between the verbal and the visual. Indeed, here he compounds the link:

Moreover, the drawings of a work should be intended only to assist in giving a more correct idea of objects mentioned in the text. Plates are wanting in life and movement. The business of the text is to animate the scene, to warm the landscape, to make the figures move and speak.¹¹⁹

The confluence between the two media in the description of the landscape is articulated by William Burchell in a journal entry for 30th October 1812:

At all times a sketch is a most faithful and comprehensive memorandum and describes most things much more fully than the pen can ever do. Wherever time

¹¹⁶ Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Italian Journey, translated by W.H. Auden and Elizabeth Mayer [London, 1970], p. 9.

¹¹⁷ Quoted in Bernard Smith, "William Hodges and English 'Plein-Air' Painting" in Art History, Vol. 6, No. 2 (June 1983), pp. 143-52; p. 145.

¹¹⁸ Col. Julian Jackson, "On Picturesque Description in Travel Books" in Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, Vol. V (1835), pp. 381-7; p. 383.

will not admit of using both, there can never be a doubt whether the pencil should be preferred to the pen : it is in fact often the most expeditious mode of making a description.¹²⁰

Here, Burchell very definitely privileges the visual image as the better method of conveying one's impressions and therefore of committing the information to the imperial archive. Another adventurer, James Backhouse, travelling in the early part of the nineteenth century concurs with Burchell. He recounts:

in the progress of the journey, the writer was induced to attempt making many rough sketches of many of the places visited, by finding a difficulty in describing them satisfactorily in words.¹²¹

This closely corresponds to Burchell's reasoning. Interestingly, however, the motivation behind Backhouse's sojourn in South Africa was as a representative of one of the myriad missionary agencies operating in the region in the nineteenth century. Thus, of the forty-four published illustrations, twenty-four are of the various mission stations that he visited. Hence Backhouse's use of visual imagery is qualitatively different from that of Burchell, and their divergent concerns drive art to provide different functions and fulfil contrasting expectations throughout the period. Nevertheless, they both laud and privilege the role and efficacy of the visual image in the preservation and presentation of the landscape space.

Perhaps not surprisingly, those who most vigorously asserted the primacy of the image were professional artists. Two of the best known published illustrated books with accompanying letterpress. Thomas Bowler, the only nineteenth-century Southern African artist to exhibit at the Royal Academy, published The Kafir Wars and the British Settlers in South Africa in 1865.¹²² The preface positively revels in the inability of two centuries of written description to convey a sense of South Africa with its "remarkable geographical and geological formations, its rich and rare botany, its teeming zoology, its

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 383.

¹²⁰ Burchell, Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa, Vol. 1, p. 411.

¹²¹ James Backhouse, A Narrative of a Visit to the Mauritius and South Africa [London, 1844], p. v.

¹²² Bowler exhibited two watercolours at the 1860 Royal Academy exhibition: "A View of Cape Town from Table Bay" and "Dockyard, Simonstown." See Bradlow and Bradlow, Thomas Bowler of the Cape of Good Hope, p. 75.

salubrious climate, and its fertile soil.”¹²³ He dismisses the plates of previous illustrated books as “[nothing] more than rough sketches of more than ordinarily interesting or thrilling encounters with man or beast:- often drawn by artists who only betrayed their utter ignorance of the country and everything in it.”¹²⁴ He proceeds to condemn the specialist botanical and zoological works as catering to a small, elite coterie. His work will, according to the preface, redress this imbalance. He directly compares the role of the author and the artist-traveller. Naturally, it is the artist, and implicitly Bowler himself, who emerges triumphant in conveying a real sense of South Africa because “the reader must often wade through pages of print, however graphic and eloquent, and even then fail duly to appreciate or realize the scene described.” However, with the artist, the viewer “takes in with his eye the actual scenes and incidents of foreign travel.”¹²⁵ The overtly competitive nature of this preface should be understood in the context of a book-purchasing public with catholic tastes and a periodical press in whose review pages there appeared such diverse items as fiction, non-fiction, sermons, prints, books of engravings and so on.¹²⁶ Even the curmudgeonly acknowledgement of the words of his copy-writer by Bowler is barbed with one-upmanship. Bowler asserts that the task of W.R. Thomson was “a simple and subordinate one – merely to add a few hints and facts in connection with the main features and history of the pictorial illustrations.”¹²⁷ Thomas Baines also regards the text as subordinate. His two-volume *Journal of Residence*, with all the panoply of literary heritage that went into their compilation, was seen by Baines as merely the collection of diaries, kept “for the purpose of recalling to my mind the incidents necessary to be remembered in painting from the sketches.”¹²⁸

In these examples, the link established between the textual and the visual is broken and the two are constituted hierarchically and sequentially – sketch and diary notes precede and are superseded by the finished visual image. Nearing the end of the century, the pre-

¹²³ Thomas Bowler, *The Kafir Wars and the British Settlers in South Africa. A Series of Picturesque Views from Original Sketches by TW Bowler. With descriptive letterpress by WR Thomson* [London, 1865], p. 1.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹²⁶ For example, in the *Art Journal*, about 8-10% of the book reviews in the ten-year period from 1835 to 1845 are of illustrated books of travels.

¹²⁷ Bowler, *The Kafir Wars*, p. 3.

¹²⁸ Baines, *Journal of Residence*, Vol. 1, p. xvi.

eminence of the visual is common currency. In 1870, a young cotton farmer in Natal, recently arrived from England, wrote that he “never saw such an extraordinarily beautiful place in my life.” Proceeding to outline the vista offered and taking care to include a painterly comment about the “splendid blue tone” suffusing the whole, a youthful Cecil Rhodes gives up on describing the scene. He concludes with a rather forlorn rhetorical flourish confirming the importance of art for visualizing the landscape: “I often wish that I was able to sketch; I have seen lately wonderful scenery.”¹²⁹ Thus, the intrinsic value of the visual record is here accepted and acknowledged as a primary means of achieving an intimate understanding with the landscape and environment of the colonial situation. It is very much at the heart of the compilation of an imperial archive.

¹²⁹ Rhodes, in his letter to his mother dated 18th October 1870; Quoted in Thomas, Rhodes, p. 60.

Competence in creating and reading visual images was a principal area of concern for those who travelled in the alien and other spaces of the colonial landscape. They required a certain visual fluency in order to render their excursions useful to the project of compiling an epistemological archive of empire. James Bruce learned how to draw when he was in London. He had been taught drawing skills at Harrow, but he wanted to be able to paint the sights that he planned to visit. Bruce's friend, Robert Strange, who was himself an artist and engraver, found Bruce a teacher. This man, Maître Jacob Bonneau had the duty of teaching him the basic drawing skills as well as a correct taste in painting and art.¹³⁰ Indeed, so concerned with the accurate recording of his travels was the Scotsman that according to the editor of the second edition of his travels, Alexander Murray, he spent much of his time in Florence attending art lessons.¹³¹ William Burchell provides another example of this, being trained in landscape drawing by the artist Merigot.¹³²

Captain Henry Butler is yet another who brought an in-depth knowledge of drawing and artistic practice to the colonial process of knowledge recording. As both an officer and a gentleman, Butler was in the optimum position to produce drawings for illustrative purposes. Writers had long given credence to the widespread belief that some skill with the pencil was a desirable accomplishment for a member of the upper classes. Indeed, since the eighteenth century, drawing had come to be seen as constructing a class and national identity for its practitioners as well as fulfilling a role as a morally and socially improving pastime.¹³³ As a member of the army, Butler would also have been expected to be able to make topographical sketches for ordnance records and strategic planning. Military training required a modicum of skill in drawing for these purposes. To this end, Lieutenant-Colonel James Pattison reformulated the curriculum of the Royal Military Academy as early as 1764 in order to include drawing classes.¹³⁴ In 1768, the artist Paul

¹³⁰ Bredin, *The Pale Abyssinian*, p. 13.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

¹³² See Burchell, *Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa*, [1971], p. xiii.

¹³³ Ann Bermingham, *Learning to Draw : Studies in the Cultural History of a Polite and Useful Art* [New Haven and London, 2000], p. 77, n. 2.

¹³⁴ Alan Sheppard, *Sandhurst : The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and Its Predecessors* [London, 1980], p. 16.

Sandby was appointed Master of Drawing.¹³⁵ Of course, the use to which officers put this graphic training was not always for militaristic ends. In a short-lived mid-Victorian periodical, *Nature and Art*, the Professor of Landscape Painting at the Royal Military Academy in Woolwich, Aaron Penley, wrote a series of articles “On Sketching from Nature” in which he extolled the skill of sketching from nature:

It gives an additional zest to travel, and adds, in a peculiar manner, to the intelligent traveller’s store of information.¹³⁶

Thus, the exactitude of military draughtsmanship was frequently seen as advantageous to the traveller in his attempts to describe foreign and unfamiliar lands. Captain James Alexander’s book of travels and adventures was illustrated by Major Mitchell, the Surveyor-General at the Cape.¹³⁷ In the introduction, Alexander gives an insight into the benefits accruing from military training in landscape drawing:

The plates, the whole of which were drawn, and some of them engraved, by that accomplished officer [Mitchell], will speak for themselves: they are very faithful.¹³⁸

Therefore, Butler’s use of his skills acquired by virtue of his class and his professional training was by no means unusual. It serves to explain the phenomenon of the illustrated colonial travel book in the nineteenth century and the particular place that it held in certain social and professional circles as a means to convey knowledge and information about the fringes of a constantly expanding empire.

The idea of the peripatetic European explorer wandering through the plains of Africa, ever watchful for a passing herd of game or an interesting botanical specimen, does not sit comfortably with the stereotypical post-Romantic image of the meditative and contemplative creator-artist, sequestered in an ivory tower inured from the everyday existence. This type of Romantic detachment was not available to the artist living,

¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 13. On Sandby’s role in the ordnance survey of Scotland, see Charlotte Klonk, *Science and the Perception of Nature : British Landscape Art in the Late-Eighteenth and Early-Nineteenth Centuries* [New Haven, 1996], Chapter 3.

¹³⁶ Aaron Penley, “On Sketching from Nature” in *Nature and Art*, Vol. 1 (1866), p. 18.

¹³⁷ Capt. James Edward Alexander, *Narrative of a Voyage of Observation among the Colonies of Western Africa...; and of A Campaign in Kaffirland, on the Staff of the Commander-in-Chief, in 1835*, 2 vols. [London, 1837].

¹³⁸ Ibid., Vol. 1, p. xii.

working and recording at the periphery of the Empire, nor conducive to the kind of visual records that have been encountered in this study. As we have seen, the visual images of the colonial landscape that were produced were frequently made for reasons other than purely aesthetic enjoyment. The people who painted and drew the landscape did so for a range of reasons that will be explored in this study and their skill in draughtsmanship was one that complemented rather than supplanted their other roles in the colonial context.

In order to understand the visual products that will be analyzed later, it is necessary to appreciate the conditions under which many of these works were produced. Having identified the colonial landscape, in all its manifestations and guises, as the subject of this study and furthermore, having suggested that it is malleable to ideological manipulation, it is also necessary to acknowledge that this landscape impacted upon those men who explored it. It did so in the form of affecting the types of images produced and the conditions in which artists, amateur and professional, had to work. Thomas Baines, commenting on the manifold requirements demanded of the artist at the colonial periphery, wrote:

In the far interior of Africa, an artist must leave behind him every convenience, and becoming in turn smith, carpenter, tailor and shoemaker, bullock-driver, and astronomical observer, must obtain his sketches and finish his pictures as he can.¹³⁹

E.D. Young concurred, commenting:

In a land where a good day's work depends upon being ready to start at daylight, and in which for the most part the mosquito has it all its own way as soon as the sun goes down, there is little time to fill up pages of diaries.¹⁴⁰

Thus, the lifestyle and circumstances in which the artist worked had a vital impact on how the world around him was perceived and recorded.

Thomas Baines' book on life in the wilderness and how to survive it, co-authored with W.B. Lord, is a vital connecting link between how one should ideally confront the natural

¹³⁹ Baines, *The Victoria Falls*, p. 2.

¹⁴⁰ E.D. Young, *Nyassa: A Journal of Adventures* [London, 1877], p. v.

world, and the objects and equipment required to bring this about. He concurs with the theory of painting the object *in situ*, “one must be able to paint on the spot,” because only this enables one to capture “all the truthful reality that working in the presence of nature can...impart.”¹⁴¹ Captain Harris was an artist-traveller also committed to realistic depictions of the landscape and environments he encountered. In order to achieve this, he always carried sketching materials in his cap. After bringing down an animal he would repeatedly measure it with a tape and rule, check its proportions and then make several careful drawings from which he would paint with a fine brush later.¹⁴² Ever the pragmatist, Baines is sensitive to the mundane diurnal matters of paper and materials. Bearing the restrictions of space in mind, Baines suggests bringing “about a dozen sheets for any one day, three white and two each of the pearl, the warm and cool grey, and the drab paper.”¹⁴³ He continues in this vein by giving more detailed advice regarding the size of the paper to use. Imperial quarto (15” x 11”) is Baines’ choice “as it gives so much more space for detail in landscape or other subjects than can be gained upon the smaller scale.”¹⁴⁴ However, Baines seem not to have been able to follow his own advice. Despite his admonitions regarding the benefits of travelling light in the tropical heat and humidity of Africa, John Kirk tell us about there being “a very large amount of artist’s materials in Mr. Baines’ boxes.”¹⁴⁵ Thus, the artist cannot curb his requirements to represent the landscape and the sights that he sees. There is a constant face-off between the artist who needs materials, paper and decent working conditions in order to properly represent the landscape and the inhospitability of that very landscape which works against that end.

The interior of William Burchell’s wagon (Plate 9), a watercolour depiction of which was shown at the Royal Academy in 1820, gives some idea of the number and range of instruments carried by explorers. As Felix Driver notes, the depiction of the tools of scientific knowledge symbolizes the European penetration into the interior of an

¹⁴¹ Lord and Baines, *Shifts and Expedients of Camp Life*, p. 626.

¹⁴² Bartle Bull, *Safari : A Chronicle of Adventure* [London, 1988], p. 34.

¹⁴³ Lord and Baines, *Shifts and Expedients of Camp Life*, p. 628.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 628.

¹⁴⁵ Sir John Kirk, *The Zambesi Journal and Letters of Sir John Kirk, 1858-63*, edited by Reginald Foskett, 2 vols. [Edinburgh, 1965], 27th October 1859, Vol. 2, p. 264.

unknown continent.¹⁴⁶ However, their presence also indicates the sheer difficulty and lengths to which the European had to go in order to record and make images in the isolated wilderness of the African savannah. Indeed, the five hundred drawings which Burchell produced bear testimony to the success of his little mobile studio. James Bruce's journey to Abyssinia at the end of the eighteenth century was severely curtailed by the loss of much of his scientific equipment in a shipwreck. The sextant, parallelleptic instruments and telescopes, along with many drawings, which perished almost put paid to his wanderings. As Miles Bredin notes, these were needed to legitimize his travels and to give a purpose to his perambulations:

In the age of Enlightenment it was no longer thought desirable to discover places unless they could be given co-ordinates and drawn on a map.¹⁴⁷

The concern with truthfulness and the implicit plea for acceptance of the descriptions as "realist" is even more pronounced with regard to commentary on visual images. William Burchell is especially adamant that his work be seen as purely realistic. Of those drawings selected for inclusion in his book, none have "been touched by any other hand: from these plates have been immediately coloured and may be considered as expressing with fidelity the tints, as well as the outlines of African scenery."¹⁴⁸ His diligence is even apparent in the little woodcuts that pepper the text:

In order to ensure greater correctness in the vignettes the author has made all these drawings upon the blocks themselves so that the impressions are the fac-similies [sic] of every line of the pencil, a style of outline have being adapted as being best suited to engravings on wood.¹⁴⁹

One of the most prominent instruments that many amateur and professional artists had recourse to use in their attempts to achieve a realistic transcription of the landscape was the camera obscura. James Bruce, one of the first men to endeavour to discover the

¹⁴⁶ Felix Driver, *Geography Militant: Cultures of Exploration and Empire* [Oxford, 2001], p. 17.

¹⁴⁷ Bredin, *The Pale Abyssinian*, p. 45.

¹⁴⁸ Burchell, *Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa*, Vol. 1, p. vi.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. vi.

source of the Nile River, was fully convinced of this instrument's value to the explorer, bringing it with him on his adventures.¹⁵⁰ He elaborates on the benefits for the explorer:

All landscapes and views of the country, which constitute the background of the picture, are real, and in reality show, very strikingly indeed, in such a country as Africa, abounding in picturesque scenes, how much nature is superior to the creation of the warmest genius or imagination. Momentary masses of clouds, especially the heavier ones, of stormy skies, will be fixed by two or three careless strokes of a pencil.¹⁵¹

The apparently easy recording of the landscape which Bruce claims for this method above corresponds to, and in some way complements, the ease of the explorer's passage through this foreign and "other" landscape. The use of the camera obscura was not confined to amateur artists, but was widespread amongst even the professional elite. For example, the Daniells used one in India because of its time-saving qualities which enabled them to record many more scenes than would otherwise have been the case.¹⁵² Both Daniells were professionally trained artists and, as such, were acquainted with standard artistic practice and materials, making sure to bring material for preparing ground, for dead colouring, dozens of varieties of lead pencils as well as a selection of papers. However, they recognized the unique environmental conditions in which they found themselves and adapted their practice to this exotic situation accordingly. Thus, the Victoria and Albert Museum has an artist's colour-box used by the pair while in India. However, unlike the usual device of the artist's box the pigments in this contrivance are contained in small skin bladders which were pierced in order to obtain colours. This novel solution was used in order to counteract the fact that the dryness of the Indian air would prove quite incommodious to the hard cake of colour normally used in these cases.¹⁵³

The difficulties encountered by artists, in regard to the transportation, management and maintenance of their artistic equipment was not the only obstacle that faced those who

¹⁵⁰ James Bruce, Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile in the Years 1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772, and 1773, 5 vols. [Edinburgh, 1790], Vol. 1, p. viii.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. x.

¹⁵² Sutton, The Daniells, p. 27.

were bent on recording the intricacies of the landscape of these “other” countries. Frequently, even more arduous conditions were to present a potential block to the artist. Often the landscape and environment itself was responsible for this. Naturally, the overcoming of these troublesome obstacles gave the artist and his work more credence and higher value, validating the European experience in the tropical landscape and implicitly lauding its presence there. The biography of Thomas Baines gives some examples of the kind of extreme incidents that could befall an artist on the colonial periphery. As the official war artist during the so-called Kafir War of 1850-3, he could have expected to encounter some peculiar and perilous situations in which to be asked to work. Yet, his commitment to his art was perhaps beyond the call of duty some times. Thus, he oftentimes delighted in “the romantic beauty of the landscape” so much that he would be stooped over a sketch while the enemy encroached upon the camp and as bullets whizzed overhead, Baines would frequently abandon his rifle for his pencil.¹⁵⁴ Despite the circumstances in which Baines found himself in this incident, Africa, even in peace-time, could be an arduous, dangerous and spirit-sapping place in which to work. Charles John Andersson warned the prospective traveller that “to journey in Africa requires the endurance of a camel and the strength of a lion.”¹⁵⁵ The stamina required by the traveller could only be magnified in the case of the artist as he negotiated the landscape with the added encumbrance of having to make a visual record of it at the same time.

One of the dominant and recurring motifs in much of the travel writing and picturing of the Southern African landscape, and indeed many unfamiliar and “other” colonial landscapes, is the persistent desire to have one’s account accepted as a description of something as it actually is. Artists and writers, through prefaces and the quotation of valedictory reviews of their works, repeatedly assert the fact that this was what they actually saw; that this recording is a transcription done directly from nature, at the time and place. The veracity of the view or description as presented is given further corroborative weight by the fact that the white European has seen it and has furthermore,

¹⁵³ Ibid., p. 27.

¹⁵⁴ Wallis, *Thomas Baines*, p. 64.

recorded it with his typically critical detachment. The denial of any critical mediation on the part of the artist in presenting the view is, as we will see, an important facility for proving the European presence in the landscape. However, this strategy has another benefit for the European imperial mission. It implicitly recognizes the difficulties encountered by the European traveller. These are laboriously delineated and expanded upon in the text, but then overturned by the actual existence of the text itself. The author-artist evidences his overcoming of these unpleasant situations and his subsequent return to metropolitan domestic society by virtue of the publication of his travails. Using disclaimers of authorial intervention in the process of representation has a long history in exploration texts recording European expansion into colonial space. It is virtually coeval with the beginnings of geographical exploration and expansion. William Hodges, sometime artist aboard Cook's voyages of discovery and working in India, was most insistent on his work being seen, not as picturesque reverie or oriental fantasy, but as absolute reality:

The drawings from which the plates for this work are engraved, I have already mentioned, are fair and accurate representations of the originals.¹⁵⁶

The title-page of Thomas Baines' series of lithographs of the Victoria Falls includes the specific reference to their being sketched "on the spot."¹⁵⁷ Baines' concern with establishing the visual credibility of his work is a persistent mantra throughout the corpus of material examined in this study.

The interest in recording the actual morphology of the environmental surroundings finds a parallel in the books that were used to record the native animals and game of the various regions encountered by Europeans. Closely connected to mainstream scientific illustration that was used to accompany and elucidate books of botany and zoology, these images were nevertheless heavily invested with ideologies of scientific taxonomy and classification, hunting and imperial domination of space that were central to the European epistemological construction, fixation and representation of imperial knowledge. The

¹⁵⁵ Charles John Andersson, *Notes on the Birds of Damaraland*, p. xii.

¹⁵⁶ William Hodges, *Travels in India During the Years 1780, 1781, 1782 & 1783* [London, 1793], p. vi.

¹⁵⁷ Thomas Baines, *The Victoria Falls, Zambezi River, sketched on the spot by Thomas Baines, FRGS, 1862* [1862; reprint Bulawayo, 1969], title page.

overriding concern, according to the authors and artists, was for their being considered realistic, accurate and taken directly from nature. Captain Cornwallis Harris, more renowned for his hunting exploits than conservation activities, nevertheless professes a desire in his first book, The Wild Sports of Southern Africa, to make “accurate portraits of them [game animals] with appropriate scenery.”¹⁵⁸ And, in his next publication, Harris specifically designates the animals as having been “delineated from Life in their Native Haunts.”¹⁵⁹ In this he takes his lead from the trend for animal painting and natural history that was pervasive in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Britain, and of which George Stubbs is probably the leading proponent. Stubbs’ interest in the scientific factuality of his work led him to preface his The Anatomy of the Horse with the guarantee that the eighteen prints were “all done from Nature.”¹⁶⁰ One of the popular colonial literary figures of the nineteenth century, Harris distinguishes between aesthetic merits and the inherent beauty in the representation of the truth:

How manifold soever their imperfections, if viewed as productions of art, they can boast at least of being adorned with the beauties of truth, having all been delineated from living subjects, roaming in pristine independence over their native soil.¹⁶¹

This model pervaded the genre, so that even a lesser known work, like Butler’s South African Sketches, is presented as consisting of those impressions of the wildlife of the subcontinent that were recorded by the hunter “on [the] spot.”¹⁶²

¹⁵⁸ Capt. William Cornwallis Harris, The Wild Sports of Southern Africa : Being the Narrative of an Expedition from the Cape of Good Hope, through the territories of the Chief Moselekatse, to the Tropic of Capricorn [London, 1839], p. xxi.

¹⁵⁹ Capt. William Cornwallis Harris, Portraits of the Game and Wild Animals of Southern Africa Delineated from Life in Their Native Haunts [London, 1840], frontispiece.

¹⁶⁰ Quoted in Judy Egerton, George Stubbs 1724-1806 [London, 1984], p. 219

¹⁶¹ Harris, Portraits of the Game and Wild Animals of Southern Africa, pp. 1-2.

¹⁶² The advertisement for Butler’s work, circulated by Ackermann included the lengthy description of the work: “To be published by Ackermann & Co., 96 Strand, London: South African Sketches : Illustrative of the Wild Life of a Hunter on the Frontier of the Cape Colony by Captain Henry Butler, 59th Reg. The work will be published in Imperial Quarto, and contain Sixteen highly-coloured plates and Fifteen Etchings, from Drawings taken on Spot during a Series of Excursions to the Bontebok Flats, and Other Hunting Grounds, beyond the North East Border of the Cape Colony : with Notes and Observations descriptive of the Scene, the Game and the Mode of Hunting. Price £1 11s 6d neatly bound.” See Trade Prospectus in TCD archives Box OLS x-2-171, No. 26.

The constant refrain of the physical presence, sometimes reinforced by his actual depiction in the act of recording the landscape, was a strategy to establish the realistic criteria of the work and also to advertise its subjugation to the European power of imaging. And yet, the actual act of committing the landscape to record was done only at great personal discomfort, danger and even risk to the artist-traveller. The written text relies for its reception upon the complicity of the reader and his willingness to accept that which he is told. By contrast, the visual can masquerade as reality. Thus, the view of the landscape with the figure of the artist sketching away merrily in the foreground is a common sight in images of Africa in the nineteenth century. This draws on a visual convention that was well established as early as the eighteenth century. In his album of sketches, Sir Charles D'Oyly follows the conventions and fashion of the day by frequently introducing himself into his pictures and often his wife too. Of the 118 sketches, 33 include a portrait of the artist, instantly recognizable in his top hat and tails. Furthermore, eight of these representations are of the artist actually drawing the scene before us. These motifs are ones found in landscape representations from the eighteenth century and earlier and had become a well-established tradition by the nineteenth century. Their employment in the colonial context repays closer scrutiny. Burchell also sets the scene for his two-volume tome by including himself in the first plate, a view of "Table Bay and Tygerberg" (Plate 10). Here again, the European gentleman is seated, observing and sketching in his top hat with a green parasol overhead to protect him from the inclement solar rays.¹⁶³ The effect of introducing a European into scenes such as these is to sanitize and domesticate the inherent Otherness of the scene. With his back to us, Burchell suggests that we are seeing exactly what he is drawing. His instantly recognizable dress was familiar to his audience as a mark of respectability and lends weight to his claims as a truthful recorder. In D'Oyly's "Front View of Protea" (Plate 11), the presence of the artist at the Governor's residence has double impact. His inclusion authenticates the vision of the house. However, the composition is split down the centre by the neatly trimmed, well-maintained pathway. On the left, high mountain peaks and wild and encroaching vegetation almost camouflage and submerge the

¹⁶³ See Dane Kennedy, "Perils of the Midday Sun : Climatic Anxieties in the Colonial Tropics" in John M. MacKenzie (ed.), *Imperialism and the Natural World* [Manchester, 1990], pp. 107-125 for a discussion of

windows of the Governor's residence. On the other side of the composition, the one behind the artist, is a well-kept courtyard, complete with a European carriage and a well-behaved little dog. These epitomize the domestication of the Other required by the imperial process. The artist stands symbolically as the representation of this order. His ability to record the scene is the tangible evidence of British ability to subsume even the wildness of African savannah within European systems of order and control. The appearance of D'Oyly at various times and places throughout the record of his relatively short stay at the Cape becomes a sort of leitmotif. Rather like Augustus Earle in Australasia, the presence of D'Oyly suggests a narrative coherence to the whole series of sketches.¹⁶⁴ They almost amount to a visual travelogue in themselves, charting his movement from one place to another and recording his moderating European influence and intrusion into the exotic, alien landscapes of Southern Africa.

Thomas Baines is another artist who frequently included himself in his drawings and oils of African scenery. In "Kebrabasa Rapids, Zambesi River" (Plate 12) one sees a highly mediated rumination about the status of the artist and his relationship with the expression of the truth (Map 2; Feature n). It was worked up from sketches made on his ill-fated journey with the Livingstone Expedition.¹⁶⁵ Baines is in the foreground with sketchbook in hand while in the bottom right two companions, probably Charles Livingstone and John Kirk, attempt to photograph the scene that Baines has just sketched. Baines' attitude towards this new science was probably one of admiration.¹⁶⁶ His finished work explicitly authenticates his artistic techniques and production as records of the truth. In fact, the inclusion of a photographic tripod further reinforces the notion that Baines' sketch is absolutely truthful and also that he regarded photography as a visual aid for exploration. It suggests that the scene that will soon be presented to the public in photographic form,

the fears surrounding the harmful effects of exposure to the sun in the nineteenth century.

¹⁶⁴ See Leonard Bell, "To See or Not To See : Conflicting Eyes in the Travel Art of Augustus Earle" in Codell and Macleod (eds.), *Orientalism Transposed : The Impact of the Colonies on British Culture* [Aldershot, 1998], pp. 103-44.

¹⁶⁵ See Tim Barringer, "Fabricating Africa : Livingstone and the Visual Image, 1850-74" in John M. MacKenzie (ed.), *David Livingstone and the Victorian Encounter with Africa* [London, 1996], pp. 169-99.

¹⁶⁶ I tend to concur with James Ryan who sees in Baines' work an admiration for the art and science of photography which shared, complemented and often corroborated Baines' own ambitions for accuracy and aesthetic attraction. See Ryan, *Picturing Empire*, pp. 33-5.

taken with a camera, the “eye of history,” is that which Baines presents to his audience in this oil painting.¹⁶⁷ This is also the case with a sketch of the Victoria Falls, taken on 10th August 1862 as seen from Garden Island (RGS x229/022014). With mists drenching everything it is impossible for this to be anything more than a hasty record of the scene. Yet, he still finds time to include the artist in the middle foreground, on a rocky promontory, sketching a scene of such Romantic expressiveness. Although this may have provided much needed visual evidence of his presence at the Falls, it also provides us with a peculiar paradox. It reinforces the apparent truthfulness, not only of the observations being delineated, but also of Baines’ experiences, emphasizing his role as effective eye-witness. It alerts us to the subjectivity of his presence and observations, serving as an emotional key to the understanding and interpretation of the scene.¹⁶⁸ The very inclusion of his figure is intended to strengthen the claims to truthfulness and to realism that was the highest accolade that a traveller could achieve for his images. It also helped to bring the scene of foreign landscape within the purview of the European imagination. However, it implies an innate contradiction in that by including himself in the work of art purportedly created “from nature,” the artist was tampering with the scene depicted. In other words, it could never be a literal transcription of what the artist saw when he was devising and sketching the scene. It exposes itself as a mental strategy for visualizing a landscape scene. Its subtexts are revealed as being expressions of the colonial requirement to confirm its presence and to attest to the reality of its penetration into the scene portrayed.

Ernst Gombrich asserted that a preordained conceptual idea plays a vital role in the physical process of perception. In effect, conceptual knowledge conditions our vision; seeing is, in fact, impossible without knowledge.¹⁶⁹ This confirms the centrality of vision and visualization as a process of “knowing” and appropriating the land for colonization. It is evident from their accounts that artists (and the material to which they were exposed) selected, edited and suppressed certain facts. They aided the process of creating the

¹⁶⁷ Matthew Bradley; Quoted in Ryan, *Picturing Empire*, p. 16.

¹⁶⁸ Davison and Klopper, “Images of Distinction : Thomas Baines as Ethnographer” in Michael Stevenson (ed.), *Thomas Baines: An Artist in the Service of Science in Southern Africa* [London, 1999], pp. 90-107.

complex mixture of visual fact and imaginative construction which sustained the imperial project. These “culturally prefabricated templates” serve to insulate the perceiver from any alien, unfamiliar elements on display, and helped the assimilation of the Other culture/landscape by the perceiving eye.¹⁷⁰ This relationship between knowledge and vision with respect to the landscape will be the central focus of this thesis.

¹⁶⁹ See W.J.T. Mitchell, “Gombrich and the Rise of Landscape” in Ann Bermingham and John Brewer (eds.), *The Consumption of Culture 1600 – 1800 : Image, Object, Text* [London, 1995], pp. 78 – 97.

¹⁷⁰ Malcolm Andrews, *Landscape and Western Art* [Oxford, 1999], p. 14.

SECTION II: WAYS OF SEEING, MODES OF VISION

For a long time any consideration of the British Empire was predicated on Sir John Seeley's oft-quoted remark that Britain seemed, "as it were, to have conquered and peopled half the world in a fit of absence of mind."¹ This was the epigraphic encapsulation of British involvement with the rest of the world. Seeley's words express the disinterested nonchalance and gentlemanly insouciance that paraded itself as colonial benevolence, masking any distasteful hints of economic exploitation or colonial subjugation in British imperial policy. Colonial expansion in the period was perceived as a necessary and self-fulfilling corollary of European industrial and social development. The colonies were merely hanging on to the well-fitted coat-tails of a Europe that led the world economically and socially – a burden sometimes disruptive, but always secondary to Europe's metropolitan imperial centres of refinement. Joseph Conrad, in *An Outpost of Progress* (1898) questioned the existence of any coherent European scheme or plan in its drive to assert dominance over the globe. For him, the European encounter with Africa resembled "blind men in a large room," flailing about with no preconceived notion or plan to guide their steps.² Far from Seeley's absent-minded yet benevolent paternalism, Conrad construes the rather haphazard and unsystematic approach to the exploration of Africa as an indication of crass European ignorance in the face of the overarching exigencies of economic advancement and the scramble for financial gain. The whole sordid affair, the European conquest of the world was, as Conrad would later put it, "not a pretty thing when you look into it too much."³

Nevertheless, both of these commentators regard the European intervention in colonial spaces as one that is unregulated and that follows no particular pattern. Whether guided by the hand of fate or by a self-serving avarice, the European appears in the colonial spaces of the world as someone unconcerned with the actualities of that space and without any means of intellectually commanding its inherent otherness and

¹ Quoted in Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: The 'Expositions Universelles,' Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851-1939* [Manchester, 1988], p. 57.

² Joseph Conrad, "An Outpost of Progress" (1898) in Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, p. 9.

³ Joseph Conrad, "Heart of Darkness" (1899) in Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, p. 141.

foreignness. However, I will suggest in the course of this study how European and British travelling artists and authors in Southern Africa in the nineteenth century went about recording a landscape and committing it to the imperial archive. The metaphysical idea of an archive of knowledge required the addition of material according to predetermined European scientific, philosophical and aesthetic criteria. I will suggest that the representation of the Southern African landscape as a colonial space was achieved by the depiction of that space according to European notions of seeing, or modes of vision. The cultural and political anchor provided by seeing the foreign space of Africa in European aesthetic and visual terms was an act of cultural and intellectual appropriation that accords with the ideology of the imperial archive outlined in Section I.

One of the central metaphors in Conrad's Heart of Darkness involves Marlow's journey up the River Congo to the interior of Africa. For him, a transgressive and inquisitive white European, this voyage represents an exploration of, and engagement with, a previously uncharted and unknown region of the globe. It is an unfamiliar landscape, evoking uncomfortable feelings of ignorance, helplessness and insecurity: "We were wanderers on a prehistoric earth, on an earth that wore the aspect of an unknown planet."⁴ The concerns of this late-nineteenth-century text are mirrored in the post-colonial era by the characters in Barbara Kingsolver's novel, The Poisonwood Bible. Leah Price, one of the fictional heroines of the book, expresses the central difficulty of knowing and subsequently representing and explaining the physical and cultural space of such an unfamiliar environment in textual form. She laments the impossibility of writing to her high-school friends in Georgia about her diurnal experiences in the Belgian Congo: "And you wouldn't even get as far as breakfast before running out of paper. You'd have to explain the words, and then the words for the words."⁵ Kingsolver's character expresses an anxiety to engage in the process of recording and transmitting the experiences of Europeans in places peripheral to their traditional centres of culture and society, as well as the very physical impossibility of doing so.

⁴ Conrad, "Heart of Darkness", p. 185.

⁵ Barbara Kingsolver, The Poisonwood Bible [London, 1998], p. 266.

Both of these novels are deeply engaged with, and indebted to, their literary predecessors – the narratives of adventure and tales of exploration that proliferated throughout the nineteenth century, and the visual images that went hand in hand with these. All of these cultural products were engaged in the process of compiling an imperial archive – a store of knowledge about the colonial spaces into which Europeans were penetrating for the first time. However, as these examples confirm, the Western audience towards which these texts and images were aimed could not accommodate the strangeness, foreignness and otherness of the African continent using their traditional and culturally inherited methods of knowing. Africa was a territorial and metaphysical space removed from conventional Western European registers of meaning. It did not fit the basic European linguistic and philosophical template that was employed to describe landscape and travel. Captain Henry Butler found that “all nature spoke a *language* so different from anything European.”⁶ He expresses the same uneasiness as the fictional voices above in questioning the ability of Western European registers of meaning and recording to co-opt the landscape into the imperial archive, which, as we have seen, was such a vital part in the intellectual appropriation of the area. Therefore, in what terms could this foreign, strange and other land be envisaged and presented to a European domestic audience?

I have discussed how the mechanics of imperial intellectual hegemony worked through the process of creating an “imperial archive.” This store of knowledge was gathered in order to ease the intellectual assimilation process and to allow for it to be deployed according to various colonial objectives. These will be assessed later in this study. However, in the realm of visual recording, one of the most crucial factors in the collection of an imperial archive was the formulation of detailed “modes of seeing” based on the artistic and aesthetic criteria of the domestic culture. European travellers and explorers tried to arrogate their impressions of these colonial spaces according to the visual and conceptual vocabulary that they might employ at home and that is vitally dependent on the cultural currents prevailing at the time. These predefined strategies of visualization performed the ideological role that would commit these spaces to the imperial archive by capturing, recording and manipulating that which

⁶ Capt. Henry Butler, “A Glimpse of the Frontier, and a Gallop through the Cape Colony” in New Monthly Magazine, Vol. 77 (May – Aug. 1846), 312-20, 457-74; 474 [my emphasis].

was foreign and alien in the landscape and reducing it to a digestible form for consumption at the imperial metropole.

Thomas Bowler, writing for the first edition of the Cape Monthly Magazine, asserted that the principal task of the artist was “to cultivate the powers of vision.”⁷ But, for the first British people to represent the South African landscape this vision was inextricably linked to the need to claim and control the territory as a British metaphysical possession. The importance of this cultural foundation-laying would prove to be a durable and flexible tool of imperial and colonial ambitions throughout the nineteenth century. Although the prevailing attitude to Southern Africa may have been to conceive of it as a *terra incognita*, in terms of visual representation the phrase *terra nullius* may be more appropriate, since the area was imagined, described and depicted as a blank and empty land rather than as a pre-existing, unknown but vacant space. George, Lord Macartney expresses the state of knowledge about the Cape Colony, to which he was appointed Governor in 1797, in a complaint:

We are shamefully ignorant of the geography of the country; we have no map that embraces one-tenth of the colony; I neither know nor can I learn where this Graaf Reinet lies – whether it is five hundred or a thousand miles from Cape Town.⁸

The African Association also acknowledged the lamentable state of knowledge about Africa, using the same terms as Macartney, by specifically referring to a lack of visual information.⁹ Only a few years earlier in 1788, Henry Beaufoy, secretary to the Association, commented:

The interior of Africa was still but a wide extended blank, on which geographers, on the authority of Leo Africanus and of the Xeriff Edrissi, the

⁷ Quoted in Bradlow and Bradlow, Thomas Bowler of the Cape of Good Hope, p. 64.

⁸ Quoted by Lloyd, Mr. Barrow of the Admiralty, p. 53. See also Peter Barber, “British Library : Department of Manuscripts” in Patricia Larby (ed.), Maps and Mapping of Africa [London, 1987], pp. 39-47.

⁹ The African Association was founded in 1788 by a group of twelve like-minded gentlemen in order to pursue the furtherance of European knowledge about Africa. It seemed to represent the kind of disinterested, philanthropic approach that Enlightenment philosophy had hoped to inspire. Societies like this one have been described as manifestations of “Humboldtian science” in the service of intellectual endeavour. See Robin Hallett (ed.), Records of the African Association 1788 – 1831 [London, 1964] for a comprehensive discussion of the origin and subsequent development of the Association. See also Driver, Geography Militant, p. 34.

Nubian Author [had] traced with an hesitating hand, a few names of unexplored rivers and of uncertain nations.¹⁰

To these men, the empty space on the map of Africa was a mark of ignorance and represented “a stigma and a reproach” to their intellectual sensibilities.¹¹ At the other end of the historical period under scrutiny, Joseph Conrad recalls his schoolboy impressions of Africa as a vast “blank space,” the “then white heart of Africa” which continued to exasperate and frustrate European visual ambition.¹² Thus, throughout the period covered by this study, the landscape of Africa, and particularly the sub-Saharan part of that continent, was constructed in the European artistic and intellectual imagination as being a *tabula rasa* – a blank slate upon which impressions and opinions could be inscribed. How one might imagine and depict what has been constructed as literally not existing? By what means can this landscape be conveyed? According to what criteria should one assess the visual and aesthetic potential of a previously unexplored territory? I will suggest that in order to appropriate the territory of the colonial landscape into the imperial archive, European travellers and explorers employed a series of visual strategies that were derived from the contemporary aesthetic, artistic and cultural debates taking place in Britain in the period covered by this study.

¹⁰ Quoted in Hallett, Records of the African Association, p. 136.

¹¹ Quoted by Dorothy Middleton “Banks and African Exploration” in R.E.R. Banks, et al, Sir Joseph Banks: A Global Perspective [London, 1994], pp. 171-6; p. 172.

¹² Joseph Conrad, “Geography and Some Explorers” in The National Geographic Magazine, Vol. XLV, No. 3 (March 1924), pp. 239-74; p. 253.

Chapter 2: The Picturesque

“Can I learn to look at things with clear fresh eyes? Can the grooves of old mental habits be effaced?”

Johann Wolfgang Goethe, 1786.

Cultural appropriation and the stamping of one’s own identity on the landscape could be arrogated to the map-making impulse.¹ However, the pre-eminence of the visual impulse in the describing and recording of the landscape of the colonial frontier is also evident in the emphasis on aestheticized modes of seeing. For artists and indeed writers at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the most propitious way of looking at the landscape was through the artistic and philosophical lenses provided by the various aesthetic theories that proliferated in the latter part of the previous century. The cartographic character of much landscape painting was castigated by one of the leading figures in the aesthetisation of the landscape – the Rev. William Gilpin. In promoting his mode of envisaging the landscape, he criticized the estate portraiture made popular by artists like Leonard Knyff and Johannes Kip as an overcrowding offence to all artistic decorum and “but a painted survey, a mere *map*.”² In contrast to the cartographic way of seeing the land, Gilpin proposed a mode of looking that came to be known as “picturesque.” The aesthetic discourse formulated by Gilpin would prove to be extremely durable and useful to the artist and traveller in colonial lands. Colonel Jackson advised prospective authors to consider how they constructed their images of landscape. His warning to his audience illustrates just how pervasive the cult of the Picturesque became in relation to landscape description:

Not only then is picturesque description a necessary element in the perfect composition of a book of travels, but works professedly on geographical

¹ This impulse has been the subject of a recent exhibition in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam entitled “South Africa on the Map : The Gordon Atlas” (13th April – 14th July 2002) which comprises the 456 drawings (mostly watercolours) done by Robert Jacob Gordon (1743-95) between 1775 and 1786 when he was sent to the Cape Colony by the Dutch East India Company.

² Quoted in Malcolm Andrews, The Picturesque : Literary Sources and Documents [Robertsbridge, 1994], Vol. 1, p. 11.

science must borrow its assistance; for [it is] limited indeed the number of persons who peruse a treatise of geography.³

The concern with aesthetic theorizing was in itself regarded as a sign of one's cultural progressiveness in the face of the unrelenting barbarism to be found in Africa.

Stephen Kay, a corresponding member of the South African Institute, was in Kaffraria with a broad mandate for exploration (Map 2; No. 2). He distinguishes between the unenlightened and primitive habits of the natives and the innately sophisticated cultural predilection of those missionaries establishing an outpost in the lands of Chief S'Lhambi in October 1825. He comments:

the natives care not a straw whether the view be fine or otherwise; the scenery pleasant or unpleasant; such, however, are objects which weight with a European; and hence we pitched upon an elevated part of the land, whence the prospect is delightfully extensive, stretching over a beautifully picturesque landscape.⁴

By virtue of their position as educated Europeans, the landscape becomes legible and meaningful in ways that are just not accessible to the African. The Rev. Thornley Smith compounds this by introducing a specific cultural denominator as a reason for the different approaches to landscape – Christianity, something that sets the European apart from his African subordinate and legitimizes his assessment of the land in picturesque terms. In describing Wesleyville, a Methodist establishment in the Eastern Cape, the Rev. Smith pronounces that the Kaffirs have “no taste for beautiful scenery, and hence it matters not to them where they dwell, providing they have enough to eat and drink; but a Christian Missionary would desire, if possible, to fix his residence amid nature's charms.”⁵ It was by using these Western registers of meaning that Europeans initially arrogated to themselves the landscape of the Southern African sub-continent, and that the hegemonic manifestations of European aesthetic precepts took hold. Although Kay presents the dichotomy between the two positions as apparently predetermined and a *quid pro quo* of the relationship between the African and the European and Smith attributes the divergence in aesthetic appreciation of the landscape to a religious inculcation, the appreciation of the landscape in these terms was only a relatively recently formulated idea.

³ Jackson, “On Picturesque Description in Books of Travels”, p. 381.

⁴ Rev. Stephen Kay, Travels and Researches in Caffraria [London, 1833], p. 80.

⁵ Rev. Thornley Smith, South Africa Delineated; or, the Tribes and Missions of the British Colonies of the Cape and Port Natal [London, 1850], p. 102.

Kay's use of the word "picturesque" brings into circulation one of the most hotly disputed and overdetermined phrases in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century aesthetic discourse.⁶ One thing, however, that does seem to be generally agreed upon is the pre-eminence of the visual image in the construction and mediation of this theory. Richard Payne Knight comments that "Picturesque is merely that kind of beauty which belongs exclusively to the sense of vision."⁷ It has been noted that its significance is indirectly proportional to the theoretical imprecision of its definition.⁸ The term itself is notoriously protean and its meaning seems to flicker across a plethora of possible referents, constantly eluding the fixity of definition.⁹ The foremost moderator of the word was the Rev. Gilpin who gives the disarmingly simple definition of the picturesque as a landscape that is "expressive of that peculiar kind of beauty which is agreeable in a painting."¹⁰ Here Gilpin welds the appreciation of landscape scenery and its assessment through pictorial images and visual conventions together in a bond that profoundly influenced the way that landscape, both domestic and colonial, was imagined and constructed in the minds of the British public throughout the nineteenth century. Others had also noted this connection. For example, William Shenstone had rather anticipated the debate of the last decade of the eighteenth century in his "Unconnected Thoughts on Gardening" by proclaiming that "landskip should contain variety enough to form a picture upon a canvas."¹¹ These notions immediately raise questions for the historian of landscape images because these theorists employ specifically art historical objects and standards of assessment in relation to actual natural views. Real landscape is brought within the purview of art criticism. The results of this trend can be seen in a description by Captain Gardiner of his mighty bivouacs or halting places in the colonial Southern African landscape which are "truly picturesque." His group found itself:

⁶ Witness, for example, Malcolm Andrews' three-volume edition of sources and documents relating to the Picturesque, *The Picturesque: Literary Sources and Documents* [Robertsbridge, 1994].

⁷ Richard Payne Knight, "A Dialogue" (1801); Quoted in Christopher Hussey, *The Picturesque: Studies in a Point of View* [London, 1927], p. 244.

⁸ See Stephen Copley and Peter Garside (eds.), *The Politics of the Picturesque* [Cambridge, 1994], p. 1.

⁹ Malcolm Andrews claims that the word has a "semantically protean existence"; Quoted in Dana Arnold (ed.), *The Picturesque in Late Georgian England* [London, 1995], p. 1. In *Picturesque Landscape and English Romantic Poetry* [London, 1970], J.R. Watson recounts the story told by Dorothy Wordsworth of how Coleridge frantically wracks his brain for the "correct" word to describe the Falls of Clyde whilst on a tour of Scotland in 1803; p. 111.

¹⁰ Rev. William Gilpin, "Essays on Prints" (1768), p. x.

¹¹ Quoted in Charles Harrison, Paul Wood & Jason Gaiger (eds.), *Art in Theory, 1648-1815: An Anthology of Changing Ideas* [Oxford, 2000], p. 819.

often among romantic scenery, sheltered when practicable, by rocks, or branches of trees cut for the purpose; while the blazing fire shed a peculiar light over the motley features of the surrounding group. Not even the designs of Salvator Rosa, Bassano, or any other great masters of *chiaro oscuro* [sic] which I have seen, have ever conveyed to my mind the real peculiarities of these wild situations.¹²

Here one finds the natural landscape being consciously rendered with reference to paintings and renowned masters of the past. This is a cliché of picturesque assessment and is doubly conventional in its use of both European images and concepts. Although formulated only in words, the description betokens the interest of the observer who sees the landscape as the potential subject of a painting and whose account of the situation is infused with a knowledge of the history of art and landscape painting. Gardiner composes the scene with judicious aesthetic reference. The mention of the fire and its light even evokes the mellow tones of an oil painting. This technical hint is elaborated upon by his conscious, if mistaken, name-dropping of some of the most prominent and revered practitioners of the landscape art. Tim Youngs quotes the *Life in Abyssinia* (1853) written by the wonderfully monikered Mansfield Parkyns who provides a refreshingly honest and very prescient insight into this whole process.

Parkyns announces:

a description of things so totally different from what we are accustomed to, as everything in these romantic countries is, cannot help losing its African feeling and becoming Anglicised, first by an English description, secondly and mainly by passing through the English imagination of the reader.¹³

These examples might be related to Ernst Gombrich's ideas of the Picturesque which may go some way to help explain its predominance in visualizing the colonial landscape of Southern Africa. Gombrich employs the Picturesque to explain his thesis in *Art and Illusion* (1960). His fundamentally psychological reading of art means that he equates the Picturesque with a mode of looking at and visualizing the world in terms of our own preconceived notions of it.¹⁴ It is not surprising to discover,

¹² Capt. Allen F. Gardiner, *Narrative of a Journey to the Zoolu Country of South Africa undertaken in 1835* [London, 1836], p. 299.

¹³ Quoted in Youngs, *Travellers in Africa*, p. 21.

¹⁴ Ernst Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* [London, 1960], p. 3. See also Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape Aesthetics and*

therefore, that his central hypothesis is that painted landscape constitutes “not the nature of the physical world but the nature of our reactions to it.”¹⁵ Thus, Gombrich touches upon the psychological and intellectual effect that the Picturesque aesthetic had for the traveller. It allowed him to see the strange and alien forms of landscape but to know them through the application of comfortingly familiar terms and conventions. And these terms were invariably those of a Western aesthetic discourse that would enable the easy incorporation of the landscape vision into the imperial archive of knowledge.

The artificiality of the picturesque view of colonial landscape and its dependency on the mediating influence of the interloping European traveller is reinforced by Gilpin’s carefully thought-out compositional framework for the ideal picturesque scene. The dark foreground, bright middleground with framing background and lateral coulisses serve to formulate a template for views. New criteria promoting romantic wildness over classical formality came to determine the selection and depiction of scenery releasing artists to represent roughness, regularity and variety in formal terms of tone and texture. The real defining quality of the picturesque is its respect for what, under normal criteria of judgement, would be deemed ugly and decidedly unattractive. In an early essay in theoretical musing, *The Dialogue at Stowe* (1748), the Rev. Gilpin pronounced that “roughness, forms the most essential point of difference between the beautiful and the picturesque.”¹⁶ Sir Uvedale Price continued and refined this notion by listing objects such as old mills, gnarled oaks, shaggy goats, decaying carts and their horses and wandering gypsies as objects of a picturesque nature.¹⁷ It immediately unseats the neo-classical canon of aesthetic appreciation, permitting the encroachment of alien forms; forms which exist outside the well-ordered, rigidly-defined restraints of the idealizing landscape forms epitomized by the georgic reveries of Poussin and Claude. The timelessness of classical landscape painting is eschewed and replaced by an art that posits the detritus of British history and the passing of time as an aesthetic category while simultaneously creating a template for looking at the

Tourism in Britain, 1760-1800 [Aldershot, 1989] and Charlotte Klonk, *Science and the Perception of Nature* [New Haven, 1996].

¹⁵ Quoted in Klonk, *Science and the Perception of Nature*, p. 4.

¹⁶ Quoted in Walter John Hipple, *The Beautiful, The Sublime and The Picturesque in Eighteenth Century British Aesthetic Theory* [Carbondale, IL., 1957], p. 194.

¹⁷ Sir Uvedale Price, “A Dialogue on the Distinct Character of the Picturesque and the Beautiful” in Harrison et al (eds.), *Art in Theory*, pp. 878-880; p. 879.

natural world. The Picturesque vision could incorporate and accommodate new landscapes but did so according to highly mediated, preconceived templates – exactly the sort of operation required if one was to include colonial landscapes in an imperial archive.

Perhaps the greatest asset at the disposal of aesthetic theory, and the picturesque in particular, in relation to its colonial utility, is its associative and inherently non-objective character. That this mode of thinking depends on previous experiences and suppositions is clear and is acknowledged from its inception. The empirical character of this philosophy is in keeping with the general bent of much English thought since the seventeenth century. By transposing art to nature and bringing its standards to bear on the natural world, Gilpin and his successors implicitly accept the reordering and idealizing quality of this mode of vision. The whole exercise of appraising natural scenery by reference to some external rules of landscape painting was necessarily one of association.¹⁸ Archibald Alison described the intrinsically picturesque quality in an object as that which “awakens a train of associations additional to what the scene as a whole is calculated to excite.”¹⁹ External objects, rather than inherently containing the determinants of a canon of beauty or aesthetic quality from which a system of taste could be derived, merely act as stimuli to detonate chains of associated ideas in the mind of the viewer. This obviously had great advantages for the traveller at the edge of the colonial frontier. Colonel Jackson drew on this reasoning in his article in the *JRGS*, asserting “it is with the description of a landscape, as with music, the chief charm of both is in association.”²⁰ William Burchell also added to the debate by remarking that “the observant artist may discover that the beauty of his picture depends far less on the choice of subject than on the mode of managing it.”²¹ Thus, the analysis of any landscape view, in the picturesque mode, is predicated on ideas and a framework of aesthetic criteria already imbibed by the observer. The discursive construction of journals, and by implication the accompanying visual addenda, are generated by already existing cultural formations. Therefore, the Picturesque fulfils those criteria demanded for a method of landscape recording. It allows for the transcription of scenes and views, providing information. However, this is done in a

¹⁸ See Andrews, *The Picturesque*, Vol. 2, p. 300.

¹⁹ Quoted in Hipple, *The Beautiful, The Sublime and The Picturesque*, p. 164.

²⁰ Jackson, “On Picturesque Descriptions in Books of Travel”, p. 385.

²¹ Burchell, *Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa*, Vol. 1, p. 265.

familiar manner and with recourse to aesthetic criteria that could be intelligible to all. In effect, the landscape of the other was being rendered in European terms. This, perhaps more than any other ideological strategy, helped to make the Southern African landscape European and make it fit for its subsequent colonization and imperial exploitation.

The associationist model and the narrow prescriptions of people like Gilpin as to what constitutes the picturesque were important factors in the creation of what Malcolm Andrews refers to as a “picturesque template.”²² Into this scheme could be slotted all manner of natural scenery in order to conform to the picturesque preconceptions of the viewer. This formulaic approach to the depiction of landscape was particularly adroit in permitting the agenda of the artists to supersede the reality of the scene before them. Indeed, Gilpin concurred with this view. The aquatints that he used to illustrate his books of travel were the perfect embodiments of “the prominent and striking features” he came across, avoiding the minutiae of descriptive exactitude.²³ His works, and by extension those which follow his picturesque pictorial model, “illustrate not an actual scene but an idea, everything unessential [sic] to which is eliminated.”²⁴ The Picturesque is no more than a frame of mind which is an “aesthetic attitude involving man in a direct and active relationship with the natural scenery through which he travels.”²⁵

Nevertheless, the picturesque perception of landscape at home in England, while sharing many features with what I refer to here as the “colonial picturesque,” is markedly different from its exiled cousin. In point of comparison the colonial picturesque exists primarily as an outgrowth of the aesthetic fixing and categorization that occurred in the late eighteenth century. These aesthetic manifestations catered for a subjectified observer who is constructed as coming from, and existing outside, the view presented. The ability to schematize the scene according to the instructions for the finding of the perfect picturesque view actively reinforces and conforms to the idea of the observer looking into an ossified scene from an external and implicitly

²² See Malcolm Andrews, “The Picturesque Template” in Arnold (ed.), *The Picturesque in Late Georgian England*, pp. 1-9.

²³ Hussey, *The Picturesque*, p. 114.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

²⁵ Carl Paul Barbier, *William Gilpin: His Drawings, Teaching and Theory of the Picturesque* [Oxford, 1963], p. 99.

privileged point of view. This has further parallels to what takes place in the act of the colonial gaze where the outsider also looks in from an external position of privilege.²⁶

The best indicator of the way that artists pick up these ideas is by examining some of their sketches. Sketches of the landscape are the result of an initial engagement with the landscape. Generally made on the spot, these are summary and shorthand notations mainly for the purpose of quickly recording the scene before them. They are the least mediated and modified. They represent the best opportunity of assessing the artist's in-built aesthetic preconditioning, exposing the cultural shorthand that artists are employing to render the landscape intelligible to themselves. Alexander Cozens expresses the essential view of this artistic technique: "To sketch...is to transfer ideas from the mind to the paper...To sketch is to delineate ideas."²⁷ In the archives of Trinity College, amongst some letters to various interested parties, are rough drawings made by Captain Henry Butler illustrating how his artistic sensibilities were conditioned. For example, in Plate 13, the ink drawing with its evidently hasty execution with scratchy, erratic lines suggests its genesis as the preliminary outflowing of ideas. It traces the path of natural scenery through the eye and the filter of the aesthetically conditioned mind and, finally, its manifestation on the page of note-paper before him. These sketchy workings of the artistic mind evidence his reaction to the landscape and how he expects his vision to conform to a predetermined schematic. The same preoccupation with the placement of features and the differing levels of perception is to be found in a similar style of sketch by Thomas Baines (Plate 14). Even though it is executed after the halcyon days of the Picturesque, the pencil lines and watercolour planes show his searching for some sort of linear rhythm to represent the valley before him. The style of the drawing offers visual proof of the artist surveying the view with an idea implanted in his mind and visibly trying to make the landscape conform to this mental template. The foreground of gently undulating dale, laid down in a block-like plane is succeeded by the dark accents of branches and tree-trunks whose staccato forms eventually reveal the more tranquil rhythms of rolling, sylvan hills in the background. The artist's concern with the opening up of vistas and the direction of the viewer's gaze gives a satisfying

²⁶ See Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes* [London, 1992].

²⁷ Alexander Cozens, "A New Method of Assisting the Invention in the Drawing of Original Composition of Landscape" (1785) in Harrison et al (eds.), *Art in Theory*, pp. 848-54; p. 851.

symmetry and composition to the work but simultaneously highlights its constructed artificiality.

The sketches of John Webber and William Westall are particularly interesting in this regard. Both worked as artists on expeditions that only stopped at the Cape of Good Hope for the briefest of sojourns. The way they use the picturesque formula as an aid to jot down the salient landscape features is a vital indication of how Europeans could visualize a foreign land. Westall's view of the Cape of Good Hope looking North-West from Fish Hoek (Plate 15) is taken from an identifiable spot, about 350 yards west of the present railway station (Map 5; No. 3).²⁸ However, Westall has orchestrated his viewing position so that he can include a requisite amount of close-up foreground detail which is then expanded to encompass the peaceful little bay and is finally terminated by the mass of the rising mountains behind. John Webber pre-empted this composition in what may ostensibly appear to be a seascape preserved in the British Library.²⁹ The ghostly, nondescript ship may advert to its being a view near Table Bay. However, the large expanse of sky that dominates the sketch casts an atmospheric pall over the whole and signals the artist's intention to see forms in blocks of mass. The jutting finger of the mountain closes off the background view and prominences the middle distance filled with shimmering water just as Westall's drawing had included the bay in this area. Later in the century, George French Angas picks up on this formula in "D'Urban, Port Natal" (Plate 16) where we see similar motifs in a coloured lithograph (Map 1; Feature iii). These scenes encompass an area of water which is presented in amphitheatrical form. This shape, according to John Evelyn, "immediately proclaims itself a unity, perfectly composed and balanced."³⁰ This further accords with Gilpin's stricture to unite the variety of parts into one ensemble.³¹ All these scenes include a patch of foreground detail, conforming to the tripartite sectional approach laid down by aesthetic theorists. It also aids the artist in detaching the viewer from the scene, thus preserving the inherently self-contained unity of the view as a pictorial ensemble.

²⁸ Thomas Perry and Donald Simpson (eds.), Drawings by William Westall, Landscape Artist on board HMS Investigator during the Circumnavigation of Australia by Captain Matthew Flinders RN in 1801-1803 [London, 1962], p. 38.

²⁹ John Webber, Add MS 23921, British Library, London; Plate 56.

³⁰ Hussey, The Picturesque, p. 85.

³¹ See Rev. William Gilpin, "3 Essays and a Poem" in Andrews, The Picturesque, Vol. 2, pp. 5-60.

These examples evidence the fact that the colonial encounter with South Africa, and the recording of its landscape for inclusion in the imperial archive was heavily influenced by the predominant modes of aesthetic theory in cultural circulation at the time. The sketches of artists display their thought processes and their reliance on a picturesque mode of vision. This specifically aestheticized discourse continued to play a mediating role in the recording of the landscape. The associative quality of the Picturesque was employed in strategies by explorers and artists in order to domesticate this “new” scenery within European modes of vision.

(a) Englishness Abroad

The relationship of the colonial encounter to the aesthetic of the Picturesque was first acknowledged by the Rev. Gilpin himself. In his "Essay on Picturesque Beauty," Gilpin explains that "the art of sketching is to the picturesque traveller what the art of writing is to the scholar. Each is equally necessary to fix and communicate ideas."³² He comments on the use of the Picturesque mode of vision as a way of capturing and relating landscapes that may be unusual or unfamiliar to the wandering artist or writer. The paradigm of aesthetic appreciation set up by late eighteenth-century theorists was appropriated and carried abroad by those explorers and artists who were the first to describe new colonial spaces. The reduction of landscape to a formulaic composition of fore-, middle- and background, framed with lateral coulisses answered a basic need in travellers for familiarity and for a mode of interpretation.³³ It provided a way of co-opting the strange and exotic into the archive of imperial epistemology that was crucial to the formation of an imperial archive and the subsequent metaphysical commandeering of the land. By its very definition, the observer sees the picturesque landscape through the mediating filter of a comfortingly familiar Western prototype. This is a classic strategy employed to aid the assimilation of the foreign landscape for the European.

The trope that the colonial landscape of Southern Africa is unique is one that is reiterated throughout the nineteenth century. This attitude is exemplified in the comments of Burchell:

In the character of the landscape and its peculiar tints, a painter would find much to admire, though it differed entirely from the species known by the term 'picturesque.' But it was not the less beautiful nor less deserving of being studied by the artist: it was that kind of harmonious beauty which belongs to the extensive plains of South Africa.³⁴

Far from trying to localize the African landscape that he sees, Burchell's words are a highly complex melange of contradictory and conflicting ideological statements. As a traveller in an unexplored country, he must insist on the singular quality of the

³² Andrews, *The Picturesque*, Vol. 2, p. 26.

³³ Rev. William Gilpin, *Observations on the River Wye* [1782; reprint Oxford, 1991], p. 8.

³⁴ Burchell, *Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa*, Vol. 2, p. 272.

landscape but at the same time he needs to ascribe some Western form of understanding to it. By initially denying the picturesqueness of the scene Burchell scrambles to assign some other category to the vista while still restraining it within the epistemological limits of European aesthetics. His description is, in fact, inextricably connected to the practice of painting and hence conforms readily to Gilpin's initial definition of the term "picturesque." Paul Carter has argued that colonial landscapes and the picturesque qualities associated with them have a peculiar, even multifaceted character.³⁵

Malcolm Andrews has suggested that in travelling, the picturesque tourist used his preconceived notions when exposed to those intimidating and strange foreign landscapes in order to domesticate that which is alien. By imaginatively repatriating these images of new landscapes, the artist divested them of their threatening "otherness." This notion conforms to the ideological mechanics of the imperial archive as I have outlined above. Nevertheless, the place of the Picturesque in this role requires some further explanation. Here the theoretical position of David Cannadine in Ornamentalism is useful, where Western European cultures imposed elements of their own onto foreign cultures so that these could then reflect a safe and securely Westernized vision for the displaced ex-patriate. John Noyes quotes Jacques Lacan's belief about the "taming, civilizing and fascinating power of the function of the picture."³⁶ Lacan expresses how visual images, and the prospect of the visual, are employed, especially in the colonial context. In these instances, the visualization of a landscape prospect according to aesthetic criteria was performed in order to sanitize the threatening encroachment of alien environments. The relatively easy translation of the natural scenery of the Southern African landscape into the pictorially digestible images of the Picturesque was a vital part in the creation of an imperial archive. It not only aided the speedy dissemination of knowledge about these areas, but also rendered them infinitely more pliable to manipulation by vested colonial interests. The Picturesque became, in the words of Giles Tillotson, "the English way of seeing."³⁷ By imposing aesthetic contours of English scenery onto foreign landscapes the potentially hostile environment was familiarized and domesticated. Indeed, the

³⁵ Paul Carter, The Road to Botany Bay : An Essay in Spatial History [London, 1989], p. 236.

³⁶ John Noyes, Colonial Space : Spatiality in the Discourse of German South West Africa, 1884-1915 [Chur, Switzerland, 1992], p. 74.

³⁷ Tillotson, The Artificial Empire, p. 29.

reality that the colonial picturesque artist claims to be revealing accurately is only true in so far as it is a truth of his own culture's making.³⁸ The imperial strategy of simultaneously creating a semiotic blank from the country and then projecting comfortable and preconceived forms upon it can be seen throughout their ostensibly innocent descriptions. The "newness" of landscape becomes a fallacy as it is only ever seen as versions of previously known ones.³⁹ Howard Morphy suggests that the newly explored land does not have a discernible past for the European. Instead, the explorer brings with him an "old" past in the form of distant landscapes that were already experienced elsewhere and which influenced his conceptualization of the new land in which he is now situated.⁴⁰ In this, the Picturesque performs the role of a tool of visualization in the compilation of an imperial archive of knowledge.

A paradox arises in the consideration of the picturesque landscape as it pertained to the colonial experience – it is by definition unfamiliar and alien, but yet it must simultaneously conform to comforting images of home-counties rectitude. These contradictory effects are writ large in the colonial encounter with South Africa. The landscape of this region can be constructed in the picturesque mode as both conforming to the universal laws of the Picturesque or replicating a sentimentalized version of England. However, in this apparently oxymoronic matrix of landscape vistas, the overarching constraint of the European aesthetic criteria served to bring these new spaces within the imperial archive as it was being constructed in the nineteenth century. I will examine how the elements of the Picturesque as formulated in England could be used as a template for artists and explorers to slot in foreign landscape vistas. However, I will begin by focusing on how explorers and artists employed the Picturesque ideology to construct the Southern African as a replica of English Picturesque – the ultimate attempt to repackage a colonial landscape in terms familiar, unthreatening and intelligible to their domestic audience.

Explorers and travellers were aware that, in describing and delineating the colonial frontier of Southern Africa, they would have to present an unknown landscape to a

³⁸ Ryan, *Picturing Empire*, p. 50.

³⁹ Ryan, *The Cartographic Eye*, especially Chapter 3.

⁴⁰ Howard Morphy, "Colonialism, History and the Construction of Place : The Politics of Landscape in North Australia" in Barbara Bender (ed.), *Landscape : Politics and Perspectives* [Oxford, 1993], pp. 205-245.

public ignorant of its nuances and fiercely proud of its own natural heritage. Perhaps influenced by feelings of dislocation or homesickness, many of these landscapes were initially presented to a domestic audience by comparing them unfavourably with the landscapes of "Old England." However, as identity is essentially a relational construction, by using the landscapes of home as a comparative yardstick the artists and authors managed to wrap this other landscape of Southern Africa in a European epistemological matrix. For example, in 1820 about five thousand settlers arrived in the Eastern Cape to set up a fortified colony along the borders of Kaffraria.⁴¹ Among the emigrants was Thomas Pringle. His work shows how the settlers naturalized their new home of Albany by comparing it to what they were used to at home. The as yet unassimilated land of the Eastern Cape is found wanting whenever it is compared to the familiarity of the United Kingdom:

My Country! When I think of all I've lost,
In leaving thee to seek a foreign home
I find more cause the farther that I roam
To mourn the hour I left thy favoured coast.⁴²

The almost painful separation from comforting views of home expressed here was a powerful motivation for artists and writers to actively seek out views and landscapes that replicated those of the British Isles as closely as possible. By depicting foreign lands in an English mode they could simultaneously soothe the feelings of dislocation and conveniently confirm this portion of the globe as a far-flung outpost and microcosm of England. The art of this early period of discovery seemed to promulgate the notion that there would be a part of a foreign field that would indeed be forever England.

The creation of English features became a powerful impulse for the estranged expatriate sequestered in an outpost of Empire. The Recorder of Bombay in the late-eighteenth century, James Mackintosh, thought his appointment such a banishment that he used to take his family out for a walk every evening after dinner. Proceeding to an elevated vantage point, overlooking the sea, he would turn to his daughters

⁴¹ See H.J.M. Johnston, *British Emigration Policy, 1815-1830: "Shovelling out Paupers"* [Oxford, 1972], pp. 32-56.

⁴² "My Country" (1825), Sonnet XII in Thomas Pringle, *The Poetical Works of Thomas Pringle* [London, 1837].

saying, "Come, girls, let us go and look at the road to England."⁴³ In writing a letter to her father, the wife of the newly-appointed Astronomer-Royal at the Cape, Sir Thomas Maclear, extolled the beauty of the scenery surrounding the Observatory adding the reassuring codicil, "nor do I think there is anything to put you in mind that you are *not* in England."⁴⁴ The defensive, almost apologetic tone reflects her obvious relief at finding a comfortingly European character to the landscape around the Observatory. The introduction of English scenic characteristics gives particular pleasure to the exiled inhabitants of these foreign climes.

Thomas Bowler, writing to Dr Lee in February 1846, clearly expresses this yearning for the land of his birth: "for my part I would rather possess an inch of ground in England than half of the African continent."⁴⁵ This nationalistic attitude is reflected in his works, as he actively sought to portray the type of picturesque landscape that followed those rules crystallized by Gilpin. He continued to see South Africa through the eyes of an Englishman. In a recent exhibition of the work of L'Ons, Angas and Bowler, a reviewer in the Natal Daily News suggested that all these artists:

viewed Africa through foreign eyes and in most of the large number of works on view little of the heat, dust and colour of the country is conveyed. The works are exactly what one would expect from nineteenth-century painters trained in an English school. The light and composition is all English.⁴⁶

That Bowler actively sought the manifestation of the picturesque is conveyed by his correspondence. He tells Dr Lee that he will "shortly be visiting Cafferland and the other end of the colony in search of the picturesque."⁴⁷ The contents of his library, sold after his death, illustrate how Bowler combined a love for illustrated travel books with a respect for, and interest in, the Picturesque. Among those books up for sale were "A Picturesque Tour of the English Lakes, 48 colour plates" (no. 24), Black's

⁴³ Anon., "The Memoir of William Westall, ARA" in Art Journal, Vol. 12, No. 4 (April 1850), pp. 104-5; p. 104.

⁴⁴ 14th January 1834; Quoted in Bradlow and Bradlow, Thomas Bowler of the Cape of Good Hope, p. 26 [my emphasis].

⁴⁵ Bradlow and Bradlow, Thomas Bowler of the Cape of Good Hope, p. 43.

⁴⁶ Natal Daily News, 8th May 1976, "Review of 3 Top Painters", Bowler Papers, National Library of South Africa Archives, Cape Town.

⁴⁷ April 1841; Quoted in Bradlow and Bradlow, Thomas Bowler of the Cape of Good Hope, p. 36.

“Picturesque Tourist in Scotland, 26 plates, 63 engravings and map” (no. 147), “The Tourist in Spain and Portugal, many steel plates, 2 vols.” (no. 158).⁴⁸

The local scenery around Cape Town also provided Bowler with rich pickings. His article for the inaugural edition of the Cape Monthly Magazine concludes with a flourish of grandiose prose lauding the beauty of the Cape for the artist:

In no part of the world can the artist meet with finer scenery than that on our coast from Camp’s Bay to Cape Point, or that to be met with in Table Valley, Rondebosch, Protea or Wynberg.⁴⁹

The “Observatory from the Salt River” (Plate 17) is a delicate watercolour that seems to confirm Mrs. Maclear’s words (Map 5; Feature a). The large umbrella of sky, filled with ravaging clouds, threatening imminent rainfall is a familiar scene in these islands. The watery atmosphere is reinforced by the prominent river scene in the foreground with the banks populated by winnowing grasses swaying gently in the breeze. The Observatory is strategically placed on a slight eminence to symbolize its centrality to the picture. Almost as prominent, and closing one of the recessional diagonals of the composition is a windmill. This has multiple connotations of European industry and endeavour penetrating into the heart of Africa, as well as a throw-back to those pre-Industrial Revolution days so earnestly sought after by the picturesque tourist. Indeed, the windmill adds a further connotative level for the artistically educated and renders the scene quite literally picturesque by calling to mind the work of many Dutch masters in the seventeenth-century Golden Age of that country’s art.

The remedy for the malaise of the early settler was to reproduce the foreign as artificially English and European; by representing it using a familiar visual vocabulary and situating it within a knowable taxonomy of description the artist or author could assuage feelings of lonesomeness in the settler and persuade the home-based audience of the suitability and rectitude of colonizing this particular area. For example, Captain James Alexander describes the village of Wynberg, just outside Cape Town, in exactly the sort of idyllic terms that would console James Mackintosh

⁴⁸ “Catalogue of Books belonging to the Estate of the Late Thomas Bowler Esq. To be sold at auction, 22nd Sept. 1870”, Bowler Papers, NLSA Archives, Cape Town.

⁴⁹ Bradlow and Bradlow, Thomas Bowler of the Cape of Good Hope, p. 64.

(Map 5; No. 2). So Edenic is the town that it “ought to reconcile even English people – most difficult so to reconcile – to perpetual absence from home.”⁵⁰ He recognizes the English attachment to home soil so pathetically evoked by the story of Recorder Mackintosh. As if writing to this audience, Alexander gives a description of the town which is an admixture of fertile English domestic landscape and a bucolic prelapsarian haven:

Among its shady avenues of oak and pine, the fruit and flowers in the gardens, the abundant vegetation, the sublime mountain rising behind with its varying canopies of clouds, the running streams, and the air ever fresh and light, I felt I could live with exceeding pleasure in company with some suitable Eve.⁵¹

Alexander’s comments are corroborated by the artist George French Angas, who referred to Wynberg as the “Sweet Auburn” of South Africa.⁵² Captain Charles Bunbury described the little settlement in glowing terms:

Wynberg, which is a low hill jutting out from the roots of the Table Mountain, towards the sandy plain, is thickly studded over with well-built country houses, surrounded by groves of pine trees, and is a favourite place of residence, both for invalids from India, and for the wealthier inhabitants of the Cape.⁵³

Captain Lucas concurred with this view of Wynberg, considering it “as delightful a country village as can well be imagined.”⁵⁴ Angas’ illustration (Plate 18) evidences the shady groves, rich gardens and magnificent scenery that so enchanted Alexander. Nevertheless, the villas and cottages of the scene, hidden beneath avenues of pine and oak trees, provide the viewer with a depiction of safety and security behind the most European of tree species and replicating the scene of many country seats throughout the United Kingdom. Whether or not Wynberg actually displayed such a conducive appearance, it appears in art as the stereotypical English country village. In a dainty watercolour drawing, Bowler provides a view of “Wynberg Village and Green” (Plate 19). The composition turns on the fulcrum of the church placed in the mid-distance providing the typical centrepiece of village life and civilization. A winding road leads

⁵⁰ Alexander, *Narrative of a Voyage of Observation*, Vol. 1, p. 325.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 325.

⁵² George French Angas, *The Kaffirs Illustrated in a Series of Drawings...together with Sketches of Landscape in the Zulu Country, Natal and the Cape Colony* [London, 1849], Plate 3.

⁵³ Capt. Charles J.F. Bunbury, *Journal of a Residence at the Cape of Good Hope; with Excursions into the Interior, and Notes on the Natural History, and the Native Tribes* [London, 1848], p. 82.

⁵⁴ Lucas, *Camp Life and Sport in South Africa*, p. 26.

the eye into the background framed by two trees. The aura of the village nestling beneath the mountains is reinforced by the detail of the little dog which gives the impression of domesticity and reassuring timidity. The colouration of the work, especially in the delicate blue and mauve tones, also adds a mellow tone to the whole, subduing the rigid outlines and building up form through washes of watercolour. The documentary impulse is submerged by a work whose central aim is to evoke sentimentalized visions and memories of a life spent in Britain.

Edward Said claims that “English places have a kind of export value.”⁵⁵ Indeed, references to specific places in the British Isles abound in the narratives of nineteenth-century explorers. These naturally spill over into depictions as artists try to marry the freshness of representing new scenery and recalling a generic or specific location in the United Kingdom. Visiting the missionary outpost of Bethelsdorp, Andrew Steedman remarked that the “numerous buildings scattered in various directions presented the appearance of a small country village, and reminded me at first sight of some quiet and secluded hamlet in England.”⁵⁶ Thomas Pringle encountered the same village. He too saw it through specific, geographically-tinted lenses: “There was much in the rural aspect of the place to remind him of a Scottish glen.”⁵⁷ David Livingstone’s accounts are littered with references to the land of his birth. Coming to the bridging-point of the Kayse River he comments about its beauty and immediately qualifies his criterion of assessment -: the river is “very much like the Clyde in Scotland.”⁵⁸ He goes even further when he considers the district of Ambaca. The lofty mountains and “comparatively short” grass prepares the reader for a close analogy with a British landscape. The *pièce de résistance* comes when the group see some “rocks of the same nature with those of Pungo Andongo, and which closely resemble the Stonehenge group on Salisbury Plain.”⁵⁹ Perhaps the most emotive description comes in Missionary Travels where he apostrophizes on the valley of the Quango which, in the best colonial fashion, “lay below us.” Livingstone achieves an impressive blend of colonial landscape description admixed with evocations of robust

⁵⁵ Edward W. Said, Orientalism [London, 1979], p. 94.

⁵⁶ Andrew Steedman, Wanderings and Adventures in the Interior of Southern Africa, 2 vols. [London, 1835], Vol. 1, p. 2.

⁵⁷ Quoted in “Memoirs of Thomas Pringle” by Leitch Richie in Pringle, The Poetical Works of Thomas Pringle, p. li.

⁵⁸ David Livingstone, Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa [London, 1857], p. 332.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 381.

Scottish scenery and an amount of historical and poetical sentimental association for good measure. Thus, “if you sit on the spot where Mary Queen of Scots viewed the Battle of Landside, and look down on the vale of Clyde, you may see in miniature the glorious sight which a much greater and richer valley presented to our view.”⁶⁰ This passage gives weight to Morphy’s assertion that the Picturesque mode of vision helps its adherents to replicate the history, heritage and landscape of their own country as opposed to that in which they are travelling.

The Rev. Thornley Smith takes us on a virtual tour around the Wesleyan missionary stations of South Africa. One of his illustrated scenes is a plate of the “Cowie River, Lower Albany” (Map 4; Feature k) (Plate 20). This river is doubly enticing. Not alone is it navigable by boat, but its scenery is also enchanting. It possesses a combination of those qualities of restless variety, progress, surprise and domesticity that so appealed to Europeans abroad in the early-nineteenth century:

The course is serpentine, and at every fresh turn you take in sailing onward, the eye rests upon a new landscape of surpassing loveliness and beauty. It often reminded me of the Thames in the neighbourhood of Richmond.⁶¹

The pointed and specific reference to Richmond is very appropriate here as that town was frequently posited as the locus of a quintessentially English picturesque landscape. For example, in his “Thomson’s Aeolian Harp” (1809, Manchester), Turner transposes the tenets of picturesque beauty to a view of the Thames from Richmond Hill encompassing the site of Thomson’s tomb and Pope’s villa at Twickenham.⁶² It figures in many idealized views and descriptions of this area of South Africa. For example, George Nicholson also uses its name, and the associations it conjures up in the minds of domestic British audiences, in order to express the beauty and tranquillity of the region and also to promote it as a haven of quintessentially English topographical features:

In following the Cowie River, the beautiful village of Bathurst embellishes a landscape eminently picturesque and fertile. It is hardly possible to see a more lovely village than that which has been aptly named the ‘Richmond of South Africa,’ and the country for miles around is not only grand and striking, but is

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 359.

⁶¹ Smith, *South Africa Delineated*, p. 14.

⁶² Peter Bicknell, *Beauty, Horror and Immensity: Picturesque Landscape in Britain, 1750-1850* [Cambridge, 1981], pp. 31-3.

of a character more likely to recommend itself to the English taste than any I have seen in the Eastern Province.⁶³

The accompanying illustration in Smith's account includes a rather odd foreground with just the requisite number of exotic trees and plants to remind one of the location being depicted – the Cowie in the Eastern Cape. However, beyond this, the view has been constructed to appear quite similar to many river scenes of English origin. Smith avoids the charge of generic descriptiveness by referring to a specific part of a specific river, thus almost “twinning” the Thames and the Cowie. This specificity is a useful technique which cements an English and a foreign view together in a mutually informative and symbiotic relationship. The foreign view has no external or independent existence except as a cultural reflection of a scene already perceived and known in the United Kingdom. The home islands are constructed as containing every possible variation of natural landscape scenery and the colonial other merely displays certain facets of this. Therefore, British landscape can encompass the entire gamut of landscape vistas. This serves to ensure that the landscape of the colonial frontier can be seen, imagined and presented in terms of predetermined, known views.

Even the most threatening and hostile climates can be sterilized and domesticated by this strategy. For example, in a letter of 22nd August 1823, George Kilpatrick begins by giving his position as the delightfully vague “Interior of Southern Africa.” He then proceeds to expand on the unfortunate circumstances of the death of a Mr. Forbes and warns that the body must be buried immediately to avoid the spread of disease. However, in describing the little settlement of Senna, Kilpatrick succeeds in laying his British aesthetic template over the colonial scene before him. The village is:

built upon the banks of the River upon a vast plain, and on the skirts of a forest which extends in every direction until bounded by the horizon. Immediately behind the village a hill of a Sugar Loaf form, not unlike Dumbarton Castle, juts its head into mid-air rising above the level...not less than 400 feet.⁶⁴

The cultural signpost here is Dumbarton Castle, whose image “juts” into this description of an uncharted area deep in the heart of Africa. It is precisely this taming and domestication of the landscape which influenced the landscape views discussed

⁶³ George Nicholson, *The Cape and its Colonists : with Hints to Settlers in 1848* [London, 1848], p. 116.

⁶⁴ George Kilpatrick to MacDougall Clayson & Co., 22nd August 1823; RGS Archives, London.

above and which explains the way that they could be co-opted into the imperial archive.

The tactic of using a picturesque mode of vision to describe African scenery was purposely produced to assuage feelings of anxiety and nervousness in the prospective settler. George Thompson's travels were undertaken "partly from motives of business, partly from the impulse of curiosity."⁶⁵ The success of English settlers in Albany was to be judged by how well they had Anglicized the area.⁶⁶ In this instance, the overriding concern of freshly installed outlanders is one of security and safety. Rather than expect a vast scene laid out before him, Thompson is quite satisfied to see the limiting confines of enclosures and the evidence of landscape being cultivated and appropriated by Englishmen. The view he gets at "Thornhill, near Port Frances" (Plate 21) is "too confined to afford an adequate idea of the magnificent landscape which is commanded from Mr. Gilfillan's little mount."⁶⁷ The visual image which he conjoins to his narrative really does have an English appearance with the gentle, rolling hills behind the lines of wagons and cattle traversing the foreground. There is also the ubiquitous tree in the foreground which plays a similar role to that in Gainsborough's "Mr & Mrs Robert Andrews" (Plate 22).⁶⁸ Like that great work the artist depicts the area of the scene as one owned by the Mr. Gilfillan of the description. His claims to tenureship are reinforced by the walled enclosures and other evidence of cultivation that are dotted across this once wild, but now Anglicized, landscape vista. Thompson continues to search for the rusticity of home among the dwellings of Albany. The stock picturesque staple of the cottage is given added resonance abroad. He expresses great delight at the pleasing appearance of the settlements whilst on his way to the Great Fish River: "The hedges and ditches, and wattled fences, presented home-looking pictures of neatness and industry."⁶⁹ Here again we see the idea of "pictures" and a stock of visual knowledge providing Thompson's criterion of assessing the progress of the settlers. This is in contrast to the "rude and slovenly premises of the

⁶⁵ Thompson, *Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa*, p. viii.

⁶⁶ Thompson was sent out to examine their progress after 8 months of settlement. He spent six weeks in Southern Africa in January and February 1821.

⁶⁷ Thompson, *Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa*, p. 36.

⁶⁸ See Amal Asfour and Paul Williamson, *Gainsborough's Vision* [Liverpool, 1999], pp. 49-52.

⁶⁹ Thompson, *Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa*, p. 37.

back-country boors” who, by their disregard for the premises of the Picturesque or their environmental heritage, fail to domesticate or tame the wilderness of the scene.⁷⁰

Sometimes the replication of Englishness was so accurate that it became almost impossible to decipher and recognize the colonial content of the image. Thus remarked Thomas Pennant, the man who wrote the letterpress for William Daniell’s Oriental Scenery. Speaking about one of William Hodges’ pictures of a country seat, Pennant comments that he “took it for a house of some Englishman at high rank in our own country, till I spied in the grounds an elephant, which marked the place it belonged to,” ie. India.⁷¹ Indeed, Bowler can also confuse the metropolitan colonial power with its Other by virtue of the Other’s perfect assimilation and replication of English values. In “Mount Nelson as it was in the 1850s” (Plate 23), Bowler depicts the home of the Hamilton Ross family without the inclusion of the absent native tending the garden or any African scenery beyond a few local tree species. The presence of the rake and the watering can in the foreground highlights the typical European “improving” attitude and resembles the kind of landscape arrangement that ignited the whole picturesque debate in the late-eighteenth century.⁷² The beautifully-manicured lawns with well-tended flower beds was just the type of landscape that was suitable for those high-ranking European ladies strolling around the grounds of this most English of country demesnes.

The concentration on representing a particular English form of domestic dwelling and estate was not coincidence. As far back as 1782, in his “An Essay on Landscape Painting,” Joseph Holden Pott proclaimed:

nothing is to be found in any country at all resembling an English park; nature nowhere appears in so luxuriant a dress, so uncontrolled in her forms, and so lively in her tints.⁷³

The English country park acquired a plethora of political encumbrances that related to liberalism and freedom as defined against the restrictive exactitude and theorizing of

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 37.

⁷¹ Sutton, The Daniells, pp. 67-8.

⁷² See, for example, Barbara Bender’s compilation, Landscape : Politics and Perspective [Oxford, 1994].

⁷³ Quoted in Andrews, The Picturesque, Vol. 2, p. 275.

French Revolutionary ideologues.⁷⁴ Humphry Repton emblemizes this attitude by identifying the essential feature of the English country garden as giving “an appearance of extent and freedom.” The modern landscaper discards the “ancient palisade and lofty walls because he is aware that liberty is the true portal of happiness.”⁷⁵ It came to stand for an independent and free England. By successfully transposing this view to foreign scenery the author or artist could simultaneously identify this area with the best of British and thereby buttress colonial ambitions in the region. The disposition of the landscape was perceived as a definably British characteristic and held ample aesthetic pleasures for the weary traveller. The Rev. Francis Galton and his entourage spent three days wandering in the wilderness of Omaruru when suddenly they emerged out of the thick scrubland to view “the charming corn of Ondonga [which] lay stretched like a sea before us.”⁷⁶ He continues to describe “the beautifully grouped grove of palms, - dense, magnificent, park-like trees, - the broad, level fields of corn interspersed with pasturage, and the orderly villages on every side.” An even greater source of reassurance was the tendency of the natives to conform to European aesthetic standards in the construction of their villages. Samuel Daniell’s “Town of Leetakoo” (Plate 24), which was included as Plate 22 of his African Scenery and Animals shows the capital of Booshuanaland (in present Botswana), which, according to the estimates of Pieter Truter was as large as Cape Town (Map 2; No. 8).⁷⁷ The unusual assemblage of natives and huts is mollified for the European gaze by the classic picturesque structure of the feathery fronds of the trees in the right foreground with the calmly meandering river leading the eye towards a mountainous backdrop. The extent and freedom demanded by the English picturesque theorists is provided by the great “assemblage of huts, constructed as a regular plan was a sight as novel as unexpected.”⁷⁸

Thus, for many, the associationist model of the Picturesque could be gainfully employed to incorporate foreign views into European standards of beauty. Cultural

⁷⁴ See Jill Franklin, “The Liberty of the Park” in R. Samuel (ed.), Patriotism : The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity, 3 vols. [London, 1989], Vol. 3, pp. 141-59.

⁷⁵ Humphry Repton, “Enquiries into Changes in Landscape Gardening” (1806); Quoted in Franklin, “The Liberty of the Park”, p. 142.

⁷⁶ Rev. Francis Galton, “A Recent Expedition into the Interior of South Western Africa” in the JRGS, Vol. 22 (1852), pp. 140-63; p. 145.

⁷⁷ Published on 5th September 1805. Leetakoo was estimated to have a population of 10,000 when Barrow visited it in 1801.

⁷⁸ Samuel Daniell, African Scenery and Animals, 2 vols. [London, 1804-5], Vol. 2, Plate 22.

appropriation aided the political and physical process of supplanting the existing systems. The link established between British landscape and foreign soil legitimized the colonial project and comforted exiles at the same time. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, this close cultural link, mirroring the political situation, was an almost foregone conclusion in the depiction of foreign lands. Professor Ansted remarked in relation to this phenomenon:

It may be safely asserted that the great masters of English landscape Art cannot but carry with them something of their own country in their numerous visits to the picturesque scenery of foreign countries.⁷⁹

Eventually, however, the picturesque conventions of composing landscape would be used to assess the South African landscape itself. The next part of this chapter will explore how artists and authors who had imbibed picturesque theory put it into practice in the colonial situation.

⁷⁹ Professor David Thomas Ansted, "On the General Relation of Physical Geography and Geology to the Progress of Landscape Art in Various Countries" in *Art Journal*, Dec. 1863, pp. 233-5; p. 234.

(b) Composition of the Picturesque

The discourse of the Picturesque and the application of its characteristics were employed in order to create an equation between colonial South Africa and particular types of English view. However, artists also rendered actual scenes in the picturesque mode without recourse to the emotive link of a direct British equivalent. Andrews argues that so pandemic was the cult of the Picturesque that the tourist almost mechanically began to slot the landscape into his preordained notions of what should pass for the properly picturesque landscape.⁸⁰ The idea of selecting and combining objects in order to compose a landscape, implicit in the theory of the Picturesque, necessitates a clear idea of what was actually deemed to be “picturesque.” In the colonial context certain scenes and landscape views were deemed particularly suitable for description according to the tenets of the Picturesque. Here I will examine the Picturesque as it was employed on its own terms in order to render Southern African scenery and the various ideological implications that this had for the project of the imperial archive.

The Rev. Gilpin maintained that “Picturesque composition consists in uniting in one whole a variety of parts.”⁸¹ Giles Tillotson assesses the characteristics of the colonial picturesque in light of this maxim.⁸² He claims that the picture must be harmonious and coherently composed to include a good field of depth with the preferable tripartite recessional structure. Variety of form was introduced through the abrupt shape of hills and a concentration on foreground detail allowing for a play of light and shade. Finally there was invariably some reference to the human presence in the landscape. I will examine those central components of the Picturesque -: the use of certain types of scenery, the framing imperative and the introduction of European figures. The central concern of the Picturesque with constructing a view is perhaps due to Gilpin’s formative dictat that “no beauty of light, colouring or execution can atone for the want of composition.”⁸³ The opening up and control of viewing prospects by adhering

⁸⁰ Andrews, “The Picturesque Template”, p. 8.

⁸¹ Rev. William Gilpin, “An Essay on Picturesque Beauty” in Andrews, *The Picturesque*, Vol. 2, pp. 5-60; p. 7.

⁸² Giles H.R. Tillotson, “The Indian Picturesque : Images of India in British Landscape Painting, 1750-1850” in C.A. Bayly (ed.), *The Raj : India and the British* [London, 1991], pp. 141-57.

⁸³ Quoted in Andrews, *The Picturesque*, Vol. 2, p. 29.

to the compositional strictures of the Picturesque became a fundamental staple of the travelling artist.

In terms of the classic picturesque view, the riverside scene was probably the one most widely accepted as providing the necessary ingredients which, if combined correctly, would yield a picturesque outcome. Indeed, so persuaded of its picturesque potential was the Rev. Gilpin that he recommended the studying of a map of England and the memorizing of the courses of her great rivers to the picturesque tourist. He proceeded to advise his scions to make these river courses “the great directing lines of [their] excursions. On their banks [they] would be sure not only to find the most beautiful views but also obtain a compleat [sic] system of every kind of landscape.”⁸⁴ In fact, the river scene provides Gilpin with the classic formula for the ideal picturesque scene. In *Observations on the River Wye*, Gilpin suggests that riverside scenery:

is composed of four grand parts; the area, which is the river itself; the two side-screens, which are the opposite banks and mark the perspective; and the front-screen, which points out the winding of the river.⁸⁵

So enduring was this formula that even early photographs of the colonial spaces adhered to its central tenets. Thus, arriving in India in 1863, Samuel Bourne is disappointed by there being “no lakes, no rivers and scarcely anything like a stream” to answer his picturesque requirements.⁸⁶ Gilpin maintained that the picturesque beauty of riverside scenes “arises chiefly from two circumstances – the lofty banks of the river, and its mazy course.”⁸⁷ Writers picked up on these and correlated this template of beauty to the visions they were experiencing in South Africa.

In describing the Fish River, 18 miles east of Grahamstown, the traveller Steedman eulogizes about the beauty and graceful harmony presented by the scene after describing the river using Gilpin’s standards of judgement. We are told that “the river wound its sinuous course through the depth below, shaded on either by long lines of beautiful, yellow-blossomed acacias.”⁸⁸ Along the banks of the Cradock River,

⁸⁴ Quoted in Hussey, *The Picturesque*, p. 117.

⁸⁵ Gilpin, *Observations on the River Wye*, p. 8.

⁸⁶ Ryan, *Picturing Empire*, p. 50.

⁸⁷ Gilpin, *Observations on the River Wye*, p. 7.

⁸⁸ Steedman, *Wanderings and Adventures*, Vol. 1, p. 197.

George Thompson describes the fine willow trees “bending gracefully over the stream” – “altogether it was a magnificent and beautiful scene.”⁸⁹ The intertwining trunks and clumps of exotic foliage silhouetted against the sky could excite the reveries of even the most prosaic of travellers. The enduring aesthetic appeal of this feature was preserved in geography text-books of the later nineteenth century such as McCall Theal’s Compendium where he comments that the Orange River is “fringed along the greater part of its course with willows and other trees, which give it a beautiful appearance.”⁹⁰ Alfred Cole bemoans the want of water as being the principal defect in the Southern African landscape.⁹¹ Even latterly, J.M. Coetzee recognizes that the lack of surface water represents “a lacuna in the repertoire of the artist.”⁹² The reason as to why a colonial traveller may have found the luxuriant banks of a river so conducive is hinted at by Lieutenant Cowper Rose. He muses on the striking contrasts one can encounter in river scenery within the distance of a few hundred yards:

In one part, the banks are rich with various greens, in glowing orange and yellow tints, in light creepers, which the waters touch, as they ripple by through their leafy and blossomy covert.⁹³

However, only a short distance away the scene is transformed and bereft of this vegetative cover, “all around bears the stamp of cold decay and death.” Bishop Robert Gray, the first Anglican bishop of Cape Town, also sets up an analogy between the beauty and fertility of a stretch of the Oliphants River and the rich profusion of “my old friend the Mimosa.”⁹⁴ Indeed, at some places the scenery is so persuasive that “it gave the appearance of an English park,” indicating the ultimate beauty for the colonizer consists in repackaging and naturalizing the scene.⁹⁵

Samuel Daniell includes a plate in his Sketches that embodies the characteristics of the colonial picturesque riverside scenery (Plate 25), indicated by the feathery fronds of the overhanging trees clinging to the banks of a lazily meandering stream. The engraving method has contributed to an irregularity in the delineation of the

⁸⁹ Thompson, Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa, pp. 111-2.

⁹⁰ George McCall Theal, Compendium of the History and Geography of South Africa [London, 1878], p. 40.

⁹¹ Cole, The Cape and the Kafirs, p. 81.

⁹² J.M. Coetzee, White Writing : On the Culture of Letters in South Africa [London, 1988], p. 44.

⁹³ Lt. William Cowper Rose, Four Years in Southern Africa [London, 1829], p. 21.

⁹⁴ Rt Rev. Robert Gray, Three Months' Visitation by the Bishop of Cape Town in the Autumn of 1855 [London, 1856], p. 73.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

vegetation, reinforced by the jagged profile of the mountainous backdrop. The picturesque qualities of the work and the use to which they may be put is underlined by the title of the plate. The scene purportedly depicts the “Residence of a Hoarde of Caffers.” The presence of two small figures hardly constitutes a teeming stronghold of hostile savages indicated by the title. Instead, the picturesque template is employed to domesticate this potentially hazardous environment. By rendering the scene using a very European paradigm, Daniell denudes the depiction of any of those negative connotations which one might expect from such a semantically loaded title. Daniell’s continued interest in the Picturesque is evident in “Harte Beeste Fontein” (Plate 26). Again, the sprawling branches of the trees and the thick vegetation are grouped around the three antelope drinking from the little stream which Daniell compares to “the Oases of North Africa.” These spots are “sequestered and beautiful.” They are implicitly the kind of haven of European scenery that compare so favourably with the “sterility of the sandy plains in which they are found.”⁹⁶ This picture, its composition and resonance of the Picturesque is very similar to a work by Thomas Bowler (Plate 27). Luxuriant growth and a profusion of vegetative fertility are traits found in this work which is part of his *Kafir Wars* album. The moonlit, riverside scenery of “Wolf River” expresses those qualities of leafy tree canopies and healthy shrubbery that Europeans found so attractive. The presence of the three antelopes in the foreground drinking from the placid river adds a restful aura to the scene which is ameliorated by the pale, silvery tones cast by the moon. The details of the antelopes, their position and poses are practically indistinguishable from Daniell’s work. Bowler has merely ameliorated the surroundings and added a few extra botanical details. Both prints show the kind of compositional mimicry that was a by-product of the picturesque template approach to landscape.

The use of a stream to lead one’s gaze into the landscape is an idea that must be carefully regulated by the colonial artist. The thread-like river was employed to excite the imagination as well as the eye and ultimately to appeal to the observer’s colonial instincts. It required the viewer to extrapolate and to imagine what might lie beyond the limits of the gaze. The additional advantage of the strategically placed trees

⁹⁶ Samuel Daniell, *Sketches Representing the Native Tribes, Animals and Scenery of Southern Africa from drawings made by the late Mr. Samuel Daniell, engraved by William Daniell* [London, 1820], Plate 39.

shading the view further contributed to building the intrigue in the mind of the beholder. In Gilpin's "Instructions for Examining Landscape" he tells us:

[w]hen we see a pleasing scene we cannot help supposing there are other beautiful appendages connected with it, tho' concealed from our view. If therefore we can interest the imagination of the spectator so as to create in him an idea of some beautiful scenery beyond...we give a scope to a very pleasing deception. It is like the landscape of a dream. This mode of picturing the unseen gives painting a new power by thus pressing the imagination into its service.⁹⁷

The mazy, meandering course suggestive of easy-going and unlimited freedom that Gilpin found attractive has to be harnessed for the colonial purpose of bringing the mind into the picture. The strict compositional structure like "Keiskemma near Fort Cox Amatola" (Plate 28) by Bowler allows the eye to travel right back into the depths of the picture (Map 4; Feature m). The implied point of view from which the scene is perceived by the observer, apparently in the middle of the river, further suggests the arbitrary and constructed nature of the view. The detail of the crocodile padding furtively up the bank has a dual role. This animal had been used in emblem books as a symbol for the continent of Africa since the Middle Ages.⁹⁸ However, in this picture it also fulfils the role of alerting us to the colonial anxiety of the undiscovered, uncharted and possibly dangerous countryside that is attendant upon the upper reaches of the river. This colonial angst is only assuaged by the direct compositional link which leads the gaze up the river and then on a mental hike to the top of the overhanging eminence. The prospect of exercising the colonial gaze from this hilltop and the consequent mastery and dominance over the landscape that this will confer is seen as adequate compensation for the perils of delving into the unknown. It is the stream with its invitational openness that seems to extend this opportunity to the traveller. The similarity of these scenes to the types of images being used to illustrate new theories of evolution and global pre-history suggests that the same visual vocabulary was being employed in order to render views that, to all intents and purposes, were equally imaginary and unknowable to the metropolitan audience for whom they were produced. Scientific treatises, such as Franz-Xavier Unger's *Die*

⁹⁷ Rev. William Gilpin, "Instructions for Examining Landscape", Fitzwilliam MS no. 3674, Cambridge University, pp. 14-6; Quoted in Bicknell, *Beauty, Horror and Immensity*, p. 38.

⁹⁸ See Jenny Uglow, *Hogarth* [London, 1997], pp. 433-4.

Urwelt in ihren verschiedenen Bildungsperioden. 14 landschaftliche Darstellungen mit erläuternden Text (1851) (translated as “Ideal views of the primitive world, in its geological and palaeontological phases, illustrated by fourteen photographic plates” in 1855) and Louis Figuier’s Earth before the Deluge (4th edition, 1865), depended very heavily upon the work of landscape artists Josef Kuwasseg and Edouard Riou respectively for their impact.⁹⁹ The employment of a common visual schema with which to delineate such scenes indicates how these were carefully constructed to present a suitable image of novelty and strangeness while still allowing the European viewer to retain some form of intellectual command over them.

Although the river course is regarded as a source of aesthetic enjoyment for Gilpin, and could be managed by careful aesthetic manipulation, it could also reflect a hidden, subconscious fear of the colonial unknown. In Heart of Darkness, the river becomes the central metaphor. Rather than standing as the symbol of life for the Europeans that live, work and die on it, the generic Thames/Congo of the story become a brooding and inscrutable feature:

the tranquil waterway leading to the uttermost ends of the earth flowed sombre under an overcast sky – seemed to lead into the heart of an immense darkness.¹⁰⁰

The idea of the interminable stream which might never be navigable was a central trope in the European imagining of Africa and was anathema to the intensely curious nineteenth-century English mentality. David Livingstone records the words of some natives who express the unspoken European nightmare. Pointing out the course of a river they say “though you sail along it for months, you will turn without seeing the end of it.”¹⁰¹ The image of the river of life that was promulgated by Gilpin’s philosophy of lofty, luxuriant and fertile banks could be turned on its head by authors writing about the retreat of the river into the forbidden landscape and thus could powerfully affect the symbolic connotations of any riverside scenery depicted.

⁹⁹ See Martin J.S Rudwick, Scenes from Deep Time : Early Pictorial Representations of the Prehistoric World [Chicago & London, 1992], pp. 97-133.

¹⁰⁰ Conrad, “Heart of Darkness”, p. 76. A somewhat similar trope is found in a recent novel by James Ballard where the River Mallory is imagined as “a forgotten tributary of the primordial river in the desert gorges of Central Africa, where man’s primitive ancestors had broken their pact with the tree.” See James G. Ballard, The Day of Creation [London, 1987], p. 60.

¹⁰¹ Livingstone, Missionary Scenes, p. 332.

It is for similar reasons that the idea of framing the view carries a double resonance in the depiction and description of colonial scenery. Another one of the canonical picturesque conventions, the delimiting and framing elements of a scene were prerequisites of the carefully-composed, stage-managed view. However, the claustrophobic mentality of the European, who supposedly despised restraint and looked with horrified trepidation on scenes of confinement meant that framing had to be tastefully executed. Joseph Addison had already suggested that:

the Mind of Man naturally hates everything that looks like a Restraint upon it, and is apt to fancy itself under a sort of Confinement, when the Sight is pent up a narrow Compass, and shortened on every side by the Neighbourhood of Walls or Mountains.¹⁰²

Humphry Repton also adhered to this view. In his opinion the perfect landscape garden “should give the appearance of extent and freedom by carefully disguising or hiding the boundary.”¹⁰³ Ann Bermingham defines the picturesque landscape as that which “aspires to the condition of a vignette – that is, a centralized composition in shallow space whose boundaries are undefined or shade off.”¹⁰⁴ This becomes increasingly commensurate with the ambitions of the colonial artist working in the picturesque mode.

The Picturesque works to delimit the continuity of the universe and hence to produce a lateral and recessional frame which bounds and encloses the landscape, isolating it as an object. In the process of collecting information for committal to the imperial archive, the frame worked to delimit the vastness of the Other. It succeeded in metaphorically isolating, recording and then transporting a section of the colonial landscape back to Europe for analysis and computation. Framing becomes the visual equivalent of labelling – techniques to combat the vastness and unfamiliarity of the new space. Gilpin’s strict codification necessitated the framing of a limited scene in order to prevent the horror of an endless expanse. A heightened viewpoint was gradually eschewed in favour of a lower view accentuating the foreground and drawing one’s attention to this area:

¹⁰² Joseph Addison, *The Spectator*, no. 412, Monday 23rd June 1712; Quoted in Harrison (ed.), *Art in Theory, 1648-1815* pp. 382-8, p. 384.

¹⁰³ Humphry Repton, “Enquiries into Changes in Landscape Gardening” (1806); Quoted in Franklin, “The Liberty of the Park”, p. 142.

¹⁰⁴ Quoted in Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque*, p. 41.

It is certain, in fact, that a considerable foreground, with a glance of distance, will make a better picture, than a wide distance, set off only with a meagre foreground.¹⁰⁵

The vocabulary of the theatre could be easily assimilated to conform to these various requirements providing both back- and sides-screens. Thomas Baines records a scene on his journey to Grahamstown in March 1848 with recourse to the classical unveiling of landscape scenery advocated by Gilpin:

as we proceeded, the hills opening in the centre, as if like the scenes of a theatre they had been drawn away on either side, revealed to us the houses of the town.¹⁰⁶

This uncovering of the scene reinforces the idea that the landscape is composed, and can be analyzed, in the form of numerous receding layers. William Burchell's first glimpse of the Orange River illustrates the aesthetic use to which screening devices could be put:

The water glittering under a fervid sun, caught my eye through the leafy screen; and a few steps lower, opened as enchanting a view as it could be possible for fancy to imagine.¹⁰⁷

As well as the compositional benefit, the screen seems to render portions of the landscape as individual, self-contained and isolated segments of beauty, perfectly accessible and safe for the travelling explorer. Jay Appleton's theory, closely echoes Edmund Burke's philosophical position, by positing the viewer's aesthetic pleasure in a landscape as commensurate with the security or threat which he psychologically affords to that view.¹⁰⁸ The safety associated with the knowable landscape is a major boon to the colonial artist. Francis Galton corroborates Appleton's thesis, *avant la lettre*, in a comment that sheds light on Burchell's scenic appreciation: "A clump of trees yields wonderful shelter. The Swedes have a proverb that 'the forest is the poor man's jacket.'"¹⁰⁹

The inclusion of human figures in the picturesque scene was similar in function to the authenticating role accorded to the artist in a previous chapter. It served to legitimize

¹⁰⁵ Gilpin, "Essay on Prints", p. 11.

¹⁰⁶ Baines, *Journal of Residence*, Vol. 1, p. 30.

¹⁰⁷ Burchell, *Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa*, Vol. 1, p. 316.

¹⁰⁸ See Jay Appleton, *The Experience of Landscape* [London, 1975], especially Chapter 4.

¹⁰⁹ Francis Galton, *The Art of Travel* [London, 1855], p. 25.

and to corroborate the views being depicted. However, there is a further layer of meaning to this particular element of the Picturesque. Firstly, it added a note of human scale and imposed civilized mores on a scene of wildness. As Lieutenant Cowper Rose remarked on surveying the River Kei, “[w]here every feature of a scene is vast, I have frequently observed that the eye cannot measure its vastness, until something with which it is intimately acquainted furnishes a scale.”¹¹⁰ Hugh Blair proffers the opinion that “perhaps the most complete assemblage of beautiful objects that can anywhere be found is presented by a rich natural landscape.” However, he qualifies this by adding:

if to these be joined some of the productions of art which suit such a scene; as a bridge which arches over a river, smoke rising from cottages in the midst of trees, and the distant view of a fine building seen by the rising sun; we then enjoy in the highest perfection, that gay, cheerful and placid sensation which characterizes beauty.¹¹¹

Malcolm Andrews identifies the inherent paradox at the centre of picturesque tourism which is ostensibly geared to discover Nature in her untouched form, unsullied by the interference of man, but yet which cannot resist improving at the same time.¹¹² In Bowler’s “Mount Nelson as it was in the 1850s” (Plate 23), the leisurely stroll of the ladies in the well-kept gardens is only possible by virtue of the prominent watering-can and rake which point towards active human involvement with, and manipulation of, the environment. William Westall’s brief sojourn at the Cape with Flinders’ expedition gave him an opportunity to paint subjects which “afford pleasure from exhibiting the face of a beautiful country.”¹¹³ One of his most complete sketches is that of the aforementioned Wynberg (Plate 29). It shows the sandy plains of the Cape Flats while the Stellenbosch and Hottentot Holland mountain ranges provide a definite backdrop to the scene. The foreground is articulated using an array of shrubbery and plants. The whole ensemble is rendered according to Gilpin’s enjoinder about a considerable foreground with only a glimpse of the distance making the best picture.¹¹⁴ Nevertheless, the roadway leading the eye into the picture neatly terminates at the low-lying block of a farmhouse that seems to nestle quite naturally and

¹¹⁰ Rose, *Four Years in Southern Africa*, p. 171.

¹¹¹ Hugh Blair, “Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres” in Hipple, *The Beautiful, The Sublime and The Picturesque*, p. 131.

¹¹² Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque*, p. 11.

¹¹³ Perry and Simpson (eds.), *Drawings by William Westall*, p. 13.

¹¹⁴ Gilpin, “Essay on Prints”, p. 11.

unobtrusively amongst the exotic vegetation. Here the farmhouse is identifiable as that of Oude Wynberg which was originally owned by a Harmen Weekens. It was, however, transferred to the first governor of the Cape, Simon van der Stel in 1685. As such it symbolically represents the century-old European mastery of this environment. The centralized focus on the presence of the small European dwelling metaphorically prioritizes it and extends the range of its influence over the entire landscape depicted.

Charles D'Oyly's "View of Erst River" in Stellenbosch (Plate 30) shows the artist cutting a rather peculiar figure in the exotic landscape surroundings (Map 5; No. 5). However, the picturesque concern with luxuriant foliage, winding rivers and clear delineation of landscape into fore-, middle- and background is less striking than the central focus of the composition which is the dainty little bridge stretching over the river as advocated by Blair. Not only does it provide a structural fulcrum to the work but its explicitly European, domestic character facilitates the fording of a river and the consequent exploration of the environment surrounding the Erst River. Even in the most rudimentary and preliminary sketches made by artists, the inclusion of a European presence seems almost obligatory. In Henry Butler's surviving manuscript sketches, the rough pen and pencil landscape sketches are done on yellow paper in a most freehand fashion. In several of these views, for example Plate 31, the typical framing device of the side coulisse comprised of high mountains with a backdrop of rocky ridges and the ubiquitous stream flowing through the landscape is accompanied by an intricately detailed drawing of houses. They are almost like those designed by the twentieth-century American architect Frank Lloyd Wright in their close adherence to the topography and markedly horizontal format. Indeed, they appear to become ever more embedded in the landscape and naturalized to the environment as one proceeds from left to right. In the sketches preserved from John Webber's trip with Captain Cook, a similar trait emerges. Although only three of the myriad sketches pertain to the Cape even these exhibit the picturesque concern with the inclusion of the European yardstick device. In one of these, the foreground is composed of vegetative cover with a striking horizontal barrier of mountains acting as a backdrop.¹¹⁵ A house sequestered away in the left of the picture reveals the English presence. Its partially hidden presence is suggestive of longevity and perfect

¹¹⁵ Add MS 15,514, British Library, London; Plate 57.

transplantation into the landscape. It is a powerful image of colonial permanence and adaptation eminently suitable for presentation to the Lords of the Admiralty on Cook's return to the United Kingdom.

The perceived civilizing influence on the observer of landscape scenery had widespread currency. The stopping and meditation over the landscape encountered was a constant theme. William Burchell describes a stretch of the Gariiep (Orange) River using the hyperbolic tones of a proto-Romantic. The scene that he chances upon is "as enchanting a view as it could be possible for fancy to imagine." However, notwithstanding his pointedly picturesque and associationist construction of the scene on the river, the episode is noteworthy for the effect that this natural landscape has on the observer:

rapt with the pleasing sensations which the scenery inspired I sat on the bank a long time contemplating the serenity and beauty of the view.¹¹⁶

Burchell indicates that the European sensibility will recognize and appreciate an aesthetically pleasing prospect almost instinctively. The same device of "rapt wonder" operates in scenes showing landscape views with the inclusion of groups of picturesque tourists. The use of the figure in the landscape was the perfect foil to introduce figures surveying the landscape in picturesque fashion and using the aesthetic criteria to assess the natural environment. This represents the almost total command of the European over the colonial landscape as it confines it within the strictures of a Western aesthetic formula. Between the years 1780 and 1830, Caernarvon Castle was one of the most popular artistic sites for the peripatetic seeker of the Picturesque with eighty-eight different views published.¹¹⁷ J.M.W. Turner, one of the most prolific artists of the nineteenth century produced several of these. However, the type of view offered by Turner varied from ones presenting topographical accuracy or archaeological speculation to those which record the scene for the breathtaking beauty and sentimental associations evoked by the situation. In a 1799 version (Plate 32) Turner indicates that the latter is the way to read this depiction by including a sketching artist and a connoisseur companion. The analysis of landscape became a rigorous intellectual pursuit as much as an artistic activity.

¹¹⁶ Burchell, *Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa*, Vol. 1, pp. 316-7.

¹¹⁷ Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque*, pp. 131-2. For further information on Caernarvon and other Welsh sites of interest to the picturesque traveller see Isaac Williams, *Welsh Topographical Prints* [Aberystwyth, 1926].

Drawing on a formula found in the eighteenth century if not earlier, the substantiating presence of a well-educated person who could be relied upon to judge the aesthetic merits of the scene was a major factor in the art of South Africa at this time. It seemed to lend verification to the perceived picturesque qualities of the scene. Plate 33, again from D'Oyly's sketchbook, appears to confirm this opinion as a motley band of observers gather around the artist. Rather than enjoying the landscape, they seem more interested in how the artist is translating the view into its picturesque pictorial equivalent on paper. That a group of friends would consider it worthwhile to spend time at this place engrossed in the artistic ingenuity of their companion confers a particular aesthetic and picturesque quality to this location.

In this discussion I have stressed how the picturesque mode of vision was put in operation in a specifically Southern African situation. I have established that the essential elements of that theory were used in the colonial context and that aesthetic formulation did have a part to play in the assessment of the landscape. I will now proceed to identify and focus on the particular ways in which the Picturesque mode could be used in furthering colonial projects and imperial ambitions.

(c) Capturing the Picturesque and Colonial Utility

The picturesque mode of looking could further the project of fitting the natural landscape into a preconceived system of aesthetic evaluation. Stock features become grafted onto various scenes and locations. As such, they recur over and over again as the artist or author seeks to project a disarmingly Anglicized vision of Africa to an expectant European audience. However, the type of countryside that an explorer might deem to be picturesque or worthy of eulogizing aesthetic comment depends very much on the potential use value that he perceives to be extractable from the scene. The artist wishing to express an attractive backdrop for a colonial dwelling will represent a markedly different prospect from one seeking an easy passage across the territory depicted. This notion was already endorsed by Colonel Jackson who believed that “with the traveller, the picturesque description should have a much wider signification than merely what the painter calls ‘picturesque.’”¹¹⁸

The first prerequisite for this type of landscape representation was an ability to record it in the first place. Prefaces abound with advice to artists on how to “capture” the scenery before them or bemoaning how a particularly wonderful sunset “escaped” the author’s pencil. In his preface to A Picturesque Voyage to India, Samuel Daniell clearly spells out his view of art as a way of “capturing” strange visions and bringing them back home for inspection:

Science has had her adventurers and philanthropy her achievements; the shores of Asia have been invaded by a race of students with no rapacity but for lettered relics; by naturalists whose cruelty extends not to one human inhabitant; by philosophers ambitious only for the extirpation of terror, and the diffusion of truth. It remains to the artist to take his part in these guiltless spoliations, and to transport to Europe the picturesque beauty of these favoured regions.¹¹⁹

For Partha Mitter, the final sentence reveals the “entire spirit of the late eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century picturesque.”¹²⁰ This curious outlining of the artist’s

¹¹⁸ Jackson, “On Picturesque Description in Books of Travel”, p. 385.

¹¹⁹ Thomas Daniell, A Picturesque Voyage to India [London, 1810], p. 10.

¹²⁰ Partha Mitter, Much Maligned Monsters : History of European Reactions to Indian Art [Oxford, 1977], p. 127.

task, employing such emotive language only to proceed to deny these terms in relation to the artist and the scientist, underlines the subconscious desire of the European to remove the non-Western landscape from its surroundings and bring it within the confines of European discourse. Charles D'Oyly's witty epigram lionizing his master, George Chinnery, expresses how the artist related his profession to the cultural appropriation of the land – Chinnery “looks at nature with an eye bold and free/ And *steals* her charms more keenly than the rest.”¹²¹

The will to dominate and control the subject of the gaze is perpetuated throughout the colonial encounter with Southern Africa. This is evidenced by Baines in his “Kebrabasa Rapids, Zambezi River” (Plate 12). The ability of art to record the scene is invoked alongside a scientific contraption which also aids visual remembrance. In this case, the ability of the camera depicted in the lower right to fix and accurately capture the scene for posterity is also claimed for the artist's sketch. Mitter accords the work of the Daniells with the status of moulding an image and an idea of the Indian subcontinent in the public perception. The European artist is charged with having a material impact upon the ideas and impressions that the domestic audience had about their colonial possessions:

The finest productions [of the Daniells] not only helped to change the prevailing conceptions about Indian architecture but were able to create a lasting image which distilled the very essence of romantic India.¹²²

This capturing of the landscape is wonderfully conveyed in a drawing made by William Daniell at the mountain stronghold of Rajah Chait Singh on 8th January 1790 (Plate 34).¹²³ The watercolour prominently equates the act of drawing or painting with the visual capturing of the landscape. William sits on a rock intensely studying the outcrop through a telescope, pointing the instrument in a gesture reminiscent of a hunter training a gun on his target. Meanwhile, to his left, his uncle Thomas Daniell is also sitting placidly drawing the same scene. The visual parallel between the two activities forcefully expresses what the preface quoted above advocated. Both of these images, by comparing art to various visual instruments, imply manipulation and fixity

¹²¹ Quoted in Mildred Archer and Ronald Lightbown (eds.), *India Observed : India as Viewed by British Artists, 1760-1860* [London, 1982], p. 72 [my emphasis].

¹²² Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters*, p. 121.

¹²³ Interestingly, it was this drawing that was used as the front cover of the catalogue of an exhibition of the Daniell's work. See Sutton, *The Daniells*, p. 61.

of landscape within a specific European paradigmatic framework. Extrapolating from this, the landscape becomes a visual and physical space that can be dis- and relocated according to European premises. One of the major suppositions upon which the Western vision of South Africa was based, I would argue, is a peculiarly picturesque mode of looking and seeing.

The imposition of the picturesque view can be carried out on territory already negotiated. In mid-1837, Captain Alexander travelled in the land of the Booshmen. Halting just before sun-down and “looking back” over a level plain, he was:

struck with the picturesque appearance of the whole scene. A line of trees and bushes were on the right of the picture, indicating the chain of pools called Aansabib; in the foreground on the left, were my own people and Namaquas on oxen and on foot; in the middleground was a line of packed and loose bullocks with their drivers; behind them the sheep and the goats; and in the distance the waggon [sic]; - whilst on the left, the view was bounded by tabular-shaped mountains, receding from us in broad steps; and overhead was a lurid sky with heavy clouds slightly gilded with the setting sun.¹²⁴

It is worth quoting this extract at length because it practically constructs an entire landscape picture for anybody unfamiliar with the tenets of classical landscape painting. The repeated and insistent reference to the scene, not as nature, but as a “picture” reinforces this, as does the painstaking and canonical concern for picturesque qualities of construction. Alexander covers all the details required of the picturesque scene – the tripartite composition, the use of lateral boundaries and the inclusion of figural interest. This can all be related to the situation of the viewer as one who has crossed the terrain and symbolically conquered it. He now adds to his store of knowledge and simultaneously renders the scene safe and digestible for other European travellers by making it into a picture. The framing and composition of the scene is an act that complements and reinforces the physical mastery and dominance over the landscape that has just been established by Alexander’s traversing of it. It equates the landscape directly with a pictorial image – something that can be viewed at will, that is open to ideological manipulation and that is an item representative of wealth, status and privilege. Picturesque conventions are here exposed as being

¹²⁴ Alexander, *Narrative of a Voyage of Exploration*, p. 286.

available for ideological manipulation and the template of aesthetic preferences can be appropriated by the colonists in order to express a specific economic or social imperative. I would now like to discuss how the supposedly transcendent and philosophical notions of aesthetic criteria could come to be embroiled in a discourse of colonial propagandizing.

The associative quality of the aesthetic categorization left the analysis of beauty and picturesque scenery in the colonial context open to being merged with economic and social standards of utility, despite their protestations that the argument of *dulce et utile* held no sway for them.¹²⁵ Ann Bermingham has argued that this dichotomy between picturesque nature and decidedly unpicturesque industry should be regarded as an historical accretion rather than a founding assumption.¹²⁶ Indeed, Daniels and Watkins convincingly state the case for the “colonial imperative of the picturesque aesthetic.”¹²⁷ I will argue that economic and social provision are still inextricably linked with aesthetic pleasure within the terms of the discourse of beauty, morality and goodness in the colonial context.

The direct link between what is beautiful and what is economically and socially useful to mankind has a long and well-documented history. David Hume quotes Socrates as declaring “all things are good and beautiful in relation to those purposes for which they are well adapted, bad and ugly in relation to those for which they are ill-adapted.”¹²⁸ Hume goes on to build on this supposition by defining our notions of beauty and aesthetic pleasure:

Most of the works of art are esteemed as beautiful, in proportion to their fitness for the use of man, and even many of the productions of nature derive their beauty from that source. Handsome and beautiful, on most occasions, is

¹²⁵ Gilpin writes of the picturesque eye “not having any business to consider matters of utility. It has nothing to do with the affairs of the plough and the spade.” Quoted in Stephen Copley, “William Gilpin and the Black Lead Mines” in Copley and Garside (eds.), *The Politics of the Picturesque*, pp. 30-61; p. 36.

¹²⁶ See Ann Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology: The English Rustic Tradition, 1740-1860* [London, 1986], especially Chapter 2.

¹²⁷ See David Watkins and Stephen Copley, “Picturesque Landscapes and Estate Management” in Copley and Garside (eds.), *The Politics of the Picturesque*, pp. 20-29; p. 20.

¹²⁸ Quoted in Hipple, *The Beautiful, The Sublime and The Picturesque*, p. 57.

not an absolute but a relative quality, and pleases us by nothing but its tendency to produce an end that is agreeable.¹²⁹

Simon Ryan argues that ostensibly mimetic pictures can be seen to employ standard picturesque construction and arrangement. But, hidden beneath these picturesque aesthetics is an instrumentalist agenda, which established nature solely as an object to be valued according to its ability to please and serve human beings.¹³⁰ The Picturesque and its place in the imperial archive came to be seen as a means of recording what John Ruskin called “the available and the useful.”¹³¹

The Anglicization of the African landscape was a useful strategy for those wishing to promote a particular quality to home-based audience. In his article in the Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society (PRGS), J. Fenwick Wilkinson follows a similar pattern by describing the landscape around the Fole River as:

rich and beautiful in the extreme, and, as I thought, resembled rich English scenery in a grass country. An undulating country full of rivers and brooks, fields, trees in large hedge-rows, woods and parks.¹³²

However, I would suggest that the picturesque quality of the scenery and the impression that it makes on Wilkinson is vitally connected to, and dependent upon the rich mineral potential of the area. He had only previously commented that the mountains over which he crossed “were, I might say, made of iron, the ore was so rich.”¹³³ Similarly, the banks of a small stream where they set up camp were “covered” with semi-precious stones like agates, calcedony and various other crystals. Thus, not only was the Picturesque a way of coming to terms with the foreign landscape and regurgitating it in a familiar idiom but it was also an aesthetic criterion bestowed on only the most advantageous and deserving of places. Only those situations where the colonial potential was present or where European influence had a marked authority would be deemed beautiful enough to warrant such a description.

In “Crossing the Berg River” (Plate 35), Burchell invites the viewer to metaphorically cross the river with him. Beyond this lies “the beautiful flat country of the

¹²⁹ Ibid., p. 40.

¹³⁰ Ryan, The Cartographic Eye, p. 57.

¹³¹ Quoted in Hussey, The Picturesque, p. 7.

¹³² J. Fenwick Wilkinson, “Journey Through the Gold Country of South Africa” in the Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society, Vol. XIII (1868-9), pp. 134-7; p. 136.

¹³³ Ibid., p. 135.

Wagenmaker's Valley" which is bounded by the Klein Drakenstein Mountains in a typically picturesque construction of space.¹³⁴ Furthermore, the farmhouse focus of the European gaze is circled by abundant shrubbery and vegetation. At the conclusion of his description the author cannot resist the direct correlation between home and colony:

very large bushes of Karree-hout, which, in growth and foliage, have a great resemblance to our common willows, grow along the banks.¹³⁵

This absolutely conventional view and picturesque quality ascribed to the location is done so in recognition of a major determining factor: "The landscape here is rich and fertile."¹³⁶ The enclosed landscape, framed on all sides like a canvas, becomes an item of wealth and an indicator of status just like the framed picture hanging on the wall.

George Thompson is quite explicit about his mercenary motives for travelling in South Africa.¹³⁷ The frontispiece of his book of "Travels and Adventures" (Plate 36) gives an idealized view of Cape Town. The placid bay and cotton wool ball of cloud fill a large proportion of the image. In constructing his view Thompson has been careful to impart a sense of security and constraint to his image. The curve at the right suggests enclosure and safety from the menacing perils beyond. The low line of the hills in the distance, which limit the endless retreat of the gaze to the indiscernible horizon, further reinforces the idea of South Africa as a cultivated and ordered landscape, as opposed to the limitless, intimidating prospect one would otherwise be faced with. The little details of the houses, which nestle in the comforting shelter of the surrounding trees, give the aura of a sylvan idyll to the whole scene. The beauty of the scene, constructed according to paradigmatic picturesque and aesthetic criteria is used to provide the visual evidence for his assertion that the Cape Colony "possesses, within its boundaries, ample means of furnishing a secure and plentiful subsistence to at least five times its present population."¹³⁸ In his account, Thompson equates picturesque cottages with what the "superior class" of settlers have "embellished" the colony of Albany with.¹³⁹ Havens of secure domesticity and bastions of traditional English values, they are naturally associated with, and "surrounded by luxuriant

¹³⁴ Burchell, *Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa*, Vol. 1, p. 179.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

¹³⁷ Thompson, *Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa*, Vol. 1, p. viii.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 181.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 18.

woods and copses of evergreens, in the disposal of which the wanton hand of Nature seemed to have rivalled the most tasteful efforts in art.”¹⁴⁰

William Cobbett’s opinion that there could be “no idea of picturesque beauty separate from the fertility of the soil” might be a very apt description for Kay’s plate of “Mt. Coke Mission Station” (Plate 37).¹⁴¹ Mount Coke was a missionary station established in the territory of S’Lhambi in October 1825 (Map 4; Feature v). Kay’s work represents a view of an agrarian arcadia with rolling hills covered with vegetation and populated by a few suitably bucolic shepherds. The main interest is the missionary station which, like some sort of exiled Palladian villa, orchestrates the activities of all those at the village. Its lawn-like grass adds to the impression of European regulation and productivity taking over the territory. One is little surprised to read in the text that the missionaries have planted mulberry and other fruit trees all of which were equally successful.¹⁴² The “pleasing diversity of hill and dale” offered by this area is also remarked upon by Andrew Steedman. His description of a journey from Mt. Coke to the Rev. William Shaw’s Wesleyville encapsulates just the type of scenery depicted in Plate 37 – “a broad and extensive plain, covered with an endless variety of beautiful shrubs and flowers.”¹⁴³ However, as with Kay one imagines, Steedman’s appreciation of these boons of Nature is dependent on their “rich and different colours” being evidence of fertility and agricultural potential which will provide “a delightful contrast to the uniform sterility of the soil.”¹⁴⁴ Thus, Kay’s image shows not only a beautiful natural prospect but also an area that could possibly be cultivated and developed advantageously by European settlers.

The ideological import of the Picturesque is one that cannot be ignored. Its apparent aesthetic nature might lead to an etherealized existence but the link with domestic landscape and aesthetic theories had a very practical and psychologically prescient use. The insistent concern with picturesque methodology has been explored further in this chapter as a methodology which could be harnessed to provide a springboard for specific colonial concerns and ideologies.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 18.

¹⁴¹ Quoted in Patrick D. Murphy, *Literature of Nature : An International Sourcebook* [Chicago, 1998], p. 159.

¹⁴² Kay, *Travels and Researches in Caffraria*, p. 421.

¹⁴³ Steedman, *Wanderings and Adventures*, Vol. 1, p. 29.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 29.

Chapter 3: The Sublime

*"Horrors like these at first alarm,
But soon with savage grandeur charm
And raise to noblest thoughts the mind...
I view with wonder and delight
A pleasing, tho' an awful sight."*

John Dalton, 1753.

The Picturesque recorded and staked an intellectual claim to land that had just been physically conquered. It was also employed to iterate a comfortable image of farm-life or missionary bliss on the plains of Southern Africa. However, such a transparently manipulative and arbitrary system of choosing and presenting landscape features, more concerned with the construction of composition or the inclusion of certain stereotypical elements rather than the accurate recording of a natural scene, was bound to come under threat. William Gilpin had absolved the artist/author from the responsibility of absolute fidelity to their surroundings by allowing that "the painter who adheres strictly to the composition of nature, will rarely make a good picture."¹ The reliance of the picturesque mode on the quantifying of the landscape left it particularly open to the charge of reordering and manipulating the visual evidence before the artist. In his account of residence in South Africa, Alfred Cole acknowledges the inherently artificial quality of picturesque prescriptions. He refers to salt lakes, a short distance from Port Elizabeth, looking "extremely pretty amid the dark foliage by which they are surrounded." However, he goes on to comment on the lack of water being the "principal defect in a South African landscape, *both picturesquely and actually.*"² Here he differentiates between two visions of Africa and consigns the Picturesque to an etherealized aesthetic category as opposed to the realistic economic concerns of settlers.

¹ Gilpin, *Observations on the River Wye*, p. 19.

² Cole, *The Cape and the Kafirs*, p. 81 [my emphasis].

By the time that Thomas Bowler's obituary appears in the Cape Argus, the generally favourable reception of his art is qualified by the sole objection that "[t]here was a certain sameness in his pictures and often a lack of tone and necessary detail."³ This critique bespeaks a change in the criteria of assessment and the differing role for art of the period. The standards of taste that led Mr. Fuller to comment on Bowler's work as exhibiting that "facility of manipulation" were not those demanded by later nineteenth-century audiences. The comments confirm Bradlow's view of Bowler as a "lineal descendant of the picturesque school of topographical artists, whose rules had been crystallized by Gilpin."⁴ The vogue for landscape painting governed by an inflexible set of rules laid down by the picturesque theorists began to wane as the overt artifice was exposed and lost its power of impact. The "newness" of the landscape was crucially compromised because it could only ever be seen as versions of previously known ones.⁵

The increasing European penetration into Africa and heightened awareness brought about principally through picturesque descriptions of an earlier generation led to a need for a more powerful and affecting form of landscape description to sell books or to retain the European appetite for Africa. The success of the Picturesque in colonial ideology may be gauged by its very redundancy. If its principal task was to acclimatize and acculturate its audience to the alien landscape of Africa then it succeeded by the fact of its replacement by a need for a more mystifying and destabilizing view of Africa. This dislocating ideology had already been formulated. This chapter will argue that one of the principal models into which Europeans slotted the daunting otherness of the African landscape was the Sublime as it was formulated in the eighteenth century by aesthetic theorists such as Joseph Addison at the beginning of the century and Immanuel Kant at the end. More specifically, the cult of the Sublime was given major impetus by Edmund Burke in his A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful, described as

³ Cape Argus, 31st October 1866; Quoted in Bradlow and Bradlow, Thomas Bowler of the Cape of Good Hope, p. 99.

⁴ Bradlow and Bradlow, Thomas Bowler of the Cape of Good Hope, p. 105.

⁵ Ryan, The Cartographic Eye, p. 56.

“perhaps the most influential discussion of sublimity produced in the eighteenth century.”⁶

For the philosopher James Beattie, working in the 1760s, “the most perfect models of sublimity” were to be found in the diverse world of nature.⁷ In this chapter, I will situate, analyze and explain the role of the theory of the Sublime in the envisaging and recording of landscape phenomena in Southern Africa. It will focus primarily on those places and features that were most likely to be incorporated into the imperial archive by using the theory of the Sublime as it was set out by Burke. The Sublime, as a philosophical and aesthetic term of reference, has a genealogy stretching back to classical antiquity. It was considered by Longinus in his Greek treatise On the Sublime (first century AD).⁸ Its aesthetic codification became fixed in the eighteenth century with a renewal of interest in the term that would persist well into the nineteenth century and percolate into the Romantic Movement in the Arts. Many authors wrote on its causes and effects, from Addison to Kant to Coleridge. However, principal among these was a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin - Edmund Burke. Burke is perhaps best remembered for his diatribes against the French Revolution, his contributions to political theory and his status as a great orator and statesman.⁹ However, in the field of aesthetic theory, his major contribution is codified in his *magnum opus*, the Philosophical Enquiry, first published in 1757. It became a canonical founding text in the establishment of a taste for, and a debate about, the Sublime. For Burke, qualities such as beauty and sublimity were perceived by the emotions of the observer. As such they rely for their identification and perception upon having a real and vital impact on the spectator and his sensibilities. The notion of the Sublime, as elaborated by Burke, was predicated on its eliciting an emotive response from the viewer. It hinges on a number of salient features in the object of observation such as obscurity and mystery, the expression of a certain power associated with greatness, magnificence and a dimension of infinite magnitude, as

⁶ Samuel Monk, The Sublime: A Study of Critical Theories in Eighteenth-Century England [1935; reprint Ann Arbor, 1960], p. iv.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁹ For generations of Trinity students, he is famous for standing sentinel at the West Front of College, immortalized by Henry Foley’s imposing sculpture which was completed in 1868. See Judith Hill, Irish Public Sculpture [Dublin, 1998], pp. 98-9.

well as an all-pervading atmosphere of darkness and solitude.¹⁰ Burke posited the determinability of this response, arguing that it could be measured as an objective reaction, analogous to the effect wrought by terror on the observer.¹¹ Nevertheless, Burke's theory can still accommodate a subjective physiological and psychological investigation and representation of aesthetic experience.¹² Indeed, it was Burke's catholicity in applying his criteria across a broad range of aesthetic, artistic and natural phenomena that allowed his theories to percolate so pervasively into the cultural bloodstream.

Obviously, these characteristics lend themselves to the codification of natural scenery, painted landscape vistas and other visual stimuli, according to the discourse of the Sublime. The theoretical basis offered by the Sublime buttressed the linguistic, artistic and descriptive classification of such features, especially in exotic surroundings and unfamiliar environments. The artist George French Angas, in the letterpress to accompany his illustrated book, published in 1849, expresses the propriety of recording the African landscape according to this Western European discourse. Angas' depiction of scenery in the lithographs was predicated on the very fact that "Africa is vast and grand; Every feature of its savage scenery is based on a scale of a magnificence."¹³ The African landscape is associated, on a naturalistic and topographical level, with those features that suggested the Sublime to Burke. Whereas the earlier aesthetic formulations of the landscape had striven to naturalize and domesticate the view offered, presenting it as nothing different to any scene one might chance upon in rural England, the Sublime required a certain jolting, unsettling effect to be imparted to the viewer. Now the fashion was for the appreciation of the singularity of the landscape view and "the grand art [was] in seizing the most striking peculiarity of the landscape."¹⁴ South Africa was an area of great potential when it came to delineating and identifying the Sublime. Robert Semple was convinced of the appropriateness of using this intellectual discourse in the description of African landscape and topography:

¹⁰ See Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters*, p. 122.

¹¹ See Jane Turner (ed.), *Macmillan Dictionary of Art*, 34 vols. [London, 1996], Vol. 5, p. 215.

¹² See Monk, *The Sublime*, p. 86.

¹³ Angas, *The Kafirs Illustrated*, p. v.

¹⁴ Jackson, "On Picturesque Description in Books of Travel", p. 384.

To an admirer of the sublime in Nature, few spots on the surface of the globe present such scenes as the Cape of Good Hope. It is not the majesty of great rivers rolling towards the ocean, nor the more silent grandeur of immense lakes resembling inland seas that is to be found here. But long, deep, and winding vallies [sic], opening out as they approached the sea, and extensive plains bordered on all sides by high mountains, announce that formerly rivers and lakes have existed there. Nay, the mountains themselves by their appearance confirm the solemn truth, that the changes they have undergone are not to be measured by the aeras [sic] of man, or the limited and scanty periods of his history. In crossing some of these mountains the mind is impressed with sensations similar to those experienced in traversing a pile of antient [sic] and venerable ruins, but infinitely more awful.¹⁵

The waterfall and the mountain would become the two principal locations where the Sublime was employed in order to render the complexity and novelty of the Southern African landscape intelligible for Europeans. These phenomena were found in other colonial landscapes and also required the use of the Sublime. Thomas Cole, a founder of the Hudson River School of Painting in North America expresses the heightened colonial concern with transmitting the refreshing newness and originality of the scenes being confronted daily by the colonial artist. His remarks could apply to any artist working outside the European context:

All nature here is new to art. No Tivolis, Ternis, Mt. Blancs, Plinimmons, hackneyed and worn by the daily pencils of hundreds; but primeval forests, virgin lakes and waterfalls, feasting his eye with new delights, ... hallowed for his own favoured pencil.¹⁶

Thompson's journey to Bechuanaland involved passing through Anteniqualand whose grandeur of scenery exactly conforms to Burke's associative model for the Sublime by filling "the imagination with magnificent and romantic images."¹⁷ These mental pictures hit all the proper aesthetic buttons by imparting "such ideas of wildness, vastness and solitary seclusion" that the psyche of the beholder is deeply affected and

¹⁵ Semple, *Walks and Sketches at the Cape of Good Hope*, p. 197.

¹⁶ Quoted in Elizabeth McKinsey, *Niagara Falls : Icon of the American Sublime* [Cambridge, 1985], p. 56.

¹⁷ Thompson, *Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa*, Vol. 1, p. 9.

the entire experience becomes “almost oppressive to the heart.”¹⁸ The associative link between Natural Sublime and the Almighty is, as one might expect, employed to all its most affective ends by the missionary, J.J. Freeman. From the outset he establishes ideas of the “boldness, grandeur and sublimity” of the Cape of Good Hope which is “girded with power.”¹⁹ That he believes the ultimate source of this power is God is indubitably confirmed by virtue of the almost hysterical tone of his description of the Chumie Mountains. Reading like a check-list of sublime landscape features for the artist, the missionary reaches an emotional crescendo, rounding off his description by imploring:

Who could gaze unmoved on such scenes? Who would not exclaim with thrilling ecstasy, ‘The heavens are telling the glory of God; the earth, O Lord, is full of thy riches!’²⁰

The Sublime is used to capture the novelty of the scenes and their inherent diversity and uniqueness. This forms an important ideological function in the compilation of the imperial archive because, by constraining and explaining the variety of colonial landscapes in different climatic regions and in different continents, the Sublime performs the role of overarching European metanarrative. It fits these scenes into the European systems of classification and accords them a place in the matrix of knowledge that was the imperial archive.

Mountains were a principal location where the use of picturesque vocabulary simply could not satisfy the descriptive exactitude required by the explorer. In describing his view of Cape Town from Table Bay, recorded in the first plate in his Pictorial Album (Plate 38), Thomas Bowler also has recourse to pronouncing that a landscape object is beyond the pale of European knowledge. In this instance it is Table Mountain:

There is nothing in Welsh or Highland scenery to compare in stern, majestic grandeur and proportion to the great mountain which [we] have been watching from afar all morning.²¹

The rudeness and undespoiled quality ascribed to mountainous scenery required the traveller to enter into direct communication with the physicality of the landscape. Samuel Johnson’s judgement of mountains as “matter incapable of form or

¹⁸ Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 10.

¹⁹ Freeman, A Tour of South Africa, p. 2.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 162.

²¹ Thomas Bowler, Pictorial Album of Cape Town [Cape Town, 1866], p. 21.

usefulness; dismissed by nature from her care and left in its original state” encapsulates the conduit offered by mountains for expressing unencumbered communion with the natural features of a landscape.²² The increasing emphasis on the singularity of the landscape and the need to elicit a powerful emotional response in the viewer meant that the primitive, unrefined nature of these features became highly valued. Also, the scale and size of the sub-continent’s mountain ranges could only be expressed in relation to a theory that encompassed and celebrated this quality of mass - the Sublime. Once again, Joseph Addison seems to pre-empt the debate by suggesting that vast objects tease the imagination, that is, they give it aesthetic pleasure, because the mind “loves to be filled with an Object, or to grasp at anything which is too big for its Capacity.”²³ This opinion is given added credence by Denis Diderot’s review of the 1776 Salon where he maintains that what startles most in nature is mass.²⁴ Burke’s classic text reiterates that “greatness of dimension is a powerful cause of the sublime.”²⁵

Addison qualifies his requirements for impressing the viewer: “By greatness, I do not only mean the bulk of any single object, but the largeness of a whole view considered as one entire piece.”²⁶ The best way to evoke a sense of massiveness and to impinge on the spectator’s consequent sense of his own insignificance was the manipulation of the viewing position and the modification of figural presence in the scene. This is especially apposite in the depiction of mountains because their representation easily facilitated that lowering of the viewpoint. In some works, even by artists working in a picturesque vein like D’Oyly, evidence of an appreciation of human insignificance comes across. In his view of “Lion’s Head” (Plate 39) even the viewing position on the summit of the Kloof cannot ameliorate the extremely low vantage point from which we see the imposing mass of the mountain (Map 5; Feature e). The insistent verticality of the work makes the eye read from bottom to top and adds to the wonder at the dominating scale of this natural edifice. The value of this strategy is recognized by Burke, who had reckoned:

²² Quoted in Bicknell, *Beauty, Horror and Immensity*, p. ix.

²³ Quoted in Hipple, *The Beautiful, The Sublime and The Picturesque*, p. 17.

²⁴ Stafford, *Voyage into Sustance*, p. 83.

²⁵ Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*, edited by Adam Phillips [1759, 2nd edition; reprint Oxford, 1990], p. 66.

²⁶ Addison, *The Spectator*, no. 412; Quoted in Harrison et al (eds.), *Art in Theory*, p. 383.

[a] perpendicular has more force in forming the sublime than an inclined plane; and the effects of a rugged and broken surface seem stronger than where it is smooth and polished.²⁷

The variegated planes of escarpment and rock expressed in the hatching and linear qualities of D'Oyly's sketch serve to fulfil this second requirement of the Sublime feature. The fact that D'Oyly's work gives an impression of the colonial interloper overwhelmed by the scene before him and representative of a physical barrier to penetration is clarified by another work done by D'Oyly on exactly the same day, 13th May 1832. His view of "Camp's Bay from the Kloof" (Plate 40) contrasts with the former scene. Here, the imperial gaze has free rein to survey the territory laid out below from its elevated point of view. There are no obstacles to be overcome or threats to be assuaged; everything seems ordered and manageable. The counterpoint to this is the depiction of "Lion's Head," with the forbidding mass of rock preventing progress of the European into the interior and evoking humility in the face of awe-inspiring nature.

Baines' "A Walk up the Devil's Mountain" (Plate 41) draws on the same register of meaning as D'Oyly. The image of the solitary adventurer traversing the rocky ledge would be repeated in some of his views of the Victoria Falls. This kind of perilous encounter had been perceived by Burke who accorded more "sublimeness" to this engagement with nature than D'Oyly's prosaic vision from the safety of the base of the mountain. He tentatively theorizes:

I am apt to imagine likewise that height is less grand than depth; and that we are more struck at looking down from a precipice, than at looking up at an object of equal height, but of that I am not very positive.²⁸

The agitated brushstrokes and the bright tonality of the watercolour, evoking the sense of depth and the awesome scale of the grand mountain range, conveys the vitality and very immediate encounter of the artist with nature. Indeed, symbolically we have moved from D'Oyly's awe at the daunting and impenetrable prospect of mountains to Baines' mastery of them but which still retains and expresses the scale and grandeur of nature in the sub-continent.

²⁷ Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry*, p. 66.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

The Sublime was perhaps most gainfully employed in order to capture the natural energy and power of waterfalls in the Southern African landscape and to commit them to the archive of European knowledge that was being created. The ability of waterfalls to emotionally affect the spectator is a corollary of their awesome power and evidence of their sublimity. Writers trying to inculcate a respect for the grandeur of the natural world had long seized upon the description of falls of water. The language used by theoretical writers and commentators confirmed those apparently oxymoronic ideas of pleasing terror and horrifying satisfaction that Burke had adduced for the Sublime. Joseph Addison considered that “nothing more enlivens a prospect than rivers, jetteaus or falls of water, where the scene is perpetually shifting and entertaining the sight every moment with something that is new.”²⁹ In A Review of Price’s Essays, William Marshall commented:

A giant precipice, frowning over its base, whether we view it from beneath, or look downward from its brink, is capable of producing *sublime emotions*. A river, tumbling headlong over such a precipice, especially if it be viewed with difficulty and a degree of danger, real or imaginary, still heightens those emotions.³⁰

George Thompson’s account of a waterfall in South Africa draws on many of the tenets of the Sublime. It interestingly records the impression the scene makes on the natives who guide his group. Whereas Kay’s natives are unperturbed by the landscape scenery he described – the placid, park-like extension of an English estate – here even the natives, notoriously oblivious to the beauties of Nature, are impinged upon by the majestic power of the scene. The waterfall is “an untrodden vestibule of Nature’s most sublime temples, and the untutored savages who guided us, evinced by the awe and circumspection with which they trod that they were not altogether uninfluenced by the ‘genius loci.’”³¹ The ability of the landscape to shock and affect is a recurring trope in the repertoire of the Romantic artist and author. The references to nature as having an emotive, almost visually overpowering force, and its hyperbolic delineation, signals the presence of the Sublime. The quality that so forcibly struck his native guides “drowned all apprehensions of danger” in Thompson himself as the

²⁹ Addison, The Spectator, no. 412; Quoted in Harrison, et al (eds.), Art in Theory, pp. 384-5.

³⁰ Quoted in Andrews (ed.), The Picturesque, Vol .3, pp. 1-59; p. 58 [my emphasis].

³¹ Thompson, Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa, Vol. 2, p. 19.

combination of grandeur and beauty sweeps everybody along in a maelstrom of emotional associations.³² The idea of singularity, individuality and uniqueness that was such a cornerstone of nineteenth-century Romantic thinking comes across in many of the written and visual descriptions of waterfalls in the region. Captain Frederick Elton is an interesting example of a later nineteenth-century traveller having absorbed the doctrine of the Sublime. He explored the Limpopo River after having discussed the plan with Thomas Baines.³³ His account of the Falls of Tolo Azime mirrors Baines' experiences with the Victoria Falls. Again Elton hyperbolizes: "I cannot exaggerate the beauty of the *coup d'oeuil* [sic]."³⁴ Previous to this, the Tuli River's various cascades, torrents and valleys are "refreshing to the eyes."³⁵ The phrasing is similar suggesting a familiarity, if not with Baines' album of prints of the Victoria Falls, at least with his criteria and language of aesthetic assessment. The unique existence of the Tolo Azime Falls is "of sufficient interest and importance to repay the exertions of any future traveller."³⁶ The author goes on to argue for the fixing of their individuality because "their peculiar formation and surroundings render them well worthy of a place in future African maps."³⁷

However, the supreme example of this power and gargantuan scale, eminently suitable for representation according to the discourse of the Sublime, were the waterfalls on the Zambezi River which came to be known as the Victoria Falls. I would like to concentrate on the visual and textual representation by European explorers of the Victoria Falls on the Zambezi River in the mid-nineteenth century as this was a major area for the deployment of this specific aesthetic criterion in the region. The Victoria Falls were first seen by a white man in 1857, when David Livingstone visited them for two days in November of that year. On observing this wonderful vista, Livingstone produced the classic European response by maintaining that "no one can imagine the beauty of the view from anything witnessed in England" before proceeding to try to describe them for an audience familiar only with the

³² Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 21.

³³ Capt. Frederick Elton, "Journal of an Expedition of Exploration of the Limpopo River" in the *JRGS*, Vol. 42 (1872), pp. 1-49; p. 10.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 15.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 14.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 15.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 16.

scenery, vegetation and topography of the English landscape.³⁸ Livingstone enunciates the philosophical and epistemological conundrum facing the European explorer encountering such scenes on his travels – how to make the unknown knowable; in what terms to represent that which cannot, by their own admission, be represented.

The first artist to represent the Victoria Falls was deeply influenced by the aesthetic precepts laid down in the eighteenth century. Thomas Baines produced an album of views that draw extensively on the canons of Sublime landscape depiction. Michael Godby argues that the artist's vision of the Falls was heavily indebted to Romantic ideas about the role of the artist.³⁹ His The Victoria Falls, Zambezi River, incorporating eleven chromolithographs of the Falls from different viewpoints, employed the elements of pictorial composition, colouration and design that closely adhered to the taste for the Sublime in artistic representation.⁴⁰ Of course, Burke's theory of the Sublime had its major and lasting influence on the criticism and appreciation of landscape painting in particular. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that it should suffuse the pictorial representations of such scenes. However, I would argue that the Burkean Sublime is a vital component in many of the written and visual descriptions that travellers published about the Victoria Falls. They used this philosophical and aesthetic criteria in order to make this awe-inspiring and astounding natural phenomenon comprehensible and intelligible for the European domestic audience who read their books or saw their paintings.

The real physical conditions and topographical actualities of the scene are presented in a specifically determined way, conforming to a European philosophical tradition. Language becomes the medium through which the European presents and makes known this "other" environment. Hence, its usage and application reflects the cultural preconditioning and epistemological limitations of the explorer and his society. The refracting prism of a Western philosophical discourse could influence and impact upon the European understanding of an alien and essentially unfamiliar natural

³⁸ See Livingstone, Missionary Travels, pp. 518-9.

³⁹ See Michael Godby, "Thomas Baines on the Victoria Falls: A Contest Between Science and Art in the Career of a British Explorer in Africa" in Stevenson (ed.), Thomas Baines, pp. 30-39; p. 30.

⁴⁰ Thomas Baines, The Victoria Falls, Zambezi River, sketched on the spot by Thomas Baines, FRGS, 1862 [1862; reprint Bulawayo, Rhodesia, 1969].

phenomenon. It would be impractical to excavate every reference to the term “Sublime” in the massive corpus of literature relating to the Victoria Falls. This would merely reinforce the impression of the word as an almost redundant adjectival adjunct rather than a useful analytical term.⁴¹ Rather, I will demonstrate how the theories formulated by Burke and others in eighteenth-century Europe could have deep resonance in situations beyond the chronological and geographical limits usually associated with these ideas. I will conclude by suggesting why the discourse of the Sublime may have been such a useful, apposite and widely used discursive tool in the European quest to define and codify the potential colonial space of the African landscape in the period immediately preceding the consolidation of European imperial power in the continent.

For Burke, obscurity was one of the main features of the Sublime: “To make anything very terrible, obscurity seems in general to be necessary. When we know the full extent of any danger, when we can accustom our eyes to it, a great deal of apprehension vanishes.”⁴² The indigenous Makololo name for the Victoria Falls, Mosi-oa-Tunya (“smoke that thunders”) neatly conveys the veiled mystery and lack of clarity that one encountered on approaching the Falls and which would render such an approach sublime. On his second visit to the Victoria Falls, Livingstone goes some way to preserving the awesome power of the waterfall by couching his advance towards it in language designed to preserve the mystery of the scene. Thus, the landscape presents a “watery smoke” in the morning which becomes a “sulphurous hue” at eventide. In direct contrast to the surrounding environment, “the sunshine, elsewhere in this land so overpowering, never penetrates the deep gloom of that shade” that surrounds the approach to the Victoria Falls themselves. Even Livingstone, the fervent Scottish Evangelical missionary, can recognize the potential for pagan worship in “that dark grove, over which hovers an abiding ‘pillar of cloud.’” The scene is purposely constructed by words and images that preserve the mysterious, ethereal and almost sacramental appearance of the Victoria Falls when it finally bursts upon the sight.⁴³ As a strategy to sharpen expectation and consequently

⁴¹ For a fuller discussion of this issue see Paul Crowther, The Kantian Sublime: From Morality to Art [Oxford, 1989], p. 2.

⁴² Burke, A Philosophical Enquiry, p. 54.

⁴³ David Livingstone and Charles Livingstone, Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambezi and its Tributaries; and of the Discovery of Lakes Shirwa and Nyasa, 1858-1864 [London, 1865], p. 258.

heighten appreciation of the visual effect, Livingstone's passage seems to draw heavily on Burke's view that "it is our ignorance of things that causes our admiration, and chiefly excites our passions."⁴⁴ This technique becomes almost canonical in subsequent representations of the Victoria Falls. In his approach to the scene, James Chapman, a trader and adventurer, has to ascend a nearby tree to gain a better view and even then he can only make out "a long line of smoking clouds."⁴⁵ The peculiar visual phenomenon of the smoking clouds also struck Frederick Hugh Barber, another pioneering explorer, as he describes the "columns of white smoke rising from the dark forest-covered valley." Even after penetrating the luxuriant vegetation engendered by the local climatic conditions around the Zambezi River, the Falls are still only "partially visible," due to their being "hidden in columns of driving spray and mist, issuing to a height of about a thousand feet, forming a white cloud."⁴⁶ Baines' "The 'Spray Cloud' of the Victoria Falls" (Plate 42) articulates these impressions in visual form. The huge billowing clouds of vapour dominate the canvas, only relieved by the visual prop of the tree near to which the travellers stop. The European members of the expedition are represented as focusing exclusively on the Falls. Concerned with recording and representing the Falls we see Baines sketching and Chapman attempting to take a photograph. However, as the viewer is drawn into the middle and background of the picture, partially by the gaze of the figures in the painting and partially by the spray cloud, the scene becomes rather unclear and insubstantial. Baines has managed to preserve the mystery of the Falls. The intervening landscape and vegetation prevents direct vision of the Falls. However, the visual dominance of the spray cloud helps to evoke the power and grandeur of this natural phenomenon and to build up a sense of expectation in the viewer.

The Philosophical Enquiry is pervaded by, and constructs its arguments around, bodily representations of aesthetic experience. The whole thrust of the argument, as well as many of the images and examples used in its elucidation, depend upon the recognition of a definite and quantifiable link between the natural phenomenon and its effect on the perceiving observer.⁴⁷ Burke's theories demand a physiological and psychological response from the viewer to the object of attention. He reasons that,

⁴⁴ Burke, A Philosophical Enquiry, p. 57.

⁴⁵ Chapman, Travels in the Interior of South Africa, Vol. 2, p. 113.

⁴⁶ Quoted in E.C. Tabler (ed.), Zambezia and Matabeleland in the Seventies [London, 1960], p. 50.

⁴⁷ See Burke, A Philosophical Enquiry, p. xi.

because certain emotions or “passions” affect the body in a similar fashion causing violent contraction of the muscles and a nervous tension, he can justifiably yoke sensations and emotion together.⁴⁸ For the traveller in Africa, the very physical force of the landscape is recorded as a means of giving corroborative emphasis to their account and adding interest and appeal to their writing. The concentration and insistence upon the direct physiological and psychological communion achieved by the spectator in the face of this wonder of nature is a recurrent mantra that situates their initial recording of the Victoria Falls within the discourse of the Sublime. Thomas Baines attributes a physical force to the scene when he visited the Falls in 1862.⁴⁹ For him the panorama presents “the most lovely *coup d’oeuil* [sic] the soul of the artist could imagine” (Plate 43).⁵⁰ The double rainbow, a unique meteorological peculiarity and visual characteristic of the scene, is undoubtedly “gorgeous” and “lovely” but also has a physical power that Baines attributed to the highest forms of scenery. The rainbows are “so brilliant that the eye *shrinks* from looking on them.”⁵¹ The physically coercive force of the Victoria Falls is a time worn technique used to impress the viewer with the overwhelming power in his midst – an essential criterion to be fulfilled by any scene of potential sublimity. In Baines’ assessment, the spectator becomes a passive observer upon whom the rich grandeur and profusion of natural growth imprints a lasting impression of intimidating power. These sensations were recreated for the domestic viewer in Baines’ picture, with the inclusion of the insignificant form of the artist standing at the edge of a yawning precipice in the foreground. Despite being strongly silhouetted against the backdrop of the Falls, their overwhelming natural power and almost supernatural beauty renders the inconsequence of this puny human even more evocatively leaving Baines to cut a rather forlorn and pathetic figure. However, this approach allows him to present the deep emotional impact which such a scene made on him. Again, the image is employed in order to aid the explanation and give corroborative evidence to the description in the text. Baines’ visible presence at the scene of such wonderment immediately advertises his daring for a home audience and thus the strategy which the visual vocabulary of the picture advances is one where even the bravest and most

⁴⁸ See Monk, *The Sublime*, p. 97.

⁴⁹ See Godby, “Thomas Baines on the Victoria Falls”, p. 30.

⁵⁰ Baines, *The Victoria Falls*, p. 3.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 4 [my emphasis].

intrepid specimens of English manhood are emotionally and aesthetically overcome by the grandeur of nature.

Other travellers record their own sensations in the presence of such an awe-inspiring spectacle. Whereas Baines' physiological response was imparted by the actual view itself, other writers internalize the impact and delineate how their bodies respond to the circumstances and effect of the view. Thus, the natural sublime is made manifest in, and directly related to, their own bodily response. Baines' companion on the journey to the Victoria Falls, the previously quoted James Chapman, writes about this waterfall which "make[s] one's hair stand on end."⁵² For him the scenic ensemble, looked at from a "giddy height" – inducing such horripilation – is exactly the sort of bodily response envisaged by Burke. The composite view of the waterfall at the Zambezi River corresponds to the feelings of the Swedish botanist, Peter Kalm, when he visited that other great waterfall – the Falls of Niagara, in 1750: "You cannot see it without being quite terrified; to behold so vast a quantity of water falling headlong from a surprising height."⁵³ Chapman's viewing position aids this response, because as Burke comments "height is less grand than depth...we are more struck at looking down from a precipice, than at looking up at an object of equal height."⁵⁴ Perhaps the most visually persuasive and impacting of Baines' views is the "Devil's Cataract" (Plate 44). The large tree in the left foreground serves to frame the view and consequently to provide a path of entry for the viewer's eye. The branches open out to reveal the majestic spectacle of the waters pouring over the rocky outcrop. Here the white colour of the foaming waters contrasts with the dark foliage of the trees to provide visual excitement and interest while the dashing brushwork conveys the rush of the water. The verticality of the work, in contrast to many of the other scenes in his Victoria Falls series, adds to the effect by insisting on the downward spiralling and cascading of the volumes of water. It parallels the experience of William Baldwin who visited the Falls in August 1860. Looking at the Falls from above he saw the magnificent sight of the water cascading downwards "like a shower of crystal" as it drops over a "perpendicular fall of immense height."⁵⁵

⁵² Chapman, *Travels in the Interior of South Africa*, Vol. 2, p. 120.

⁵³ Quoted in McKinsey, *Niagara Falls*, p. 24.

⁵⁴ Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry*, p.66.

⁵⁵ William Charles Baldwin, *African Hunting from Natal to the Zambesi including Lake Ngami, the Kalahari Desert, &c. from 1852 to 1860* [London, 1863], p. 399.

In Chapman's bodily response he experiences those combined emotions of grandness, terror and sublimity that are coeval with viewing such a sight. Burke had postulated that such "ideas of pain, sickness, and death, fill the mind with strong emotions of horror" and were the prime movers in the origin of feelings of the Sublime.⁵⁶ Dr Emil Holub recounts the physical afflictions that accompanied him to the Victoria Falls. However, he concludes:

In spite of the suffering which I continued to endure from the state of my feet, I look upon the three days which I spent in the vicinity of the Falls as the most satisfying and enjoyable part of my sojourn in Southern Africa.⁵⁷

Thus, even bodily pain is transcended by the aesthetic and affecting visual merit of the scene. Indeed, the physical pain becomes almost a badge of achievement necessary to perceive this beauty and wonder of nature. Frank Oates recounts how one of the tourists that he met returning from the Falls was adamant that "he would rather walk barefoot from Durban to see them than leave them unseen."⁵⁸ Chapman associates the whole scene with one that is intent on "charming the eye with dread," thus connecting pleasing emotions with uncomfortable sensations.⁵⁹ Burke, relying on a sophisticated philological and etymological argument derived from classical Greek and Latin, concludes, "whatever therefore is terrible, with regard to sight, is sublime too."⁶⁰ Physical discomfort and bodily distress are adduced as potent symbols of an encounter with the Sublime. Edward Mohr was a later traveller, following in the footsteps of the English pioneers. Yet, he too seeks to express the natural spectacle presented by the Victoria Falls in terms of its effect on his body in order to express his wonder, amazement and aesthetic appreciation of the visual impact of the Falls. On seeing the vast clouds of vapour rising above the "green and apparently endless" canopy of trees, Mohr proclaims that "never as long as my pulses beat shall I forget that moment."⁶¹ By drawing a specific physiological reference into his description of

⁵⁶ Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry*, p. 36.

⁵⁷ Dr Emil Holub, *Seven Years in South Africa: Travels, Researches and Hunting Adventures between the Diamond Fields and the Zambezi (1872-9)*, translated by Ellen E. Frewer, 2 vols. [London, 1881], Vol. 2, p. 191.

⁵⁸ Frank Oates, *Matabele Land and the Victoria Falls: A Naturalist's Wanderings in the Interior of South Africa*, edited by C.G. Oates [London, 1891], p. 87.

⁵⁹ Chapman, *Travels in the Interior of South Africa*, Vol. 2, p. 127.

⁶⁰ Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry*, pp. 53-4.

⁶¹ Edward Mohr, *To the Victoria Falls of the Zambesi*, translated by N. D'Anvers [London, 1876], p. 319.

seeing the Falls for the first time, Mohr hints at the deep physical effect that the Victoria Falls made on him and positions them within the discourse of the Sublime.

However, the appreciation and aesthetic impact of the Victoria Falls could also find an outlet in a psychological impression made by them. Burke saw a correlation between physiological and psychological impressions. Mohr's eventual appreciation and assessment of the scene revolves around its impact upon him and the feelings and emotions elicited by the scene:

Long did I gaze upon this magnificent scene, my imagination carrying me away as on the pinions of the storm. It seemed to me as if my own small *ego* had become part of power which raged about me; as if my own identity were swallowed up in the surrounding glory, the voice of which rolled on for ever, like the waves of eternity. But I threw down my pen. No human being can describe the infinite and what I saw was a part of infinity made visible and framed in beauty.⁶²

Mohr eulogizes on the power of nature to render all human sensibility meaningless and insignificant. The futility of human descriptive faculties in the face of such a scene accords with Burke's assessment of these notions:

The ideas of eternity and infinity, are among the most affecting we have, and yet perhaps there is nothing of which we really understand so little, as of infinity and eternity.⁶³

The allusion to infinity was one that Burke employed to raise the prospect of sublimity:

But let it be considered that hardly any thing can strike the mind with its greatness, which does not make some approach towards infinity.⁶⁴

And Burke states conclusively a few pages later:

Infinity has a tendency to fill the mind with that sort of delightful horror, which is the most genuine effect, and truest test of the sublime.⁶⁵

The overwhelming sublimity of the scene at the Victoria Falls, by virtue of its tendency towards infinity renders human existence almost negligible. The impressive

⁶² Ibid., p. 327.

⁶³ Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry*, p. 57.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 58.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 67.

visual display has the same effect on Dr Emil Holub. He pronounces that “truly it is a scene in which a man may well become aware of his own insignificance.”⁶⁶

Vastness was a major contributing factor in the construction and transmission of the Sublime: “Greatness of dimension, is a powerful cause of the sublime.”⁶⁷ Livingstone is so impressed by the singularity of the Victoria Falls that he maintains: “one Mosi-oa-tunya is quite enough for a continent.”⁶⁸ Here he acknowledges the enormity and almost overpowering influence that the Victoria Falls could exert on a region and those trying to describe it. The running debate regarding the actual height of the cascade was one that pervaded accounts of the Falls themselves. Livingstone, Baines, Sir John Kirk and Sir Richard Glyn traded opinions about the depth of the chasm, ranging from 310 to 400 feet.⁶⁹ The descriptions of such massive depths, under the pretence of objective scientific measurement, further helped to shroud the Victoria Falls in an aura of majestic grandness that was vital in the construction of the Sublime.

The power, scale and infinite magnitude that Burke posited as being one of the principal motivations behind the Sublime response is expressed in many works associated with the Victoria Falls. For example, Baines pictorial renditions of the Falls powerfully and evocatively capture the tenets of the Sublime as formulated by Burke. However, in written accounts, the physical impact and emotional intensity of the response elicited by the Victoria Falls found expression in the language used in order to describe and quantify these for a European audience. Baines’ images were textualized in Chapman’s account of the Falls. The ivory trader verbalizes the scene for his audience:

My senses truly become overwhelmed with crowding sensations while gazing on these wondrous works of God, but I cannot describe them. In passing, we again peep down into the depths of the yawning chasm of the west end, belching forth its dense clouds of vapour, and follow with our eyes through the blinding brilliancy of the rainbow, the boiling, roaring, dashing, splashing,

⁶⁶ Holub, *Seven Years in South Africa*, Vol. 2, p. 195.

⁶⁷ Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry*, p. 66.

⁶⁸ Livingstone, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambezi and its Tributaries*, p. 308.

⁶⁹ See Godby, “Thomas Baines on the Victoria Falls”, p. 34.

gushing, gleaming, bounding stream, and exclaim “How beautiful! How terrible!”⁷⁰

The evocation of the Sublime impact of the Victoria Falls relies here on the very language employed by Chapman in his rapturous description. Longinus had extolled the place of the “invention of figures [of speech], splendid diction, and composition with dignity and elevation” as sources of the Sublime.⁷¹ The vigour of Chapman’s verbs, the use of the present tense, and the breathlessness of the run-on lines evince the spectator’s reaction to the Falls in prose. The sheer linguistic exhilaration of the serpentine sentence perfectly encapsulates the vitality, motion and dynamism inherent in the scene. It works to evoke and cement the idea of overwhelming power and inexhaustible energy of Nature in the face of which mankind and all his efforts are puny, insignificant and doomed to inconsequence. Burke analyzes this effect:

The truth is, all verbal description, merely as naked description, though never so exact, conveys so poor and insufficient an idea of the thing described, that it could scarcely have the smallest effect, if the speaker did not call in to his aid those *modes of speech* that mark a strong and lively feeling in himself. Then, by the contagion of our passions, we catch a fire already kindled in another... Words, by strongly conveying the passions... compensate for their weakness in other respects.⁷²

For Burke, words are the most suitable medium for conveying the “affectations of the mind from one to another” that was absolutely requisite in the transmission of sublimity.⁷³ Edward Mohr acknowledges that the Victoria Falls have already been described at length by previous explorers before going on to rival Chapman’s linguistic pyrotechnics:

Before us we have the full glorying of the falling mass of water, ever moving, ever changing, blustering, foaming, glowing, shining, with small green islands peeping over the very edge of the abyss, and on the left and right, above and below, water everywhere hurrying onwards with a continuous noise like thunder.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Chapman, *Travels in the Interior of South Africa*, Vol. 2, p. 127.

⁷¹ Rev. Richard Stack, “An Essay on the Sublimity of Writing” in *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy*, Vol. 1 (1787), pp. 3-26; p. 3.

⁷² Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry*, p. 160 [my emphasis].

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

⁷⁴ Mohr, *To the Victoria Falls of the Zambesi*, p. 323; p. 327.

Frederick Barber recounts the only occasionally visible bottom of the abyss as being a “chaos of foam and seething, agitated water.”⁷⁵ Dr Holub describes the scene whereby jets of water:

dash down with tremendous fury, their edges curled up and broken in angry foam and spray; the largest streams,...those that power along are caught by the jagged peaks and torn asunder, ending their career by rolling over and over in cascades.⁷⁶

Frederick Courteney Selous describes how tranquilly the beautiful river flows on “heedless of its coming danger, till with a crash it leaps in one splendid mass of fleecy, snow-white foam into an abyss 400 feet in depth.”⁷⁷ The violence of the imagery combined with the animation of the language actively constructs the scene as one of majestic sublimity. These various linguistic flights of fancy closely adhere to Burke’s analysis of Milton’s depiction of Satan in the *Philosophical Enquiry*. For Burke, this literary construction is rendered sublime by dint of the language employed and consequently “the mind is hurried out of itself, by a croud [sic] of great and confused images; which affect because they are crouded [sic] and confused.”⁷⁸ The language in which descriptions of the Victoria Falls were frequently couched seems to consciously rely on this effect to convey and articulate the scene and to translate its visual impression into a suitably comprehensible and evocative textual basis. Stylistic conventions help to do this and Burke and other theorists of the Sublime credit language as playing a vital role in the evocation of the Sublime.

The textual accounts of the Victoria Falls, and their visual adjuncts, present us with a good example of how the discourse of the Sublime was adapted and employed extensively in the representation of a foreign, strange and “other” scene. The strategies delineated and characteristics outlined above were used for the textual codification of “the first waterfalls in the world and as much finer than Niagara as Niagara is finer than Schaufhausen.”⁷⁹ However, these representations of the scene, suffused and saturated as they are by the many and various facets of the Sublime as it had penetrated the cultural consciousness of European explorers in Africa in the

⁷⁵ Quoted in Tabler (ed.), *Zambezia and Matabeleland in the Seventies*, p. 50.

⁷⁶ Holub, *Seven Years in South Africa*, Vol. 2, p. 193.

⁷⁷ Selous, *A Hunter’s Wanderings in Africa*, p. 110.

⁷⁸ Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry*, p. 57.

⁷⁹ Richard Trewen (1852-96); Quoted in Tabler (ed.), *Zambezia and Matabeleland in the Seventies*, p. 144.

nineteenth century, carry an ideological import in the process of European engagement with the African landscape. We need to examine the consequences of having a foreign and alien landform described and so heavily encumbered with European philosophical and aesthetic baggage. How does the large accumulation of the terms, the intricate network of associations and cultural presumptions impinge on the European engagement with this potential colonial environment?

The Sublime was a crucial philosophical strategy in the imperial envisaging of the landscape. Its use is connected to the anxiety of the European about his inability to represent and to intellectually grasp the regions through which explorers and traders were passing. Livingstone is so bedazzled by the “most wonderful sight that I had witnessed in Africa” that his language and description of it are totally inadequate and unsuitable for such a scene. His futile and rather pedestrian attempts to intellectually colonize, to represent and record the scene, lead to his asking his readers to think of “the Thames filled with low tree-covered hills immediately beyond the tunnel, extending as far as Gravesend.”⁸⁰ Indeed, his incapacity to conceptualize the grandeur of the Falls was noted by some of the first Europeans to follow in his footsteps. William Baldwin, tells us that he read Livingstone’s description of the Falls for the first time in December 1860:

[C]ompared notes with my own [notes on the Falls], they differ materially, but on carefully reperusing mine I cannot alter a word. He [Livingstone] has much underrated their magnitude.⁸¹

The comic incongruity of the image should not distract from the real and definite strategy being pursued in this description – that of trying to describe and visualize the scene for a domestic British audience by recounting and associating it with familiar scenes and terms at home. However, the discourse of the Sublime allowed the explorer to do something more intellectually valid and more politically useful. Burke’s theory permitted, and even extolled the virtues of a lack of knowledge with regard to the object being perceived or described: “Knowledge and acquaintance make the striking causes affect but little.”⁸² The freshness, novelty and consequent emotional impact of the scene is preserved in descriptions of the Victoria Falls that

⁸⁰ Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, pp. 519-25.

⁸¹ Baldwin, *African Hunting from Natal to the Zambesi*, p. 438.

⁸² Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry*, p. 57.

acknowledge their indescribability. Narratives of travellers who visit the Falls are replete with authorial disclaimers as to the impossibility of a correct rendition of the scene. Livingstone bemoans the fact that “it is a rather helpless task to endeavour to convey an idea of it in words.”⁸³ Baldwin claims that “no words can describe their grandeur.”⁸⁴ Chapman laments the lack of comparative sources at his disposal: “I have never seen anything with which I can compare it.”⁸⁵ Even Richard Frewen is quite overcome by the singularity of his visit in the 1877 despite having seen Baines’ views of the scene beforehand:

The Victoria Falls can never be over-described or overpraised; the descriptions and pictures which I have seen don’t give one the slightest idea of the reality.⁸⁶

Mohr finds all attempts to encode the Victoria Falls in written and textual terms futile: “But I threw down my pen. No human being can describe the infinite and what I saw was a part of infinity made visible and framed in beauty.”⁸⁷ Imbedded in these descriptions is the classic colonial use of the Sublime in order to further its descriptive and appropriative ends.

The avowed speechlessness and self-professed descriptive ineptitude of the writers does not tally with the facts of the texts. For just as the infinite has been embodied in the natural guise of the waterfall, so the unutterable has been eloquently committed to prose. Simon Ryan has noted how this oxymoronic process of claiming speechlessness and indescribability before proceeding to describe the scene constructs the explorer as a surmounter of geographical and linguistic difficulties.⁸⁸ The travellers who have recorded the Victoria Falls advertise their ability to travel to, to record and ultimately to return from these unknown regions and areas of great natural beauty and imperial promise. By transposing awkward, alien and indecipherable forms of knowledge into a code of Western epistemology, Europeans could manipulate and command that which had previously evaded their grasp. This rendered the potential imperial and colonial landscape knowable for the European audience at home, through the published travelogue and illustrated account. It had the important advantage of drawing the alien and foreign climes and cultures within a European

⁸³ Livingstone, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambezi and its Tributaries*, p. 179.

⁸⁴ Baldwin, *African Hunting from Natal to the Zambesi*, p. 399.

⁸⁵ Chapman, *Travels in the Interior of South Africa*, Vol. 2, p. 127

⁸⁶ Quoted in Tabler (ed.), *Zambezia and Matabeleland in the Seventies*, p. 149.

⁸⁷ Mohr, *To the Victoria Falls of the Zambesi*, p. 327.

⁸⁸ Ryan, *The Cartographic Eye*, p. 86.

methodological system. Thus, anything perceived as being threateningly “other” can be neutralized by, and contained within, a European epistemological framework centred on written descriptions. The European project of civilisation and progressive development was inextricably linked to and dependent upon a reduction of foreign knowledge systems to a European-orientated code. The discourse of the Sublime gave Europeans a way to envisage and to record the unusual wonders and vistas presented by an unknown landscape. It allowed the traveller to present his adventures in the form of signs that would be both intelligible and attractive to the reading audience while simultaneously asserting European mastery over the landscape.

The presentation of the Sublime in the form of written descriptions and visual images was perfectly consonant with Burke’s notions about the way that the emotional origins of this phenomenon operated:

When danger or pain press too nearly, they are incapable of giving any delight, and are simply terrible; but at certain distances, and with certain modifications, they may be, and they are delightful, as we every day experience.⁸⁹

The filtering medium of the published narrative account or the illustrated book acts as a kind of safety net, securely removed from the site of the danger, and through which European domestic audiences could gaze at regions of newly explored and mysterious landscapes without the attendant risks and threats encountered by the travelling authors. Thus, it could safely be used to ameliorate interest in a passage of description. The exciting novelty conjured up by the discourse of the Sublime could help to boost sales figures at home. For example, James Chapman rewrites his narrative, and by a process of “weeding and pruning,” lays it before the public in a more enticing form.⁹⁰ The crucial phrase, “weeding and pruning,” highlights the process of editing and the concern with linguistic power that was a requirement in the competitive world of mid-nineteenth century publishing. The Sublime becomes one of the European explorer’s tools with which he appropriates and familiarizes the scene for the reader. Philosophical discourse allowed authors to remove the scene from its geographical and local existence and to present it as an aesthetic object. The Victoria

⁸⁹ Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry*, p. 37.

⁹⁰ Chapman to Earl Grey, 20th September 1863; reprinted in Chapman, *Hunting and Trading Journeys*, Vol. 2, p. 221.

Falls and other similarly awesome features become available for critical scrutiny and appreciation according to Western criteria and through European media. The Sublime is here exposed as part of an imperial epistemological process. The physical act of recording a view of a distant landscape feature in a published narrative and its subsequent dissemination to a domestic audience gave Europeans an implicitly superior position of power and intellectual control.

Martin Shee maintained that the discourse of the Sublime occupied “the insane point of the critical compass.”⁹¹ But what Shee ridiculed was actually a useful strategy, deployed cogently and consistently by European explorers encountering the Victoria Falls and other exotic landscape vistas. It provided an epistemological framework for viewing an environment and locale that was completely outside the European experience until the mid-nineteenth century. The detonators of sublime experience that were codified and analyzed by Burke and others in the eighteenth century come to the fore again in the diverse descriptions of the Victoria Falls especially but also in relation to other landscape features. However, these characteristics do not occur merely as pedantic and stereotypical responses in the face of the grandeur of the Southern African landscape. Rather they form part of the process whereby colonial landscape views were intellectually appropriated, and became known and represented to European audiences.

The philosophical formula of the Sublime was equally as useful as the Picturesque to the explorer, author and artist in adding unusual landscape features encountered in the colonial context to the imperial archive of knowledge. As an aesthetic criterion, it could be manipulated and employed in the colonial and foreign context of a strange land for specific ends and to accomplish a definite strategy of intellectual colonization. The widespread currency of these aesthetic tools afforded the artist the opportunity to describe and depict stupendous and almost incredible landscape scenes and features, such as the Victoria Falls, according to a predetermined visual and aesthetic order. I would now like to discuss the scientific impulse that impelled many depictions of the landscape space of Southern Africa throughout the nineteenth century.

⁹¹ Quoted in Monk, *The Sublime*, p. 3.

Chapter 4: Realism and the Scientific Impulse

“Art is never independent of its place, and takes on the features of its locality as surely as it takes on the features of its time.”

Bernard Smith, 1945.

The aesthetic modes of visualization discussed above greatly aided the European explorer in his quest to gain intellectual control over the landscape in which he was travelling. These modes of vision correspond to prevalent trends in artistic and philosophical circles at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. While artistic trends and tastes may have changed and modified throughout the nineteenth century, the idea of employing a European-based system of visualization still held true. I will argue that science as an artistic tool and the bent for scientific accuracy in visual images which developed throughout the nineteenth century, particularly in Britain, was also co-opted by artists and travellers in order to capture the strange and foreign otherness of the Southern African landscape in an intelligible Eurocentric form.

The analysis of science and scientific discourses as a tool for explaining the political and cultural structures of imperialism has only recently become a serious area of inquiry. What has been characterized as the Victorian “fanatic concern for scientific accuracy” is now proffered as a major influence on all forms of cultural output in the nineteenth century.¹ For Carol Christ the paintings of the pre-Raphaelites, the tortuous prose of John Ruskin and the intensely personal poetry of Hopkins are all cultural products emanating from, and expressive of, the same social circumstances. They form part of that web of beliefs and associations that evidence the almost obsessive Victorian concern for the delineation and description of the minutiae of scientific

¹ Carol Christ, The Finer Optic : The Aesthetic of Particularity in Victorian Poetry [New Haven, 1975], p. 17.

explanation and a “zeal for exact fidelity to natural detail.”² A claim to represent the reality of appearances and to be offering a faithful mimetic transcription of natural detail became a central tool in the artists’ armoury for depicting landscape features. For those charged with imaging the colonial periphery the pervasiveness of this cultural imperative was to form yet another “way of seeing” the spaces of Southern Africa.

There was a persistent drive amongst the formulators of imperial culture and imagery in Southern Africa to theorize and actualize the Empire and its colonial spaces in scientific and rationalist terms. The obsessive concern with presenting the representation of the colonial space of Southern Africa as realistic and absolutely true to nature was one that heavily influenced the artist’s vision of the subcontinent as the nineteenth century progressed. Indeed, as I will argue, the role of art and visual representations was vital to this drive and was inevitably influenced by, and influential in, the development of a scientific vision of the Empire. This symbiosis is evident at the edges, in both literal and metaphoric terms, of colonial history. The work of science and the role of art became increasingly blurred at the geographical peripheries of the British Empire. Just as the boundary between imperial territory and uncultivated, unexplored space could be fluid, so too the clear distinction between science and artistic representation of the landscape of these areas could be subsumed beneath the overarching principle of colonial epistemological appropriation of the landscape. The role of scientific description and the concomitant artistic claims of fidelity to nature are just as involved in creating a digestible and intelligible European view of the landscape as the philosophical and aesthetic criteria assessed above.

Science and its relationship to nineteenth-century modes of imperial perception and artistic expression is dependent on late twentieth-century revisionist readings and modes of critical thinking. As an explanation for certain traits and trends in the formation of a nineteenth-century aesthetic of landscape, it has been analyzed by Charlotte Klonk.³ In the parallel realm of cultural and social history, Daniel Headrick has discussed the percolation of scientific discourses and practice into the European

² Ibid., p. 18.

³ Charlotte Klonk, *Science and the Perception of Nature : British Landscape Art in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century* [New Haven, 1996].

imperial encounter with the colonies. A convincing argument enables Headrick to place the technological advances and scientific bent of the age at the heart of any appraisal of the cultural mechanics of Empire.⁴ These studies assess the relationship, crossover and mutual interdependence of science and art and that of science and empire respectively. However, it is Bernard Smith's magisterial account of European artists working in Oceania that really blazed a trail, igniting the debate about the impact of scientific discourse on art and landscape imagery being produced in the colonial context.⁵ His wide-ranging and provocative account of the rise of scientific currency in the artistic context in the latter half of the eighteenth century concludes with the assessment that in the one hundred years from 1759 to 1859, the artist "in a century of collaboration with the business of recording the appearance of Man and Nature [had] subjected his own vision of reality to the service of science."⁶

It is here that my analysis and appraisal of the situation in Southern Africa diverges from Smith's. His assessment of artistic intention and the circumstances of production somewhat privileges the exigencies of the scientific fraternity for whom many of the artists on the South Sea Voyages were working. His discussion of scientific exactitude becoming a dominant motif in artistic and cultural circles in the nineteenth century lends itself to the kind of pejorative analysis that was promulgated by W.F. Axton. He identifies a trend in Victorian painting that led to:

more and more demands for literal attention to microscopic detail [which] drew all painting, but especially landscape, into the straightjacket of literally minute finish.⁷

Axton reserves special criticism for the Pre-Raphaelites who were guilty of employing an "all-over myopia of vision and a microscopy of depiction."⁸

Undoubtedly, the instructions expressly laid down to the artists accompanying the exploring crews by the Lords of the Admiralty required a certain reining in of romantic exuberance on the part of the artist. However, Smith confuses the

⁴ Daniel Headrick, *The Tools of Empire : Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* [Oxford, 1981].

⁵ Bernard Smith's *European Vision and the South Pacific* was first published in 1960 although many of the ideas and approaches for that work have their genesis in his *Place, Taste and Tradition : A Study of Australian Art since 1788* which was first published in 1945. In this study I am using the second edition of *European Vision and the South Pacific* published in New Haven in 1985.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 339.

⁷ Quoted in Lynn L. Merrill, *The Romance of Victorian Natural History* [Oxford, 1989], p. 174

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 174

overarching phenomenalist culture of the late eighteenth century with the purported dominance of a scientific vision. As Klonk points out, the intellectual culture of the eighteenth century had not yet been ruptured into two mutually antagonistic camps of science and art.⁹ As yet, these branches of knowledge were not distinct, antagonistic or even mutually exclusive. Even for someone like Marianne North, living at the end of the nineteenth century, this distinction did not exist. There was no conflict for her, as an artist, in painting an object of great beauty while simultaneously extolling its factual existence as a material object for analysis. She was, according to S. Peter Dance, “like all Victorians who cared for things of the mind, . . . uninhibited by that tedious modern invention, the two cultures.”¹⁰ If artists conformed to the scientific portrayal of scenery and landscapes it was not, I believe, at the behest of scientists demanding visual representation for their theories and for their research. Rather, it is because the prevailing mode of perception, both artistic and scientific, in relation to the colonies was one of empirical and accurate recording of the view for future computation. The relationship between art and science, in their mutually informative methods of analysis, is indicative of the polymathic, cross-disciplinary expertise required of the exploring artist, as opposed to a narrow and constraining vocabulary of expression suggested by the idea of artistic subjugation to the needs of science.

These scientifically informed empirical renditions of natural phenomena encountered by artists as they explored the colonial periphery were not just simple, value-neutral representations of the landscape. In an age of acquisitive imperialism, the natural and physical sciences were inquisitive tools and could be constructed as being uncorrupted by political engagement. However, like all forms of social interchange, these putatively disinterested sciences provided a dignity and a natural logic to the process of European expansion.¹¹ They were part of the nexus of imperial propaganda and self-reflexive debate that grew in proportion to the territorial acquisitions of the Empire. Thus, they are logically subject to the same vagaries of political malleability that has been acknowledged in other forms of visual representation discussed above. These allegedly scientifically accurate pictures employed what Martin Kemp refers to

⁹ Klonk, *Science and the Perception of Nature*, pp. 4-5.

¹⁰ Quoted in Merrill, *The Romance of Victorian Natural History*, p. 168.

¹¹ See Richard Drayton, “Science and the European Empires” in *JICH*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (Sept. 1995), pp. 503-10; p. 506.

as “graphic tricks” in order to translate the reality into a visual artefact.¹² This process is apparent in the nineteenth-century European encounter with Africa, where the vast majority of knowledge was transmitted via the cultural channels of text, image and book. And, as discussed above, the collection and organization of material and information was done with reference to a totalizing scheme of amassing an imperial archive of knowledge. This chapter begins by examining the pervasive and influential role played by science in nineteenth-century culture and how this fed into art. These findings will be applied to the artistic and physical exploration of colonial spaces in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Visual imagery can be seen as symbolizing and engaging with this concern with scientific exactitude. The role of science in the artistic representation of the colonial landscape will be analysed, showing how the convergence between art and science was visualized in some contemporary images. In particular, I will suggest how this culture of science fed into the visual ideology of the colonial encounter with Southern Africa. It helped to sustain the imperial archive that is a fundamental basis of colonial engagement in the nineteenth-century British encounter with Southern Africa by privileging a typically European mode of vision. I will analyze these issues in relation to the response of artists to atmospheric effects, foreground scenery, accurate zoological depictions and colour effect in terms of how these visual images were informed by a deep engagement with the prevailing scientific bent of the times.

¹² Martin Kemp, “‘Implanted in Our Natures’: Humans, Plants and the Stories of Art” in Miller and Reill (eds.), *Visions of Empire*, pp. 197-210; p. 201.

In terms of traditional pictorial representation, the discourses of science and the representation of its practices were unattractive subjects for inclusion in pictures. Science was boorish, menial and unrefined – diametrically opposed to the generalizing and morally uplifting role of high art. Smith alludes to Dr Johnson’s cultural mouthpiece, *Rasselas*, suggesting in 1759 that it was not the business of the poet to “number the streaks of the tulip, or describe the different shades in the verdure of the forest.”¹³ The role of the artist, as envisaged and codified by Reynolds, was less to concentrate on the peculiarities of nature than to make a sweeping, generalizing statement for humanity. The creative arts were well insulated from the vagaries of the natural world as the arbiters of taste condemned the artist who took his inspiration directly from nature as one without imagination or critical faculty. However, artistic theory can rarely restrain artistic practice. The ever-increasing interest in the factual surroundings of their world provided the artistic raw material for a Golden Age of British landscape painting. The focus on a phenomenological recording of their immediate surroundings, with a minute concentration on the intricate realities of the environment evidences the response amongst landscape artists to a new appreciation of detailed observation and an interest in scientific explanation. The organs of high art were rather inert and unresponsive in their recognition of the inevitability of change. In 1819, a critic for *The Champion* reviewed the annual exhibition of the Society of Painters in Oil and Water-colours. While giving a guarded commendation of the work on display he warns of the threat of increasingly inconsequential subject matter finding its way into paintings:

We wish our artists, however, may not become too fond of making *pictures of nothing*. Expanses of skies and seas and sands, and the mere phenomenon of the elements are fit *accompaniments* - but they are hardly subjects for pictures.¹⁴

The increasing penchant amongst artists for expressing the material facts of the English landscape as it presented itself to their eyes became so dominant that the Royal Academy had to impose an interdiction on “mere transcriptions of the objects of natural history.”¹⁵ This divergence and friction between the bastion of post-Renaissance European artistic heritage and the drive for a contemporary up-to-date

¹³ Quoted in Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific*, p. 339.

¹⁴ Quoted in Kriz, *The Idea of the English Landscape Painter*, p. 125.

¹⁵ Peter Howard, *Landscapes : The Artists' Vision* [London, 1991], p. 224, n. 35.

representational vocabulary clearly indicates the role that practising artists saw for science in their work. By conforming to a phenomenological view of the world, both artist and scientist engaged in a process of meticulous scrutiny. The world was presented as it appeared, the intricacy and the beauty of its existence being enough reward to sanction the expounding of artistic and scientific energy on it.

The culture of exploration, colonialism and expansion into hitherto unclaimed territories was a vital outlet for this new way of conceiving reality, where close observation and rational explanation were set up as the supreme goals to be striven for through artistic representation and empirical experimentation. The visual aesthetic inspired by the scientific bent of the nineteenth century was co-opted into representations of Africa and can take its place in the network of European imperial apparatuses that helped to control, envisage and image the Empire. Robert Stafford and others have revised the terms in which we see the imperial enterprise by allowing for the inclusion of scientific influences in that discourse. He posits a direct link between the scientific exploration and the imperial interests of Britain. He characterizes exploration as “goal-directed research that created knowledge in the laboratory of the wilderness.”¹⁶ Stafford maintains and articulates the view of Victorian exploration as one where the empirical base of nineteenth-century science was a fundamental tool for aiding the exploration and imaging of the regions being constantly accreted to the British Empire. In encountering and explaining the colonial landscape and its inhabitants, objective analysis and data gathering came to occupy a central and important role. What E.M. Forster called “the implacable offensive of science” swept up the disembodied material facts of the unexplored regions of the Empire in its march towards self-effacement and the supreme goal of realistic representation.¹⁷ For nineteenth-century explorers and colonialists, the role of science and its emphasis on objective factual analysis became an almost national prerogative, developing into a mainspring of British colonial policy. It functioned as a useful catch all excuse for exploring particular patches of land in the name of philanthropic and scientific investigation. And, of course, scientific endeavour – with its ability to name

¹⁶ Robert A. Stafford, “Scientific Exploration and Empire” in Andrew Porter (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire; Volume 3 The Nineteenth Century* [Oxford, 1999], pp. 294-315; p. 294.

¹⁷ Quoted in Robert A. Stafford, *Scientist of Empire: Sir Roderick Murchison, Scientific Exploration and Victorian Imperialism* [Cambridge, 1989], p. 202.

and classify disparate objects - was ably suited to retrieving the errant facts of colonial space and committing them to the archive of knowledge being steadily built up.

The vogue for perceiving science as a sort of pseudo-nationalist creed is expressed quite deftly in a monument to the British naturalist, John Gilbert. Located in St James' Church in Sydney it commemorates an intrepid ornithologist, speared to death by a band of unruly aboriginals and includes the inscription, "Dulce et decorum est pro scientia mori."¹⁸ The interesting substitution of patriotic fervour with scientific zeal, and the subsequent blurring of the boundaries between these two impulses, perhaps indicates the underlying identification, in the British metropolitan unconsciousness, of scientific advancements with a typical British activity and intellectual superiority. By practising this science and imposing rationality on their colonial possessions, the British imperial representatives distinguished themselves from others, especially natives. As Matthew Edney has shown, the British did science, the natives did not and thus the practice of science became "a quintessentially scientific and British activity" - the two becoming synonymous.¹⁹ In the climate of imperial relations, the society (or the representatives of that society) that practises and employs science is privileged. The subtle regurgitation and paraphrasing of the Latin motto replaces the promulgation of the nation with that of science as the most noble way to meet one's end. In the midst of this culture there develops a tacit acceptance of science as the ultimate arbiter in all matters colonial. Thus, it is unsurprising to find its influence all pervasive, no more so than in the visual representations of the nascent colonies. This motif emphasizes the increasingly widely accepted view that the use of scientific methods in the collection and organization of data was the most important and reliable means of creating an intellectual basis for the Empire. The resultant aesthetic of realism and accuracy of depiction that influenced the visual rendition of colonial spaces went hand in hand with the theories of the Picturesque and the Sublime. All three assisted in a familiar, reliable and decidedly European way of looking at landscape and natural phenomena that were visually unusual, alien and perhaps threatening to the explorer, artist and author.

¹⁸ See James Morris, *Imperial Progress : Heaven's Command* [Harmondsworth, 1998], pp. 195-6.

¹⁹ Matthew Edney, *Mapping an Empire : The Geographical Construction of British India, 1765-1843* [London, 1997], p. 32.

So all encompassing was scientific discourse in the nineteenth century that it eventually infiltrated the world of high art in Britain. The most strident advocate of a closely observed, realistically depicted landscape was John Ruskin. Running through his various and verbose literary outpourings on all matters aesthetic is the persistent trope of imploring artists to concentrate, rather like their colleagues in the sciences, on the particulars of the natural world, the minutiae of creation, as a way of realising the inherent sanctity of all creation. For Ruskin, the prevailing artistic taste for a detached and idealized view of the world, only tangentially related to reality, was a betrayal of God-given talent and a travesty. He castigated the process of “generalization” as the “act of a vulgar, incapable and unthinking mind.”²⁰ His theoretical credo privileged the concentration on minutiae that would be championed in the visual arts by the pre-Raphaelites. However, even before this, John Constable had pronounced at the Royal Institute Lecture in June 1836 that “Painting is a science and should be pursued as an inquiry into the laws of nature.”²¹ This sheer rationalist, unromantic approach advocated by Constable and later justified in ethical and moral terms by Ruskin, reflects the value placed on scientific discourse by the arbiters of culture and the practitioners of high art in the early part of the nineteenth century in the home country. The relationship between these two, as yet indistinct branches of knowledge, was conveniently appraised by David Ansted.²² He was one of a number of scientific experts who wrote articles for artists giving advice as to the best method to paint landscape and natural phenomena with scientific accuracy. The appearance of these tracts in art journals and periodicals displays the contemporary idea that these were not antithetical but rather complementary disciplines. Indeed, the role of the Department of Science and Art in the official sponsorship of culture in the nineteenth century is both an indicator of and contributor to this cultural climate.²³ Professor Ansted concluded his series of five articles in the Art Journal with the rejoinder:

²⁰ Quoted in Stephen Daniels, Fields of Vision : Landscape Imagery and National Identity in England and the USA [Cambridge, 1993], p. 298.

²¹ Quoted in Klonk, Science and the Perception of Nature, p. 150.

²² Professor David Thomas Ansted was the author of over fifty books relating to geology and its teaching in schools. Among his best known works are The Application of Geology to the Arts and Manufactures. Being six lectures on practical geology (1865) and The Ancient World; or, Picturesque Sketches of Creation (1847).

²³ Elizabeth Bonython and Anthony Burton, The Great Exhibitor : the Life and Work of Henry Cole [London, 2003], pp. 183-4.

Thus, it is that science and art should ever advance hand in hand. Each discovery in the former leads to an accession in the power of the latter.²⁴

The symbiotic connection identified by Ansted was one where intellectual endeavour in either branch of knowledge would benefit and enhance the other. Scientific inquiry, it is apparent from these examples, was not seen as a barrier to artistic development. Indeed, quite the contrary, by referring art to the seemingly objective test of scientific veracity, the truthfulness and honesty of artistic representation could be established beyond doubt.

The penchant among domestic artists for filtering their work through the process of scientific verification was magnified amongst those artists who travelled to distant climes. As Smith argues, the artistic license to employ methods of scientific examination in one's work existed in the colonies before it gained common currency in the mainstream art world at home. Very often the job specification upon their being hired would include the proviso that these artists aid the accompanying scientists with their artistic and documentary talents. Sydney Parkinson, who accompanied Captain Cook on the *Endeavour*, was one of the first artists to be employed as an accurate record-keeper of specific natural phenomena, in addition to his brief to paint picturesque and pleasingly aesthetic views of the lands encountered by the voyage. His brother Stanfield, in his preface to Sydney's posthumously published account of the voyage, recalls Sydney;

taking a particular delight in drawing flowers, fruits, and other objects of natural history [so that] he became soon so great a proficient in that stile [sic] of painting as to attract the notice of the most celebrated botanists and conoisseurs in that study.²⁵

Joseph Farington records that "accuracy of drawing seems to be a principal recommendation" for any potential artist being considered for employment by Sir Joseph Banks, one of the most pre-eminent naturalists of the day.²⁶ Just as a crossover developed between art and science, so the boundaries became blurred between the practitioners of the two distinct disciplines. Thus, while Parkinson was an artist who

²⁴ Ansted, "On the General Relation of Physical Geography and Geology to the Progress of Landscape Art in Various Countries", p. 235.

²⁵ Sydney Parkinson, *A Journal of a Voyage to the South Seas, in His Majesty's Ship, The Endeavour* [London, 1783], p. vi.

could turn his hand to botanical representations, so Georg Forster was a naturalist aboard Cook's *Resolution* who could also draw. Indeed, his natural talent for visual documentation seems to have influenced the Admiralty's decision to award him with an appointment. Anders Sparrmann, the author of an early book on South African exploration, wrote admiringly of Forster's "drawing hand."²⁷ These artists conformed to Henri Valenciennes' view that the painter should see himself as the "historian of nature."²⁸ William Vaughan summarizes the role of British art in the furtherance of natural history at this formative stage in its history:

In the great age of natural history, visual description was held to be uniquely informative. Flora and fauna of the world received increasing attention in studies and publications.²⁹

Thus, artistic representation had a vital role to play in the committal of this new branch of empirical science to the epistemological archive of Europe.³⁰

As well as travelling on board Cook's second voyage to the South Seas, William Hodges also worked in India. He was another proponent of the close following of the standards of scientific rectitude by artists. In dealing with the mysticism and potential for the exotic in India, the high-flown abstraction and idealizing bent of artists had to be superseded:

the imagination must be under the strict guidance of cool judgement, or we shall have fanciful representations instead of the truth, which above all, must be the object of such pursuits.³¹

By carefully controlling the depiction of other climates within the language and vocabulary of scientific accuracy and realistic representation, the artists of the colonial landscape performed just as much of an ideological somersault as those who visualized the perfect homestead, the ideal missionary community or the putative settler town in the most attractive terms. The scene of so-called scientific veracity is

²⁶ Quoted in Capt. James Cook, *The Journals of Captain James Cook*, edited by J.C. Beaglehole, 4 vols. [Cambridge, 1955-67], Vol. 4, p. cclxxiii.

²⁷ Quoted in Peter Whitehead, "The Forster Collection of Zoological Drawings in the British Museum (Natural History)" in *Bulletin of the British Museum (Natural History)*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (March 1978), pp. 25-47; p. 29.

²⁸ Quoted in Stafford, *Voyage Into Substance*, p. 449.

²⁹ Vaughan, *British Painting*, p. 188.

³⁰ For one of the seminal discussions of this phenomena see Allan Ellenius (ed.), *The Natural Sciences and the Arts : Aspects of Interaction from the Renaissance to the Twentieth Century* [Stockholm, 1985].

as equally encumbered with the issues of control, power and dominance as the more overtly contrived views of landscape. For, as this became accepted as the representational norm, so it could be co-opted by officials as the only way to depict, envisage and image the colonial landscape. Indeed, the instructions given to artists accompanying explorers later in the nineteenth century closely mirror those criteria laid down by people like Hodges and others in the eighteenth century. The overt employment of art for the purpose of recording is apparent in the instructions given to Hodges by the Board of the Admiralty. Hodges was required:

to make drawings and paintings of such places in the Countries you may touch at in the Course of the said Voyage as may be proper to give a more perfect idea thereof than can be formed from written descriptions only.³²

In his voyage to the Congo, the Cork-born leader of the expedition Captain James Tuckey, was reminded to lay down a chart of the river with “tolerable correctness.” It was to be “on such a scale, as will admit of the main features of the country, and all remarkable objects, being marked drawn upon it.”³³ Much later in the century, the brief given to Thomas Baines, as he set out with the Livingstone Zambezi Expedition, is exhaustive and demanding. It required a broad breadth of knowledge from the artist and advertises the various branches of scientific discourses and disciplines which made use of his visual studies.³⁴ In this way, art and visual representations became the handmaidens of colonial authorities and the medium for envisaging all manner of colonial and imperial concerns.

The role of art in the culture of exploration was one that was deeply embedded in, and dependent upon, the pursuit of knowledge and the classification of facts. William Burchell expressed the prevailing cultural climate of nineteenth-century colonial exploration:

In the wide system of created objects, nothing is wanting, nothing is superfluous: the smallest weed or insect is as indisputably necessary to the general good, as the largest object we behold.³⁵

³¹ William Hodges, *Travels in India* [London, 1783], p. 155.

³² Quoted in Bernard Smith, “William Hodges and English ‘Plein-Air’ Painting” in *Art History*, Vol. 6 No. 2 (June 1983), pp. 143-52; p. 145.

³³ Tuckey, *A Narrative of a Voyage of Exploration to the Source of the Congo*, p. xxxv-xxxvi.

³⁴ See Michael Stevenson, “Thomas Baines : An Artist in the Service of Science in Southern Africa” in Stevenson (ed.), *Thomas Baines*, pp. 1-29.

³⁵ Burchell, *Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa*, Vol. 1, p. 226.

The way that artists approached and were instructed to approach their subject matter reflected the mood for accurate portrayal of details and features of the landscape. Voyagers, seeing and recording the landscape before the advent of photography and its implicit guarantee of realism, were entrusted with the committing of the ephemeral and enduring sights of the new land to paper, both in textual and visual format. In this process, art was conforming to the conventional tastes of the day. As a mode of seeing and a means of co-opting renegade facts from the periphery of the Empire, the discourses of scientific veracity and realistic visual representation that accompanied it became as embroiled in the creation of an imperial archive as the Picturesque or the Sublime.

The reliance of scientific discourse on the mediating power of art is difficult to overstate in an age before the hyper-realistic truthfulness attendant on the camera images in our digital age. Just as science informed the aesthetic visualization of the landscape at the Cape in the late eighteenth century, so the art of exploration was vital in contributing to the European scientific understanding of these “other” lands. The importance of art for the advancement of the sciences can be seen in a number of contemporary portraits, depicting artists, travellers and scientists and visually conveying the interconnectedness of art and science. These portraits are metanarratives, illustrative of the place of scientific discourse in the production of art work in the colonial landscape and the appropriateness of its consideration as an integral part in the building up of an imperial archive.

One such example is a captivating picture painted by John Francis Rigaud in London in 1780 of the father and son, Johann Reinhold and Georg Forster, embodying the confluence between art and science (Plate 45).³⁶ In the work, the younger man is sketching the bird held by his father. Johann Reinhold, with the dead specimen in his right hand and a gun in his left has clearly been hunting, where he has also bagged the other birds at the bottom left of the composition. The central focus of the composition is the visual diagonal, leading from the bird in the bottom left through the blank white space of the page before Georg Forster and continuing to the eye and the mind of the European naturalist. The stylus being used to depict the bird is a compositional feature that has the effect of directing the attention of the viewer towards Georg’s intensely concentrating visage. The symbolic chain of progression corresponds to the idea of the imperial archive that I have been promoting as a vital constituent in the imperial project. This painting further illustrates the process whereby the natural inhabitants, animals, cultures and landscapes of foreign and “other” lands are committed to the inherently Eurocentric modes of representation and analysis and subsequently “captured” or lodged in European understanding.

This picture, which represents two professional scientists, recruited as part of Cook’s *Resolution* expedition, further suggests the prominent role played by science and its

³⁶ Now in the collection in Vaduz, Liechtenstein.

cohorts in advancing this process. Furthermore, the compositional structure of the work encompasses yet more symbolic elucidation of the position of science in European exploration of the colonial landscape. The arc formed by Johann around his son symbolically suggests the circumstances in which science operated in the colonial context. His arms are arranged to form the outermost limits of the work - they bracket the scientific endeavour being pursued by Georg within their compass. In one hand, Johann holds the object of his son's gaze - the dead bird. In the other hand, he holds a gun. It is the implicit catalyst that has enabled the whole process of colonial scientific endeavour to occur in the first place. The European technical superiority and aggression which this image of the gun encodes is what has allowed Georg to make the scientifically-accurate drawings of the bird. In the background, Rigaud introduces some stock elements of exotic vegetation in order to advertise the landscape as foreign, mysterious and unknown. However, behind Johann's right shoulder, Rigaud gives an image of a background landscape that clearly identifies the view as being in the South Seas. Instead of the generic, almost clichéd foliage, Rigaud depicts a placid panoramic expanse of water upon which sails a typically Polynesian barque.³⁷ Behind all is a gently sloping mountain of which Hodges was also a great master. The landscape is used to anchor the scene in a specific geographical context. These scenes would have been quite familiar to the art-viewing public at the time because of the renown of Hodges' work. At the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1776 he had displayed "several views of bays etc. about the island of Otaheite [Tahiti]."³⁸ The reviewer of the exhibition gauges the extent of the cultural circulation of this work by suggesting that "the public are indebted to this artist for giving them some idea of scenes which before they knew little of."³⁹ Thus, the activities and the attendant ideologies of the foreground protagonists can be related to this geographical location in the tropics just as surely as the foreground corresponds to the background. In other words, the scientific endeavour and the role of visual representations in its practice, are issues that revolve around a particular spatial and temporal moment of European expansion into, and exploration of, "other" and potentially colonial lands.

³⁷ For example, see a work like William Hodges' "A View of Matavai Bay in the Island of Otaheite" (1776) in the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich. See Smith, European Vision and the South Pacific, p. 69.

³⁸ Smith, European Vision and the South Pacific, p. 75.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

Felix Driver analyzes Henry W. Phillips' "Captain Speke and Captain Grant with Timbo, a Young Native from the Upper Nile" (Plate 46) in similar terms.⁴⁰ The diverse sources of knowledge collection and organization depicted by Phillips are presented as ways to further the European knowledge of the sliver of African landscape that peeps tantalizingly under the straw roof of the explorers' dwelling. The native testimony, as exemplified by the presence of Timbo, is juxtaposed with the archetypal European means of gaining knowledge and information about the African landscape. The map which Speke is examining, the sketch book on which Grant is working and the botanical specimens in the foreground are all forms of scientific enquiry. They work together in the European taxonomic process of discovery and are integral parts in the construction of the imperial archive of knowledge about the landscape. Thus, the value of the sketch is given the weight of scientific authenticity in this representation.

The act of European scientific recording through the media of art and writing is dependent on the unspoken circumstances which have crept into these visual representations. The value-neutral, nominally objective position of science in the imperial network is here exposed as a chimera - it is dependent on an imposition of both European physical and intellectual order on the landscape and its inhabitants in order to produce its results. This process enabled European artists to depict ever more realistic and accurate representations of the flora, fauna and landscape topography of colonial lands.

⁴⁰ Driver, *Geography Militant*, pp. 19-21.

The representation of natural features and environmental conditions that would inform and educate a domestic audience was one of the uses of art in the compilation of an imperial archive. Typical artistic effects, such as the careful consideration and deployment of colour and lighting techniques allowed artists to capture a realistic sense of the scene before them and commit it to paper or canvas. The representation of storm scenes, cloud formations and atmospheric effects is a useful case study of how landscape views could be permeated by the discourse of science at the beginning of the nineteenth century. According to Professor Ansted, the depiction of a stormy scene was an indicator of supreme artistic skill:

In all landscape, the coming storm and the driving rain are occasionally to be seen, and if well represented, stamp the artist at once as a master. None but those who have studied nature thoroughly can reproduce these details.⁴¹

Perhaps Ansted is unwittingly following the advice laid down by a Dutch artist in the eighteenth century - Gerard de Lairese, who said in 1707 that "a beautiful sky is proof of a good master."⁴² The range of visual opportunities provided naturally by the atmospheric conditions of the storm give a wide scope to the artists' visual imagination. The artist could claim to have rendered the real conditions of the colonial landscape for the edification of a domestic audience. The deployment of artistic skill was here used to build up a store of information about the atmospheric and climatic conditions of the colonial scene. As such, the tools of the artists' trade, such as colour, light and composition as well as the finished work itself helped to create an imperial archive of knowledge.

William Hodges' "Table Mountain and Table Bay, Cape of Good Hope" (Plate 47) is one of the earliest examples of British scientific curiosity being co-opted to record the actuality of the colonial landscape of Southern Africa. The overt employment of art for the purpose of recording is apparent in the instructions given to Hodges by the Board of the Admiralty.⁴³ The work may be more judiciously termed a marine portrait of the prevailing weather conditions in Table Bay when Cook's vessel anchored there. It was painted from Cook's cabin aboard the HMS *Resolution*, and supposedly

⁴¹ Ansted, "Clouds, Air and Atmospheric Meteors, in their Relation to the Picturesque" in *Art Journal* Oct. 1863, pp. 193-6; p. 195.

⁴² Quoted in John Gage, "Clouds over Europe" in Edward Morris (ed.), *Constable's Clouds: Paintings and Cloud Studies by John Constable* [Edinburgh, 2000], pp. 125-34; p. 126.

⁴³ See Hodges, *Travels in India*, p. 155.

represents the scene exactly as it appeared to Hodges.⁴⁴ Captain Cook describes the harbour at Cape Town as being “capacious, pretty safe and commodious, it lies open to the North West winds, which winds we are told very seldom blow strong.”⁴⁵ Hodges’ painting appears to be an almost perfect visual translation of this assessment. However, more importantly it shows the way that Hodges, by virtue of his innovative *plein-air* technique, encapsulates the “characteristical” weather conditions that ships were liable to encounter at the Cape. The mellow, Claudean hues characteristic of Hodges’ master, Richard Wilson and his carefully planned compositions of Neo-Classical reveries, is here replaced by Hodges with a strikingly realistic and atmospheric rendering of the scene before him.⁴⁶ The shafts of sunlight breaking through the cloudy sky, the vast immobile mass of Table Mountain, and the murky conditions through which we see the whole are rendered with an impressive feel for the immediacy and transience of light. Use of highlights and gradations of tone combine to create the feeling of recession and render the conditions unique to that particular moment in time. Indeed, the squalls of rain and the gusts of sea-breeze that Hodges evokes in the painting, actually did occur when he was preparing this work as the diligent testimony of the ship’s meteorologist records.⁴⁷

Yet, this approach is not some proto-Impressionist vision, purely concerned with capturing the fleeting atmospheric conditions of the day. The freshness of touch and nascent *plein-air* technique result from the artist’s use of the mobile studio of Cook’s cabin in order to furnish a landscape painting intimately connected with the scientific and exploratory tendencies of the day. The empirical approach to natural phenomena was pan-disciplinary, not to be confused with a naïve and unselective naturalistic transcription. The newly energized empirical mode of perception caused Hodges to seek out a “typical” description of landscape.⁴⁸ The picture functions as both representation and symbol. Component parts are carefully selected and arranged in order to convey the perceived essence of a particular scene in accordance with the penchant for scientific accuracy suffusing the contemporary culture. The rendition of the tumultuous stormy sky is one of the recurring motifs in the artistic repertoire of

⁴⁴ Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific*, pp. 57-9.

⁴⁵ Cook, *The Journals of Captain James Cook*, Vol. 1, p. 465.

⁴⁶ For further discussion of Wilson see David Solkin, *Richard Wilson : The Landscape of Reaction* [London, 1982].

⁴⁷ Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific*, p. 58.

those who wished to convey the localized natural details to a domestic audience through the work of art. Hodges' work, as an accurate record of weather and climatic conditions at the Cape and its fidelity to environmental reality was, in itself, indicative of Hodges' artistic ability. The very exactitude of his work rendered it a masterpiece in a nineteenth-century critical climate where attention to detail and mastery of realistic depiction were prized. The visual qualities of the work, accurately portraying the typical weather conditions of the Cape of Good Hope, are paralleled by the topographical information incorporated by the artist. Thus, not only does Hodges' realistic representation include enough information to make a military evaluation of the coast but also encapsulates the prevailing and "characteristical" weather conditions at the Cape, committing them to the imperial archive through his artistic skill.

Hodges' contemporaries and rivals, the Daniells were also, it appears, influenced by the new phenomenological approach to depict an atmospheric scene off the Cape of Good Hope. Their *Picturesque Voyage to India* would seem to hark back to the travellers of the eighteenth century and their artificial classification of the landscape according to predetermined academic rules. Its very title conjures up notions of the exotic, but the uncle and nephew are quick to point out that the visual representations are "not liable to the omissions of memory, or the misconceptions of fancy; whatever it [the book] communicates is a transcript from nature."⁴⁹ They implacably wed their visual depictions to a scientific agenda of absolute truthfulness and veracity. In the sixth plate of their work the Daniells depict a "Gale off the Cape of Good Hope" (Plate 48). In the accompanying letterpress, the opinions of John Barrow are quoted in order to add weight to the meteorological phenomenon called the "Tablecloth" - a cloud of mist that descends upon Table Mountain in certain atmospheric and weather conditions. There follows a lengthy and quite detailed scientific and meteorological explanation for this climatic effect that goes some way to illustrate the interest in explicable natural phenomena:

These effects [formation of clouds on mountain tops] may be thus accounted for: the condensed air on the summits of the mountains of the continent rushes

⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 78 and 204.

⁴⁹ Thomas and William Daniell, *A Picturesque Voyage to India: By the way of China* [London, 1810], p. ii.

by its superior gravity towards the more rarefied atmosphere over the isthmus; and the vapour it contains is then taken up and held invisible or in transparent solution. From hence it is carried by the south-east wind towards the Table and its neighbouring mountains, where by condensation from increased temperature and concussion, the air is no longer capable of holding the vapour with which it was loaded, but is obliged to let it go. The atmosphere on the summit of the mountain becomes turbid; the cloud is shortly formed; and hurried by the wind over the verge of the precipice in large fleecy volumes, rolls down the steep sides towards the plain.⁵⁰

Here, the powerful visual impact of the work is aligned with the exhaustive and highly developed piece on the science of the view being depicted. The plate functions as almost a figure to illustrate a science lecture - the visual illustration of the theory being expounded in the text. Conjoining the image and text is the shared concern with presenting the objective atmospheric realities of the scene. By giving such an analysis in their work and insisting upon how it should be read by adding Barrow's account, the Daniells are placing their work in the same ideological web as Hodges'. Both employ art to reflect a scientific impulse and they use the constituent components of their images to express the actuality of the scene. By constructing and actively promoting their work as such, these artists use visual imagery in order to co-opt scientific veracity into the imperial archive.

The insistence on realism promulgated by these artists regarding the import of stormy weather at the Cape could be contrasted with the views of the missionary, John Campbell. While the Daniells' long analysis and explanation of the atmospheric conditions contribute to a text-book-like delineation and appraisal of the scene, the missionary reflects an amazement and wonder at the scene, wholly at odds with the type of discourse being projected by the Daniells' image and text. Campbell's ship is unable to anchor at Cape Town due to the adverse weather conditions caused by a raging storm. However, his description of this tempest lacks the scientific accuracy of the Daniells' text. Campbell, by contrast, relies heavily on the philosophy and the vocabulary of the Sublime:

⁵⁰ Ibid., Plate 6.

Perhaps of all scenes which the human eye has an opportunity of beholding, such a storm, in such a latitude, is the most grand, majestic and awful.⁵¹

The phraseology associated with the Sublime was very much a subjective matter, which depended on eliciting a certain emotional and even physiological response from the viewer. The Daniells, on the other hand, preserve the distance of the observer from the action. There is little implication of their actually partaking in the event and any personal response is deeply submerged beneath the welter of scientific detail that builds up the image as an accurate tableau of atmospheric activity and meteorological circumstances. It actively denies any human involvement in the scene. It is constructed as an objective, truthful and accurate portrayal of characteristic weather scenes at this particular global location. It can therefore be taken as descriptive and documentary rather than subjective, prone to the vagaries of human emotion and blinded by the fallacies of the human heart. Science and its need for objective representational vocabulary recommended itself as a means of acceptance of images of an unknown landscape. The insistent pursuit of a credibly scientific and realistic visual response to the landscape and environmental conditions of the colonial space becomes part of the process of building up an accurate view of the conditions, resources and potential of this landscape. By presenting their images as trustworthy depictions, artists help to make the domestic audience sure in its knowledge of, and epistemological superiority over, the landscape spaces of the Empire.

Artists and public alike seized upon the depiction of the atmospheric conditions of the Cape of Good Hope, promoted by the work of the Daniells and Hodges. The attempt to convey the unique qualities of this region, with its distinctive mountain, bay and peculiar weather conditions was a popular artistic feat, desired by many visitors. The symbolic power of this view of Cape Town becomes assimilated into the cultural bloodstream. For example, in his first series of prints, depicting four scenes of Cape Town, Thomas Bowler paints three of these depicting the city from a maritime position, in and around Table Bay.⁵² Similarly, Thomas Baines set up as a professional artist during his sojourn in Cape Town in the 1840s and survived by

⁵¹ Campbell, *Travels in Southern Africa*, p. 2.

⁵² Thomas Bowler, *Four Views of Cape Town, Cape of Good Hope; Drawn from Nature* [London, 1845].

selling the “never-failing ‘Cape Town with Table Bay and Mountain’” (Plate 49).⁵³ Thus, the ability of the artist to capture the unique climatic conditions at the southern tip of Africa becomes synonymous with the landscape of the region. Its rendition by the artist and the subsequent transmission to an audience, as evidenced by Bowler and Baines, suggests that this type of scene could be vital in the creation and maintenance of an imperial archive of knowledge.

However, the imperial project also required views of the interior of the subcontinent if it wished to amass a comprehensive stock of knowledge. Thomas Baines, that inveterate explorer, travelled beyond the limits of the Cape Colony and as he did so he provided evidence of the climatic conditions that await the traveller. For example, in his “South West Angle of Lake Ngami” (Plate 50), Baines gives the viewer a rendition of a storm scene with the ravaging clouds in the background threatening imminent downpours (Map 2; Feature i). Here, the artist goes some way towards proving his mastery in Ansted’s terms. The conveyance of the particular tropical conditions, with the blue skies and the heat-induced storm in the offing, are all wonderfully depicted by Baines. The compositional format of the work contributes to the eye being drawn to the sky. This was a classic trait of the scientific involvement amongst artists of the nineteenth century. Constable, of whose own cloud formations much has been written,⁵⁴ placed the portrayal of the composition of clouds at a high level:

the landscape painter who does not make his skies a very material part of their composition neglects to avail himself of one of his greatest aids.⁵⁵

Baines’ clouds, with their freshness of composition and luminous veracity add to the impression that the scene is occurring before one’s very eyes. However, their contribution to the veracity of the experience and documentary quality of the scene can be set alongside their role as evidence for Baines’ artistic competence. For a nineteenth-century audience, the accurate recording aerial effects did not exclude one from assessment on aesthetic criteria. Rather, it positively enhanced one’s artistic credentials and gave a sanction to one’s practice as increasing the store of

⁵³ Baines, *Journal of Residence*, Vol. 2, p. 9. For more information on related works see <http://www.michaelstevenson.com/catalogues/2002_january/frame_index.htm> 28th September 2004.

⁵⁴ For example, see the exhibition catalogue edited by Edward Morris, *Constable’s Clouds* [Edinburgh, 2000].

documentary and trustworthy evidence about the climate and conditions of the landscape which one painted.

These representations of the local weather conditions of the Southern African subcontinent illustrate that the scientific imperative existed side by side with a more aesthetic and subjective way of recording the colonial landscape. These responses to the Southern African landscape constitute the representative motifs of divergent modes of vision in the depiction of that landscape. One reflects the aesthetic, romantic and sentimental outlook of an age where the palimpsest of nature was constituted as a picture, to be assessed and analyzed as a holistic and effective tool, impacting upon the sensibilities of the viewer. Personal, psychological and even physiological responses are privileged in this scenario. In the other mode, the basis of this chapter, the emphasis shifts. Increasingly evident is the abrogation of personal, aesthetic involvement and appraisal of the landscape. This was aided, of course, by a demand for accuracy and realistic representation in textual analysis. But, more than this, the scientific discourse of landscape concentrated on, and demanded an emphasis on, the minutiae and constituent parts of the natural world.

The result of this concern with the rendition of the scientific exactitude of the material world and the careful delineation of empirical facts was made manifest in the pictorial representations of the minutiae of the colonial landscape. The belief that everything was important and contributed to the whole and the new interest in hitherto largely ignored phenomena meant that there would be an intense concentration on what were, up to now, relatively obscure facets of the painted landscape of the colonies. The efforts to produce a realistic and accurate representation of the landscape became the paramount task of the artist. The realism professed *ad nauseum* by earlier explorers who wrote about their experiences would be literally translated into visual images by artists working in the nineteenth century. This concern with scientific rectitude and veracity played out in the way that artists privileged and elevated certain aspects of their work in order to imbue it with the requisite fidelity to nature.

⁵⁵ Quoted in Edward Morris, "Introduction: Constable's Clouds and the Chiaroscuro of Nature" in Morris (ed.), *Constable's Clouds*, pp. 9-11; p. 10.

One area that was concentrated on as never before in the nineteenth-century European encounter with the colonial landscape was the foreground representation. John Glover (1767-1849), the English artist who subsequently emigrated to Tasmania in the 1830s, evidences the fact that art practice often outpaces critical comment. The author of a review of his 1821 show, which appeared in Ackermann's Repository, merely highlights Glover's detailed foregrounds by complaining of:

too great particularity upon minute objects...the herbage in some of the foregrounds...drawn and coloured with Linnean precision...as if the landscape were made for the herbage, rather than the herbage for the landscape.⁵⁶

Even in the eighteenth century Richard Payne Knight had alluded to it in his poem-treatise: "To show the nice embellishments of art,/The foreground is ever the prosperest part."⁵⁷ By the dawn of the nineteenth century, the cultural climate allowed the artist to display his knowledge of the diverse scientific fields of geology, botany and zoology. As a result, his art incorporated a veritable textbook of specimens to admire and to add intellectual weight to the work. However, the employing of a highly detailed foreground was not only done in order to evidence a familiarity with the tenets of rapidly developing scientific discourses. Indeed, the pre-Raphaelites, encouraged by the commentary of John Ruskin, were following a cultural trend, first identified by Edward Dayes. In his advice to young artists, issued at the very beginning of the nineteenth century, he reminded them that their "foreground will require not only to be well detailed, but also highly enriched with plants."⁵⁸ The foreground, being that part of the image that was closest to the viewers, was to be privileged with a greater degree of attention. It was used as a stage or display table on which to represent, in minute botanical detail, the unusual and rare plants and animals that were encountered by artists working and travelling in foreign and colonial climes. The deep concern with particularity and meticulous attention to detail was rendered artistically in the drawing of distinct outlines, specificity of the details and the perfect biological fidelity of the objects depicted in these visual representations.

The advice of George Allman, as delivered to the students of the Royal Dublin Society Drawing School, is an interesting example of the convergence of the not yet

⁵⁶ David Hansen, John Glover and the Colonial Picturesque [Hobart, Tasmania, 2003], p. 45.

⁵⁷ Richard Payne Knight, "Landscape : A Poem", lines 176-7.

⁵⁸ Dayes, The Works of the Late Edward Dayes, p. 305.

disconnected interests of science and art. His presence at the prize-giving ceremony of the school, as Professor of Botany at the University of Dublin, indicates the esteem in which botany and scientific knowledge was held by the artistic community. The rigorous analytical approach of science was presented, not as antithetical to the artist's endeavour, but as a vital tool with which to examine the material world. His public address to the students was a consideration of "The Importance of Natural History Studies to the Artist." He delivered a lecture in which the virtues of zoology and botany were extolled as important constituents of the artistic endeavour.⁵⁹ In another example of the crossover between art and science, Professor Allman quotes the "graduate of Oxford." Finding a professor of a scientific discipline quoting the words of an art critic, John Ruskin, to a group of budding young artists, highlights the cultural milieu in which artists were working at the time. Allman continues by quoting Ruskin as saying:

The great masters of Italy, almost without exception, and Titian, ... are in the constant habit of rendering every detail of their foregrounds with the most laborious botanical fidelity... It appears then not only from natural principles, but from the highest authority, that thorough knowledge of the lowest details is necessary; and full expression of them right, even in the highest class of historical painting.⁶⁰

Ruskin adduces an aesthetic and historical precedent for his plea to go back to nature, "selecting nothing, rejecting nothing."⁶¹ Nevertheless, the rendering of foreground detail could also be explained by the need to produce and project a realistic representation of the scenery being explored by the artists in question. In the context of colonial landscape painting, the foreground was used not only to introduce the space of the painting, but was also employed in order to emphasize certain topographical, botanical and ethnographical effects.

Evidence for this reading is found in the preface written by William Burchell for his published account of his travels in Southern Africa. He was quite convinced of the merits of recording all the components of the natural environment and every trifling

⁵⁹ Professor George J. Allman, The Importance of Natural History Studies to the Artist [Dublin, 1849], p. 14.

⁶⁰ John Ruskin, Modern Painters, Preface to 2nd Edition, p. xxvii; Quoted in Allman, The Importance of Natural History, p. 15.

⁶¹ Quoted in Tim Barringer, The Pre-Raphaelites [London, 1993], p. 56.

incident in his journal in order to build up the most realistic representation of the whole. He draws an interesting analogy between his method of journalistic compilation and the way that the landscape painter should build up his view of the surrounding environment. He comments:

The object of this journal being to give a natural and faithful picture of passing scenes and transactions, many circumstances of less importance have been allowed their place in it; just as, in a landscape or historical painting even of the sublimest conception, the weeds of the foreground, or the stones of the pavement, however, trifling in themselves, must be represented, in order to complete the whole, and convey the just resemblance of Nature.⁶²

Burchell's comments are interesting in their illumination of the motivation behind the writing of travel narratives. However, in the context of the present discussion, they also display the cultural circumstances in which artists were expected to produce judicious representations of their own domestic and, by extension, foreign landscapes. The insistence on detail, as a vital component of the ensemble, a necessary factor in the structuring of the landscape idea had obvious implications for the artists in the colonies, either travelling independently or with an expedition. One of the earliest recognitions of this tendency occurs in the reviews that greeted William Westall's Australian landscapes at the Royal Academy exhibition of 1812. In an anonymous obituary, the author recalls that these scenes;

Attracted great attention from their novelty. They were all views of places for the most part the first time visited by Europeans. In the *foregrounds* were displayed the magnificent and gorgeous foliage and fauna of this country, painted with great attention to their botanical character.⁶³

Novelty and unfamiliarity were countered with painstaking attention to detail. The scientific veracity adduced to these works and demanded by the dominant artistic theories of the day went, in a large measure, to ensure that colonial landscape was represented as realistic and verifiably extant by the visual renditions of artists.

Thomas Bowler is an artist perhaps more inclined to the Picturesque mode of vision rather than the scientific appraisal of the landscape of Southern Africa. Yet, he is one who also displays this pandemic concern with foreground detail in his work. His

⁶² Burchell, *Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa*, p. viii.

“Green Point Lighthouse” was one of two pieces that he submitted for a Fine Arts Exhibition in Cape Town in November 1852.⁶⁴ It was this work that was the subject of praise in the review of the show in the South African Commercial Advertiser of 11th December 1852. The critic, “Mastic Varnish”, was impressed by the way that Bowler had constructed the foreground: “Mr. Bowler’s foreground, as in fact all his foregrounds are, is very cleverly introduced.”⁶⁵ Comparing this assessment with an extant watercolour of the same scene by Bowler in the Museum Africa in Johannesburg (Plate 51), one can see the process and decisions that Bowler considered and implemented as he worked up an oil or finished painting for publication in print form. The watercolour consists of various blocks and washes of colour with the small units of the lighthouse buildings contrasted and silhouetted against the bright sky on the horizon. Everything seems quite evanescent and transient - the fisherman casting his line, the image of the ship seemingly drifting slowly out of the image and the attention lavished on the sky with all its inherent transience and changefulness. This all contributes to indicate the way that Bowler thought about this momentary sketch and the capturing of the scene. However, in Bowler’s finished works, those oils intended for public display or for working into publishable engravings, a different pattern emerges. Here, his landscapes tend to be more finished and very definite in the role accorded to the foreground as part of the total effect.

In “Burn’s Hill Missionary Station”⁶⁶ (Plate 52) one sees the religious establishment through the foreground frame of the tall, characteristically African aloe trees on the left (Map 4; Feature vi). This trait of introducing the main visual element of interest in the picture behind the highly detailed and instantly recognizable rendition of the foreground is one that Bowler would use repeatedly in his published prints. The compositional element of the aloe is also used in the “Royal Observatory Looking Westward”⁶⁷ (Plate 53), while many scenes of The Kaffir Wars and the British Settler in South Africa are also introduced using this technique. The use of the aloe is an important symbolic as well as naturalistic inclusion. From the early part of the century, George Thompson could comment on the commercial value of the aloe. He

⁶³ Anon, “The Memoir of William Westall, ARA”, p. 105 [my emphasis].

⁶⁴ Bradlow and Bradlow, Thomas Bowler of the Cape of Good Hope, p. 53.

⁶⁵ Quoted in Bradlow and Bradlow, Thomas Bowler of the Cape of Good Hope, pp. 53-4.

⁶⁶ Bowler, The Kafir Wars, Plate 16.

⁶⁷ Thomas Bowler, South African Sketches [London, 1855], Plate 3.

made several mercantile sorties around the nascent British colony and particularly to the settlements of Swellendam and George where “the exportation of aloes began to assume an importance in colonial traffic.”⁶⁸ Thus, the foreground could be used to convey the growth and prominence of specific plants and crops which, as well as being symbolic of the area, could also act as metaphors for the commercial and social progress of the district. Vegetation could be a determining factor in the portrayal of a typically African scene. Lady Sarah Duff Gordon commented on the peculiarities of Wynberg – that most English of villages in the opinion of picturesque travellers of the early-nineteenth century. Yet, the foliage in the foreground, and the artists’ highlighting of this, advertises it as African and strange and other to the European:

lovely country; rather like Hertfordshire; red earth and oak-trees. Miles of the road were like Gainsborough-lane, on a large scale, and looked quite English; only here and there a hedge of prickly pear, or the big white aruns in the ditches told a different tale; and the scarlet geraniums and myrtles growing puzzled one.⁶⁹

And Thomas Lucas could not but acknowledge the vegetative peculiarity of the same town. Its hybrid nature led him to comment:

It is intensely Dutch, in its trim houses with their green shutters and formal avenues, the latter backed up by the grand Table Mountain with its beautiful protea plantations; at the same time it is quiet tropical, being adorned on all sides with beautiful heaths, fuchsias, aloes, prickly pears, Hottentot figs, and other eastern types of vegetation.⁷⁰

The cumulative effect of this on the composition of the image is to build up an emphasis on the foreground. Bowler’s foregrounds, being “cleverly introduced,” avoid the disruption between fore- and background that could easily result from such representations. The foreground elements in his work interact with and inform the principal subject matter. In the examples cited the subject of the title is invariably European institutions of learning, scientific discovery and religious instruction. However, by setting these against the typically African plant - the aloe - Bowler clearly advertises the foreign and “other” setting in which these institutions are situated and perform their work. The foreground vegetation, being distinctively

⁶⁸ Thompson, *Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa*, Vol. 1, p. viii.

⁶⁹ Duff Gordon, *Letters from the Cape*, p. 27.

⁷⁰ Lucas, *Camp Life and Sport in South Africa*, pp. 26-7.

African, literally acts as an introduction and the context in which these colonial institutions must be seen. Thus, the concentration called for on the foreground helps to place the scenes in the proper geographical settings and seems to add a note of realist landscape scenery to a view of the colonial space. By relying on a realistic mode of vision and by advertising his works as being true to every facet of nature, Bowler can convince the viewer of the inherent truthfulness of his depiction.

Thomas Baines is an extremely important figure in the development of this increasingly scientific evaluation of the colonial landscape by visual artists. Dr John Kirk confirmed, in an advertisement for the artist's work, that "Mr. Baines has given actual views, and has so scrupulously adhered to nature, that any one familiar with the vegetation may name the very plants represented in his paintings."⁷¹ As part of his work, he also evidences the developments in dealing with foreground detail. As I have shown, the foreground of pictures become ever more privileged by the artist in order to suggest the scientific accuracy of his work. Baines takes this one step further in his oil of "Welwitschia" (Plate 54). This is the worked-up version of sketches that he made of the plant when he discovered it in present-day Namibia in 1861.⁷² According to Marian Arnold, the finished oil depicts an entire narrative of the discovery and recording of the plant in a highly mediated image and one to which Baines has given careful consideration.⁷³ However, I would suggest that it is also a symbolic and representative example of the way in which foreground comes to prominence in Southern African landscape representations and how the plant and botanical life recorded therein become increasingly important. In the contrast to Bowler's work, where foreground introduces and comments upon the background, the opposite occurs here. The background scene of a winding train of wagons is a visual documentary account of the circumstances of this plant's discovery by the European explorers. It is present as a commentary on the foreground information. Perhaps the most unusual aspect is the presence of the artist who bends down, assiduously recording the botanical discovery in the type of visual shorthand that we see in the painting in Kew.⁷⁴ Here, Baines reverses the convention of depicting the artist with his back to

⁷¹ Advertisements for Baines' work; RGS Archives, London.

⁷² For information on Baines discovery see Marian Arnold, "Thomas Baines and Botany" in Stevenson (ed.), *Thomas Baines*, pp.70-89.

⁷³ Arnold, "Thomas Baines and Botany", p. 83.

⁷⁴ It is to be found at the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew, Inventory No. 8.0.

us, avidly noting down the scene spread out in front of him (and by implication, his viewer). This convention, as we have seen, of placing the artist in the midst of his landscape view adds supposed authenticity to the vista being depicted. However, by reversing the position of the artist, Baines limits our view and concentration to just the plant before our gaze. The *Welwitschia* plant becomes the sole object of our gaze in the narrow spatial envelope that the artist has constructed and sandwiched between himself, the proactive recorder of the scene, and the passive viewer. This spatial envelope is the only landscape detail, from our respective perspectives that can be common to both artist and spectator. Therefore, it occupies an essential role in the artist's reaching out to the viewer and appealing for his empathy. It dominates visually through the long and straggly leaves and the bulbous red flower that together serve to maintain our attention on the botanical specimen. Its role as the most important detail, in both the sketch for the botanists at Kew and as a finished oil painting, indicates the role of the scientific sketch as an object of intellectual inquiry and aesthetic pleasure as well as a documentary recording of events. The plant and the artist's scientific portrayal of it become surrogates for the process of exploration and discovery in the African landscape. It symbolizes the nineteenth-century European engagement with Africa and how that was recorded according to a scientific agenda for a domestic audience in Britain.

The concern with foreground detail, as shown by these examples, illustrates a developing awareness of the importance of individual details in works of art and pictorial representations. Their usefulness as tokens of scientific inquiry should not blind the visual historian to the fact that the manifold strangeness, extraordinary shapes and vivid colours were characteristics that enlivened the analytical mind of the observant inquirer and also excited the artistic bent of the early explorers in Southern Africa. Artistic concern with the foreground peculiarities of the landscape could again be co-opted to perform a function in the corroboration of the artist's skill. Similarly, however, foregrounds were laden with that import that allowed them to stand in some way for the process of exploration, discovery and colonization that characterized the European encounter with Africa. The modern European aesthetic concern with these phenomena in art meant that the distinctiveness of the African environment could be recorded and envisaged according to contemporary artistic tastes in Europe. In this way, the recording of foreground detail aided the compilation of the imperial archive.

The assessment of the colonial landscape could also incorporate analysis of the zoological intricacies of the territory. The depiction of the fauna occupied a similar position in the epistemological appropriation of the space as that of botanical specimens, foreground details or cloud formations – all allowed for the expression of the scientific aesthetic in visual description and simultaneously contributed to the comprehensive evaluation of the colonial space. William Vaughan states, “a mastery of factual detail was a requirement for all animal depiction” during the period covered by this study.⁷⁵ By displaying examples of that detail the artist both advertised his skill and added to a store of knowledge about the colonial landscape that was being steadily gathered throughout the nineteenth century.

As with Hodges and his rendition of the atmospheric conditions at Cape Town, so too one of the earliest zoological depictions relating to the Cape of Good Hope set a pattern for the future portrayal of colonial space within the prevailing artistic and critical trends. In 1763, the renowned animal painter George Stubbs exhibited his painting of a Zebra (Plate 55).⁷⁶ This oil painting shows the first zebra to be seen in England. The scientific detachment, and the intense observation that aided the replication of markings and anatomical conformation that formed the basis of Stubbs’ reputation, are obvious in this work. These characteristics are put in the service of recording for posterity the female zebra brought from the Cape of Good Hope by Sir Thomas Adams and presented to Queen Charlotte in 1762. The subject of much publicity, the account of the quadruped which appeared in the London Magazine was accompanied by an anonymous engraving whose naïvety stands in contradistinction to Stubbs’ highly wrought work of realism. Stubbs’ work, and the scientific exactitude it espoused, was greatly in demand at this time.⁷⁷ The public who were simultaneously looking at and buying Stubbs’ work and imbibing the novelties of the newly explored territories at the periphery of empire was reliant on an artist who privileged the scientific aspect of his work. As Basil Taylor commented:

⁷⁵ Vaughan, British Painting, p. 166.

⁷⁶ Egerton, George Stubbs 1724-1806, p. 112.

⁷⁷ His patrons included the Duke of Richmond, the Marquess of Rockingham, Earl Grosvenor, Earl Spencer and the Duke of Grafton. See Egerton, George Stubbs 1724-1806, p. 12.

There is every reason to count [Stubbs] as next to Leonardo, as the greatest painter-scientist in the history of art.⁷⁸

Taylor makes his assessment on the basis of Stubbs' meticulous drawings, their attention to anatomical detail and their ability to convey the intricacies of the animal kingdom. Their meticulousness guaranteed a certain truth value for the object being depicted and thus became a useful tool in corroborating the natural landscape of foreign regions. The image of the zebra illustrates the kind of schematic which other artists would strive for in the depiction of the natural fauna of this region. The rather incongruous background of the English forest scene appears mildly ridiculous in a work where realism seems to be the overriding concern. Indeed, this is the work of a man who claimed that his art was "all done from Nature."⁷⁹

As the nineteenth century progressed, the scientific interest, combined with the rise of phenomenological philosophy, created a new zeal in art for artists to confine themselves to the subjects before their very eyes. Many of the artists' statements from this period constitute a wilful desire to establish a dichotomy between realistic truth to Nature and an implicitly false devotion to artistic and aesthetic conventions which distort that truth. Captain Harris began a trend for the portrayal of the fauna of the region in the context of hunting. In some ways, illustrated hunting books, for which Harris is perhaps most famous, mirror the taste for scientific exactitude in botanical and zoological specimens in the nineteenth century. The artists who wrote and illustrated these works claimed to be providing a service in the compilation of data concerning the anatomical complexities of the fauna. Harris claims in the Wild Sports, his first literary offering

My passion for 'venerie' had long afforded me the opportunities of discovering that the delineations given in popular books of Natural History, of many of the larger quadrupeds were far from being correct.⁸⁰

Harris continued, in a sort of apology for his own method, that he had, "during my service in India, devoted a portion of my leisure to making some accurate portraits of them with appropriate scenery."⁸¹ In his second foray into the literary world, Harris further corroborates this interpretation of the depiction of fauna. This was a book of

⁷⁸ Quoted in Egerton, George Stubbs 1724-1806, p. 17.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 219.

⁸⁰ Harris, The Wild Sports of Southern Africa, p. xxi.

portraits of the game of Southern Africa. In this work all of the specimens are “delineated from the Life in their Native Haunts.”⁸² He distinguishes between aesthetic merits and the inherent beauty in the representation of the truth:

How manifold soever their imperfections, if viewed as productions of art, they can boast at least of being adorned with the beauties of truth, having all been delineated from living subjects, roaming in pristine independence over their native soil.⁸³

The disavowal of artistic encumbrances implicitly guarantees the truthfulness of the portraits and permits their access into an imperial archive of data about the landscape and indigenous inhabitants of Southern Africa.

Captain Henry Butler provides an example of how pervasive this approach to the portrayal of animal life at the colonial periphery became. In writing his book, Butler was tapping into the success enjoyed by Harris – fellow officer and ultimate doyen of the hunting grounds of the South African veldt. One of the aristocratic patrons who appears on the list of subscribers in the Trinity College archives seems to have been interested in more than just acquiring a well-illustrated, expensive object for his “Drawing-room Table.” Lord Farnham wanted to peruse the work for its value to him as an amateur of the hunt and one interesting in the fauna of the region. He is described in an anonymous letter to Butler as “a confident stalker” suggesting that Farnham partook in the mid-nineteenth-century fashion for hunting that riveted the upper echelons of society. The author of the letter confidently asserted that “[y]ou may add the name of Farnham to your [subscription] list.”⁸⁴ The scientific realism demanded by readers such as Farnham, who expected a precise recreation of the thrilling scenes of South African nature, was a major selling point and obviously contributed to the success of Harris’ works. When Ackermann, the publisher of the book, wrote to Butler notifying him of a review of his work that had “escaped my research” when the periodical in which it appears was first published, he states that “at Page 244 Oct. no. New Sporting Magazine which I shall send to you is a notice of your work; it is very short, but states that the sketches are very characteristic and

⁸¹ Ibid., p. xxi.

⁸² Harris, Portraits of the Game and Wild Animals of Southern Africa, title page.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 1-2.

⁸⁴ Unsigned letter to Butler, ca. 1840; TCD, No. 24.

truthful.”⁸⁵ This description is obviously meant to be understood as complimentary and likely to garner extra subscriptions for the Sketches. It shows that this element of factual details and methodical meticulousness was a highly prized asset in even the most escapist of pastimes. Those who subscribed to a book purporting to show elements of the wild life of the region wanted to be able to rely on the factual accuracy of the work.

These books became popular points of reference for the domestic and colonial audience who had access to them. Art became a useful recording agent and was used as a kind of visual currency in the process of imperial information exchange. The claims of people like Harris for the veracity of their depictions were a contribution to the epistemological and discursive power of natural science as it developed in the nineteenth century. Harris’ stated passion for “venerie” in his introduction to the Wild Sports allowed him to discern that popular representations of these animals in previous depictions were inaccurate. He based the credibility of his work on its contribution to a lasting and accurate depiction of the fauna. His oeuvre seems to have quickly become the standard work of reference by virtue of its supposed scientific accuracy. It includes zoological-style plates such as “The Gnoo” (Plate 56) which shows the profile and frontal views of the animal and records its biological peculiarities, placing the study of the animals of South Africa on a “scientific” basis. The work functions on the level of a natural history textbook for succeeding generations. Baines, writing over twenty years after the first publication of Harris’ work, analyzed the elephant that he had recently felled with reference to Harris’ delineations of the animal. Working in the spirit of empirical exploration, Baines challenged Harris’ accuracy while simultaneously acknowledging his influence. He described the forehead of the beast as being “flat, or even convex, and not channelling in the centre like that of the Indian [elephant], and as unrepresented in all the pictures I have yet seen, those of Harris, even seeming to have been influenced by his Indian experience.”⁸⁶ Thus, Baines set Harris up as the original example of the master huntsman. However, he positions himself within the British empirical endeavour of progressively improving scientific veracity. Baines’ implicit claims to greater

⁸⁵ Ackermann to Butler, 15th November 1841; TCD, No. 37.

⁸⁶ Thomas Baines, Explorations in South West Africa [London, 1864], p. 307.

authority and truthfulness also has the effect of setting himself up as a supreme recorder of natural history and doyen of scientific veracity.

The artistic representation of the zoological inhabitants of the landscape of Southern Africa was also pervaded by concerns about scientific accuracy. The ultimate praise for one's work concerned its veracity and truthfulness. This exposes the drive for committing the peculiarities and details of the landscape to a form of archive that could be studied and added to at will. The progressive and accretive nature of the enterprise closely mirrors that kind of political and social dominance that was beginning to be exerted over the colonial periphery in the nineteenth century.

The otherness of the African and indeed many colonial landscapes in the nineteenth century was, I would suggest neutralized by their transcription according to the aesthetic principles of the day which were closely connected with scientific attention to detail. Just as artists wanted to present the atmospheric conditions, foreground characteristics and zoological oddities of the colonial landscape of Southern Africa according to this credo, so too they wished to employ a suitable colouring for their work. This was frequently a point of discussion for domestic critics. Most observers could appreciate a storm scene, marvel at cloud formations or wonder at vegetable or zoological peculiarities whilst simultaneously accepting the realistic depiction done by the artist. However, when it came to the more aesthetic, subjective and inherently artistic phenomena of depicting the colouration of the colonial landscape critics were liable to rebel against the prevailing notions of realistic rendition and to ascribe the artists' choice to poor workmanship or lack of skill.

Thomas Baines suffered from this effect. The starting-point for any consideration of the reception of Baines' work is the memoir written by Henry Hall to preface the posthumously published The Gold Regions of South Eastern Africa (1877). In his recollections of the author, Hall attempts to correct some of the aesthetic opinions that were circulated amongst the public regarding Baines' work. He begins by laying out the case against Baines: "Objections have been made to his want of finish, and too great glare in their [his paintings] colouring."⁸⁷ However, Hall's defence of Baines' work is a rather half-hearted plea for the benefit of the doubt to be accorded to the indigent and much-disadvantaged colonial artist together with a slightly apologetic nod at the vagaries of the Southern African climate:

It must be remembered that he was an entirely self-taught artist, and never had the advantage of any academical or gallery education. He also painted in a most brilliant climate, where all the varying tints of nature shine out in indeed very strong lights, and very often he was compelled to use colours of a very perishable and inferior nature.⁸⁸

Hall's reasoning seems to be aimed at excusing the artist from any responsibility for his work and explaining the visual qualities of the works by recourse to inferior

⁸⁷ Baines, The Gold Regions of South Eastern Africa, p. xvii.

materials and uncomfortable and hazardous working conditions. In terms of the aesthetic merit of the work, therefore, Hall implicitly deems Baines' work to be inferior and not to be compared to the work of those living in more clement situations. Thus, Hall's notes appear to be an unsolicited and rather unconscious calumny of the artist's work even as the writer attempts to defend his subject.

William Hodges also succumbed to the critics' scorn. In a review of the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1777, where Hodges had shown some of his Pacific landscapes, the commentator castigated his work for its technical ineptitude:

The public are indebted to this artist for giving them some idea of scenes which they before knew little of. It is rather surprising however, that a man of Mr. Hodges's genius should adopt such a ragged mode of colouring; his pictures all appear as if they were unfinished, and as if the colours were laid on the canvas with a skewer.⁸⁹

Yet, Hodges maintained that the novelty of his artwork was a response to the environments from which they originated rather than any technical aberration on his behalf. The peculiarity of distant lands and their climatic conditions should be the overriding concern of the artist entrusted with their portrayal. Clearly the technical means required to achieve this would appear strange, exaggerated and even inaccurate to those commentators and viewers "accustomed to the sight of rolling masses of clouds floating in a damp atmosphere."⁹⁰ Similarly, Baines' work seems to represent the landscape of those "other" landscape so far distant from the well-known English ones. Baines was trying to represent a sub-tropical environment rather like the one in the Far East which Joseph Conrad could only refer to as "a motionless fantasy of outline and colour."⁹¹

Examining the criteria that Baines himself set out for the assessment of his own work, one can appreciate the terms in which his work must be seen. He maintained, even from the very outset of his career that, as a documentary artist of the landscape, he wanted to emphasize the realistic quality of his work:

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. xvii.

⁸⁹ Quoted in Harriet Guest, "The Great Distinction : Figures of the Exotic in the Work of William Hodges" in *The Oxford Art Journal*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (1989), pp. 36-58; p. 40.

⁹⁰ Hodges, *Travels in India*, p. 2.

⁹¹ Joseph Conrad, "Karain: A Memory" (1898) in Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, p. 44.

the only merit I claim for them [his sketches] is that of being as faithful to the character of the country as my ability will permit.⁹²

He clearly alludes to the artistic and aesthetic credo pursued throughout his career. These comments are apposite in their emphasizing of the concern with realism but also with what Baines sees as the fulfilment of this realism - the representation of the "character of the country." Baines' work is a loyal representation of the scenery that he saw, a working through of that commitment to realism that his art illustrates and a contributing factor to the amassing of the imperial archive in the nineteenth century. It performs the task of identifying and recording the features of the landscape according to a programme of scientific realism. But, by doing so it allows the natural phenomena of a foreign and other space to be encoded according to European principles of scientific epistemology.

Rather than modify his approach to recording things as he saw them, Baines had to endure the criticism of those who expected painterly license to prevail in his work. As Hall pointed out, some people found the high-coloured tenor of his work garish. Although Hall mentions the influence of the environment and climate on the region, it is a somewhat fleeting excuse and much more is made of the lack of technical assistance and materials suffered by Baines whilst working in the nether regions of the African veldt. One must concur that Baines' work is indeed a veritable panoply of colours, coruscating across the canvas - an effect that is altogether lost in the engraved and published versions of the works. This wild and almost carefree application of colouring was refreshing but, it is implied, hardly to be thought of as evidence of high aesthetic merit. Rather than an intentional artistic decision or realistic rendition of the scene, this trait is categorized as either the exaggerated whim of an untrained artist or as a result of the substandard materials that were available. However, the coloration of many of Baines' most powerful and vibrant images of the colonial African landscape is a vital distinguishing mark of this man's work, rendering it as typically and distinctly African. It is, I would suggest, the culmination of the attempts of earlier artists to see, envisage and represent the Southern African landscape in a distinctive light, unprejudiced by the influence of metropolitan landscape traditions. By removing his work from the web of artistic interference, Baines succeeds in recreating

⁹² Baines, *Journal of Residence*, Vol. 2, p. 1.

the landscape of the colonial spaces as they appeared to him. Thus, he achieves the realism that the scientific impulse required and which allowed his art to be used as part of the process of building up reliable information about the spaces of Empire.

Baines' work may not conform to the received aesthetic ideas or criteria of assessment that are promulgated by some nineteenth-century critics. However, seen in the light of the role of art in complementing the scientific exploration and analysis of colonial spaces, his work is absolutely consonant with the building up of a realistic impression of the landscape. It is, despite its critics' claims about incompetence, amateurism or indigence, a realistic rendition of the landscape of Southern Africa. Baines' art reflects and complements the comments made by generations of travellers about the unique quality of the South African landscape. For example, in October 1812, William Burchell was contemplating the beauty of the scene spread out in front of him, presumably as a sort of corrective to his immediate surroundings where his party was "so busy at work" skinning an hippopotamus.⁹³ The comeliness of this charming landscape, according to Burchell, "consisted not in the mere outline; the glowing warmth of the atmosphere, diffused a mellow effect over the whole."⁹⁴ The writer is here suggesting that the mere outline of the pencil, the rudiments of the drawn line, do not have the emotive and expressive capacity to convey and to do justice to the intense quality of light and colour that the unique atmospheric and environmental conditions of Southern Africa impart to the landscape. William Cornwallis Harris, in his Wild Sports of Southern Africa, is another empirical observer who, long before Baines, had seen and commented upon the wonderful and evocative colouring that seemed to reverberate through the landscape of the sub-continent as it extended from the light effects of the sky down to the flora and fauna in their natural habitat. Describing the wearisome monotony of the plains which one finds in a landscape view such as that included with his drawing of "The Quagga" in his Portraits (Plate 57), Harris suggests:

Yet nature has endeavoured, in some measure, to atone for other deficiencies, by decking them [the flora] out in her grandest colours, and in some of the most eccentric and attractive forms that exist in the vegetable world.⁹⁵

⁹³ Burchell, Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa, Vol. 1, p. 413.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 413

⁹⁵ Harris, The Wild Sports of Southern Africa, p. 6.

Harris compares the motley and variegated floral covering of the desert as being like a "Turkey carpet."⁹⁶ Here a huntsman not renowned for his appreciation of the aesthetic blandishments of nature, gives credence to Baines' representation of the colour and sheer visual exuberance of the Southern African landscape. Another person who alludes to this environmental characteristic is that arch-advocate of colonial emigration policy - John Chase. He summarizes a long litany of travellers who have been fulsome in their praise of the Cape Colony. They are all agreed, according to Chase, and "praise, in varied language, but with concurrent testimony, the splendour of our skies and the purity of our delicious atmosphere."⁹⁷ Later in the century, the German traveller, Edward Mohr, was equally effusive about the vividness of the natural surroundings of Natal:

An attentive observer cannot fail to be struck with the amount of influence exercised upon the spirits of man by the mere colouring of the scenery in which he finds himself.⁹⁸

Indeed, Baines' work complements the literature about South Africa that celebrated the colourful exuberance of its natural phenomena. For example, Pauline Smith's novels and short stories record that very effulgence of colour that Baines had striven for, that was obviously a characteristic of the environment and yet which had been denounced. In "The Sinner," the principal character, Niklaas is surrounded by a profusion of colour:

Around him all the veld was gay as a carpet with flowers, and close to where he sat with a bright crimson cluster that made him think of the burning bush out of which the Lord had once spoken to Moses.⁹⁹

And her work continues to display and take account of the unique coloration of the landscape in which she sets her tales. In The Beadle one encounters descriptions that pay homage to, and take account of, the mountains and hills in their "vivid, softening, ever-changing glory of pinks and purples and greys."¹⁰⁰ Baines, himself, did not see his work as in any way compromising the actuality of his landscapes as documentary

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 6. Note the intertextual reference in Capt. Frederick Marryat's The Mission; or, Scenes in Africa [1848; London, 1970] which includes a similar scene in the desert and has the principal character ask, "Does not this plain put you in mind of a Turkey carpet, Major; so gay with every variety of colour?" (p. 258).

⁹⁷ John Centlivres Chase, The Cape of Good Hope and the Eastern Province of Algoa Bay with Statistics of the Colony, edited by Mr. Joseph S. Christophers [London, 1843], p. 26.

⁹⁸ Mohr, To the Victoria Falls of the Zambesi, p. 31.

⁹⁹ Pauline Smith, The Little Karoo [London, 1925], pp. 100-1.

¹⁰⁰ Pauline Smith, The Beadle [London, 1938], p. 21.

records of the Southern African situation by painting them in such brilliant and splendid colours. It was recorded, in an anonymous and posthumous memoir:

Many persons took exception to the dazzle of his pigments, but we well remember his saying to us, "I only wish that I could deem myself able to paint Nature as bright as she is."¹⁰¹

Baines accords the colouring of his work a vital and indeed central role in the task of documenting the African landscape as it appeared to him in reality. It may have offended the aesthetic sensibilities of those who expected something different from art of the colonial landscape. Yet, for the compilers of an imperial archive, like the RGS, the realistic tendencies of Baines' work and its ability to capture and convey the unique visual qualities of the landscape in an apparently unmediated and uncontaminated medium was of great importance. The otherness of the landscape is both expressed and neutralized by the pictures painted by Baines. Its wild shock of colour is new and unusual to the public and critic alike but by capturing it with the paintbrush and pencil, the artist performs the role of imperial archivist. For all artists working in a strange environment, away from the squalls and cloudy mists of Northern Europe, the quality of colour was a principal means of conveying both the otherness of the landscape and their sheer exaltation in the beauty and vivacity of nature as it was manifest in the tropics.

By virtue of his pictorial representations of the scenes that he chanced upon Baines became a kind of national artist. His accurate portrayals of the actuality of the Southern African environmental conditions, according to scientific protocol and the enjoinders of realistic representation, helps to create a true, Southern African style of landscape representation. This is reinforced by the particularity of the view and the detailed analysis of the landscape constituents that went hand-in-hand with the artist's representation of this geographical region. Edward Dayes promoted the view that "countries, as well as men, have their peculiar character."¹⁰² Baines' concern with the details of vegetation of the landscape helped to construct his views as representative images of the Southern African landscape according to the cultural climate of the day. The burgeoning interest in the representation of specific national landscapes was

¹⁰¹ Quoted in Carruthers and Arnold, *Thomas Baines*, p. 85.

¹⁰² Dayes, *The Works of the Late Edward Dayes*, p. 3.

assisted by the representation of the native flora of the region. Alexander van Humboldt opined:

It is the vegetation that determines the character of a landscape and acts on our imagination by its mass, the contour of its forms, and the glow of its colours.¹⁰³

Baines contributes to what Hodges advised the artist to seek and create when travelling in foreign climes - the “characteristical landscape.”¹⁰⁴ Not only does Baines succeed in doing this but he does so in a manner that uses the very language of realism and scientific objectivity.

The reception of Baines’ work by the metropolitan imperial audience acknowledged his art as a scientific tool for the exact delineation of foreign and “other” landscapes. It was constructed and presented to the public as an absolutely truthful visual delineation of the colonial landscape. In the *Art Journal* of May 1869, the reviewer of the Crystal Palace show in which Baines work was being displayed commented that “they merit the attention of all who want to find out more about the real circumstances of African existence.”¹⁰⁵ Henry Hall alluded to the popular reaction to Baines’ work at such events as this by contending that “all visitors to the Crystal Palace must have seen and admired” the artist’s work there.¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, the aesthetic and artistic quality of Baines’ work is somewhat dissembled by his active engagement with the landscape on the level of scientific enquiry. The reviewer notes:

Mr. Baines is an amateur artist, and hence his works must not be subjected, as examples of high-class art, to criticism; but as representing African scenery, life and ethnological studies, they are most attractive, and merit the attention of all visitors to the Crystal Palace.¹⁰⁷

Thus, the work of Baines is presented as a part of the process of creating an imperial landscape of knowledge. The specific denying of any artistic value to the works serves to create the impression that they are merely the realistic recording of the landscape.

¹⁰³ Quoted in Nancy Lee Stepan, *Picturing Tropical Nature* [London, 2001], p 37.

¹⁰⁴ Hodges, *Travels in India*, p. 155.

¹⁰⁵ *Art Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 5 (May 1869), p. 159.

¹⁰⁶ Baines, *The Gold Regions of South Eastern Africa*, p. xvii.

¹⁰⁷ *Art Journal*, Vol. 8, no. 5 (May 1869), p. 159.

However, this rather apologetic analysis of the visual qualities and merits of the artwork is not echoed in the reception that Baines' work received amongst the scientific community. Here the visual images that Baines produced were received as conduits that conveyed the actuality of the Southern African landscape to the metropolitan audience. The great doyen of Victorian science, Sir Roderick Murchison¹⁰⁸ was extremely impressed by Baines' artistic ability to convey the actuality of the scene to home bound, domestic viewers. He is quoted as addressing the RGS:

With an artist like Mr. Baines, who has sent home such admirable coloured drawings of South African scenes, particularly of the Falls of the Zambesi, those who are destined never to penetrate into the southern part of Africa may quite realise to our mind's eye the true character of that grand continent.¹⁰⁹

Baines' work is received as a realistic rendition of the landscape. It is accepted as an artistic addition to the store of knowledge being acquired about the colonial periphery at the imperial metropole. The role of art in this scenario is to facilitate that process of accumulation and to complement the other modes and disciplines with which this information was collected.

¹⁰⁸ For a fuller discussion of the role of Murchison in the process of imperial ordering of scientific facts in nineteenth-century Britain see Robert A. Stafford's Scientist of Empire : Sir Roderick Murchison, scientific exploration and Victorian imperialism [Cambridge, 1989].

¹⁰⁹ Advertisement; RGS Archives, London.

The reception of Thomas Baines' work provides an interesting insight into how the scientific mode of vision could straddle the apparently antithetical camps of objective, empirical accuracy and subjective, aesthetic pleasure. He is accorded accolades as an amateur draughtsman, fully in command of his media and able to transcribe and convey the empirical facts of the material world before him. However, by virtue of circumstance, training or equipment he is qualitatively unable to elevate his prosaic renditions above the matter-of-fact circumstances of their production. Thus, Baines is lauded for his close attention to detail despite his own modest appraisal of his artistic ability - he derided it as "my small skill in botany."¹¹⁰ Baines' work is denied artistic validity by virtue of its pictorial and colouristic peculiarities. The selection of colours is questioned and the artist's ability to render such scenes in an aesthetically pleasing manner is doubted. However, the persistent desire to present and see this work as "realistic" and the laudatory appreciation of his paintings in scientific circles, suggests that the realistic and empirical ends that Baines strove for were actually attained and that his work was valued for this virtue. Thus, the discourses of science, as pertaining to the depiction of the colonial landscape, occupy a rather ambiguous space. In the climate of the aesthetic debates about realism in the nineteenth century, the scientifically accurate rendition of cloud formations and the minutiae of landscape details was to be celebrated. It was certainly part of the cultural imperative of the day, being raised in status due its advocacy by such important critics as Ruskin. However, even while it adapted itself to becoming one of the aesthetic and artistic criteria of assessment, the use of a scientific mode of vision could, paradoxically, deny any subjective involvement on the part of the artist. So, as well as proving one's artistic capabilities in the rendition of a storm scene or a cloud configuration, scientific modes of vision implicitly sanctioned the authenticity of a view and laid a claim for the accurate representation of the colonial landscape. The elements of pictorial composition that the scientific mode of vision privileged, such as foreground, fidelity to realistic colour effects, accuracy of meteorological and biological representation were the perfect handmaidens for the explorer trying to record as fulsome a record of the Southern African landscape as possible. The repeated protestations of representational accuracy that these artists and writers claimed for their work was part of the vocabulary of scientific representation. The employment of a scientific mode of

¹¹⁰ Baines, *Journal of Residence*, Vol. 1, p. 143.

visual analysis allowed artists such as Baines to describe with as much fidelity to detail as possible the intricacies of the landscape that was being unfolded before them in Southern Africa in the nineteenth century. Science becomes as equally useful in achieving intellectual control over the landscape as had been the aesthetic discourses discussed above.

By using this mode of visualizing the landscape, artistic merit could be arrogated specifically in terms of scientific exactitude. Aesthetic value could be established by the artist through the accurate portrayal of a landscape as surely as through the depiction of these landscapes through the philosophical lenses of the Picturesque or the Sublime. The scientific mode of vision was an artistic and stylistic trait to be deployed for aesthetic and visual ends as well as simultaneously preserving its privileged status as a moderator of realism and accuracy.

The various modes of envisaging the landscape discussed in this section have the advantage (to the colonial metropolitan power) of aiding the representation of the foreign spaces of the Southern African colonial space according to an easily understood, familiar European aesthetic, artistic or philosophical framework. In some ways, there is a progressive trend to be identified in the deployment of these modes of vision, these ways of making the landscape of a foreign and other space known and intelligible to the European at home.

At the outset of the colonial encounter a highly aestheticized way of looking at landscape and physical features permitted an unusually serene and secure method of envisaging the landscape of a foreign country and an alien environment. By drawing analogies and identifying parallels between the new, unexplored colonial landscapes and the familiar metropolitan European ones, the colonial interloper could claim an as yet unknown and uncharted territory as part of his own metaphysical environmental heritage and, more importantly, as part of his intellectual cultural inheritance.

However, as exploration uncovered progressively more unusual sights and scenes – be they on a gargantuan scale like the Victoria Falls or on a smaller, but no less novel scale, such as unusual and characteristic flora and fauna - the ways of adopting the landscape to an imperial archive changed accordingly. Diverse methods of envisaging the landscape were employed on the same basis. They were used as a European aesthetic or visual framework in order to see the colonial landscape of Southern Africa and by implication, to commit it to paper and the imperial archive that was being steadily accumulated throughout the period covered by this study.

Nevertheless, while acknowledging the progress of cultural and aesthetic trends, I would argue that the use of various modes of vision was determined as much by local circumstances. Many artists could employ diverse ways of seeing landscapes. One artist could represent the landscape of Southern Africa according to any or all of the modes of vision outlined above. This, it seems to me, corroborates the notion that the modes of visualizing the landscape presented here were not the staid, stolid and rigid regulations into which artists just slotted any landscape scene that they came across. Rather, the framework of these methods of seeing provided an overarching Eurocentric ideology of visualization. The various methods of seeing could be

adopted to represent many of the scenes encountered by the travelling artist and author in the nineteenth century.

In summary, the imperial traveller could always rely on a ready-made visual template in travelling and recording the landscape of the region. These modes of vision share a collective attribute of aiding and abetting the retrieval of visual information from the colonial periphery and adding it to the imperial archive of knowledge. By using these modes of vision, individually or in combination, the artist or explorer could represent the unusual otherness of the landscape according to a predefined and inherently more comfortable set of aesthetic and visual parameters. This facilitated the recording of sites as diverse as the Victoria Falls, “one of, if not *the*, most transcendently beautiful natural phenomena on this side of Paradise,” as well as some of the smallest and most apparently inconsequential elements in the landscape.¹¹¹

If, as Jan Pieterse argues, “non-European worlds were represented as part of European scenarios” then these modes of vision described above were the material means by which artists translated the strangeness of the colonial landscape of Southern Africa in the nineteenth century into suitable European aesthetic and visual terms.¹¹² I would now like to explore how the co-opting of these landscapes into the imperial archive was used by various interest groups in order to express, reflect or shape a specific ideological inflection towards the landscape in which they were moving, travelling, exploring or working.

¹¹¹ Selous, *A Hunter's Wanderings in Africa*, p. 110.

¹¹² Jan Nederveen Pieterse, *White on Black : Images of Africa and Blacks in Western Popular Culture* [New Haven, 1992], p. 224.

SECTION 3: THE REPRESENTATION AND RE- PRESENTATION OF THE LANDSCAPE

The United Kingdom tightened both her epistemological and political grip on the region as the nineteenth century progressed. And, as explorers penetrated deeper into the landscape, the image of that landscape changed from unknown to known. The imperial archive, and the modes of visualization that compiled it and that have been discussed in the previous three chapters, brought the landscapes of Southern Africa within British epistemological boundaries and presented it as intelligible and malleable products. Lynette Russell has argued, “in phenomenological terms, the creation of meaning was arrived at through the explorer’s intersubjectivity, his ongoing interpretation of the world he encountered.”¹ This interpretation and intersubjectivity was naturally a function of, and dependent upon, the cultural climate in which these men lived and moved. Along with the aestheticization of the landscape, a matrix of interrelated and connected social ideas, policies and beliefs developed that informed the mid-Victorian encounter with the landscape of Southern Africa which seeped into and found expression in the visual imagery of the time. This was a fresh engagement with the experience of landscape relying on pertinent contemporary issues and ideas in order to illuminate and inform its view of the colonial landscape. I would suggest that it changed from an essentially and exclusively mythopoeic one concerned with the epistemological and intellectual fixing of the landscape, to one which incorporated the outlook of the potential colonizer – observing, constructing and imposing a view of potential colonial and imperial space on the landscape and terrain of Southern Africa. For a more actively imperialist society, the idea of Empire was predicated on making these landscapes into spaces that were arranged and managed according to European imperatives. True “landscape” for people like John Ruskin involved explaining and imposing an order on the natural chaos of uncultivated landscapes that appeared at the periphery of the

¹ Lynette Russell (ed.), Colonial Frontiers : Indigenous-European Encounters in Settler Societies [Manchester, 2001], p. 5.

British Empire.² These cultural filters were the means by which new lands were seen, described and converted into text and visual image for a domestic audience.³

In this matrix there glistens several ideas and tropes that had a prominent role in this process and materially affected the British experience of the colonial landscape. The attractiveness of the colonial landscape as a new world of fresh possibilities, as suggested by the texts of explorers throughout the nineteenth century, raised a number of issues and opportunities for visual artists and other individuals connected with the presentation of the colonial landscape to the British public. The apparent fertility and availability of the colonial landscape came to be seen as a cause and an indicator of native social idleness.⁴ This alleged abnegation of native involvement in the landscape allowed Europeans to present the space of Southern Africa according to their own concerns and prevailing ideologies of settlement and development. For the scientist, the new world being “opened up” afforded myriad possibilities for propagating and developing the natural sciences and mineralogy. Many exploration expeditions include a large contingent of scientific persons in order to make sense of the new environment. For example an early nineteenth-century expedition to one of the major arterial waterways of Africa is entrusted to:

Captain [James] Tuckey, an officer of merit and varied services, and who had published several works connected with geography and navigation. Besides a crew of about fifty individuals, including marines and mechanics, he was accompanied by Mr. Smith, an eminent botanist, who likewise possessed some knowledge of geology; Mr. Cranch, a self-taught but able zoologist; Mr. Tudor, a good comparative anatomist; Mr. Lockhart, a gardner [sic] from Kew; and Mr. Galwey, an intelligent person who volunteered to join the party.⁵

² See John M. MacKenzie's discussion of Ruskin's lectures on “War” to the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich in the 1860s in John M. MacKenzie (ed.), *Popular Imperialism and the Military, 1850-1950* [Manchester, 1992], pp. 4-5.

³ Indeed, the representation of European intervention on the wilderness of the Southern African landscape had a history that lasted well into the twentieth century. See Morag Bell, “‘Citizenship not Charity’: Violet Markham on nature, society and the state in Britain and South Africa” in Morag Bell, Robin A. Butlin and Michael Heffernan (eds.), *Geography and Imperialism* [Manchester, 1995], pp. 189-220.

⁴ See Ryan, “Imperial Landscapes”, p. 63.

⁵ Professor Jameson, James Wilson and Hugh Murray, *Narrative of Discovery and Adventure in Africa, from the Earliest Ages to the Present Time: with Illustrations of the Geology, Mineralogy, and Zoology* [Edinburgh, 1830], p. 155.

This example bespeaks the close interrelationship that existed between the various branches of knowledge, as they developed coterminously and simultaneously in the furthering of the colonial enterprise, and also between those charged with making visual representations and those whose role it was to create a political and cultural patchwork identifying the scientific, commercial and colonial potential of the land.

For colonial authorities, in places of established British settlement, the constructed image of Africa as a place of unspoiled possibilities was extremely useful in promoting a stream of enterprising and productive colonists from the British Isles to settle in Southern Africa, and to thus exponentially advance this civilizing process. For those tired of the soporific world of mid-Victorian mores, the colonial landscape acted a place of refuge and retreat. It functioned as an antidote to what Haggard called the “sad and trodden world” of nineteenth-century Britain.⁶ Visual imagery played an important didactic, even propagandistic role for all these groups, and will be examined in turn. I will focus on some of these forces, emphasizing their individual and characteristic traits and the effect that these had on the representation of the landscape, both visual and verbal. However, I will also highlight how all these cultural and ideological factors were an interwoven set of concerns and issues in respect of the colonial landscape that vitally influenced the evolution and reception of that imagery.

⁶ H. Rider Haggard, The People of the Mist [1890; reprint, Polegate, 1998], Preface.

Chapter 5: Religion

"The heavens declare glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handywork."

Psalm 19, Verse 1.

(a) The Promised Land.

Malvern van Wyk Smith has analyzed the origin of some of the nineteenth century's most potent myths and ideas about Africa, her landscape and people. He suggests that two conflicting ideas are prevalent in the presentation of Africa. The first is one influenced by the Rousseauesque notion of the noble savage whereby Africa is regarded as a haven broken in upon by corrupted and corrupting Europeans.¹ In the religious climate of the nineteenth century, this oasis of tranquillity becomes coeval with the notion of a lost Eden. Many of the missionaries who write and present African landscape in the nineteenth century do so in the clear and manifest belief that the landscape is an emanation of the Divine Creator himself. Every piece of scenery and topographical detail is adduced to some greater cause and is taken as irrefutable evidence of the guiding hand of the Lord. However, van Wyk Smith also forwards the fundamentalist Evangelical approach that Africa is still in what Robert Moffat might refer to as "heathen darkness." According to orthodox Calvinist doctrine the benighted savages of Africa had no conception of the Lord Almighty, existed in a fallen state and exhibited a hellish darkness. There exists in many missionary texts the need to improve, the drive to civilize and a certain missionary impulse to transform the benighted wasteland of Africa and to convert the people. Thus, "one notices the dichotomy of paradise and wasteland" in the religious discourse concerning the African landscape.²

¹ The first usage of the term "noble savage" has been traced back to the English poet John Dryden.

² See Van Wyk Smith, "The Origins of Some Victorian Images of Africa", pp. 13-4.

In his monumental study, Traces on the Rhodian Shore, Clarence Glacken has charted the development of the European response to the landscape. He suggests that one of the most persistent questions preoccupying Western thinkers in relation to their landscape, and man's place within that environment, was the idea of a specifically designed earth. Glacken summarizes many generations of philosophical thought into the question:

As a fit environment for man and other organic life is [the earth] a purposefully made creation?³

The early European yearning for explicable causes behind the natural phenomena of the world was satiated by the Christian tenets of creation. The earliest Christian texts affirmed a connection between the very physicality of the landscape and some preordained, systematic plan of construction. The Psalmist sings of God's trace being visibly impressed on the natural world: "the heavens declare glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handywork [sic]."⁴ The vocal celestial realm is aided in the glorification of God by the silent, but no less obvious, evidence of His work in the physical world on earth. It bears testimony to His existence by virtue of its own. The evidence of the saints who attributed the wonders of Creation to a benevolent God pervades the history of Christianity. The traditional immanence of God within the natural world was expressed by St Gregory the Great, who characterized the elements of Nature as showing "the footprints of our Creator."⁵ St Hilare simply asked: "Who can look on nature and not see God?"⁶ In the eighteenth century, Johan Georg Sulzer continued this attribution by inextricably connecting landscape to the force of God. The elements of the natural environment are suitable conduits for impressing the human mind with the power of God:

Who does not respond with a feeling of pious gratitude when he sees the riches of nature spread out before him in the fertile countryside? Who does not sense his weakness and his dependence on higher powers when he sees the powerful masses of the overhanging cliffs or when he hears the roaring of a mighty waterfall, the terrifying raging of the wind on the surge of the sea?

³ Clarence Glacken, Traces on the Rhodian Shore : Nature and Culture in Western Thought from Ancient Times to the End of the Eighteenth Century [London, 1967], p. x.

⁴ Psalm 19, Verse 1.

⁵ Quoted in Peter Fuller, "The Geography of Mother Nature" in Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels (eds.), The Iconography of Landscape [Cambridge, 1988], pp. 11-31; p. 16.

Who does not register in these scenes the all-powerful force which steers the whole of nature? It is undoubtedly true that primitive man created his first concept of the divinity from such scenes.⁷

For the English poet William Wordsworth, the vales around the Lake District were examples of a pantheistic creation – the immanence of God in all things – they were “temples of Nature, temples built by the Almighty.”⁸ The subtle correlation established by Wordsworth in this quote illustrates the way that the appreciation of Nature and the natural world began to occupy an equally worthy place in the worship of the Almighty as man-made ecclesiastical edifices. This strain of creationist thinking and the imbuing of the natural environment with the discourse of religious symbolism continued to play a role in British and European thought and practice into the nineteenth century. The Rev. William Gilpin, the clergymen so influential in the formation of the aesthetic of the Picturesque in Britain, regurgitated the cultural commonplace by surmising that “Nature is but an effect/Whose cause is God.”⁹ Visiting the French Alps in 1793, Thomas Gray contended that “not a precipice, not a torrent, not a cliff, but is pregnant with religion and poetry.”¹⁰ Travellers in America, inured to the British aesthetic and philosophical tradition were particularly sensitive to the great natural masterpieces of God strewn over the New World that was being progressively opened up. Thomas Cole’s “Essay on American Scenery” (1835) is an interesting example of British responses to foreign landscapes by an expatriate artist – one who will actually transcribe that topography for viewers at home in Europe. And it is as an artist that he highlights his instinctive European desire to uncover a spiritual significance in Nature: “the wilderness is yet a fitting place to speak of God.”¹¹

Cole’s words, and indeed the whole philosophical tradition from which they derived, point to the fact that this discourse of religion deeply affected the idea of landscape in the colonial context. It became one of the most prevalent forms of justification for

⁶ Ibid., p. 16.

⁷ Johan Georg Sulzer, “Landscape (arts of design)” in Harrison et al (eds.), *Art in Theory*, pp. 839-42; p. 840.

⁸ Quoted in Murphy (ed.), *Literature of Nature*, p. 158.

⁹ Rev. William Gilpin, “Three Essays” in Harrison et al (eds.), *Art in Theory*, pp. 40-9; p. 47.

¹⁰ Quoted in Andrew Wilton, “The Sublime in the Old World and in the New” in Wilton and Barringer (eds.), *American Sublime : Landscape Painting in the United States, 1820-1880* [London, 2002], pp. 11-37; p. 14.

¹¹ Thomas Cole, “Essay on American Scene” (1835) in Graham Clarke (ed.), *The American Landscape: Literary Sources and Documents*, 3 vols. [Robertsbridge, 1993]; Vol. 1, pp. 337-47; p. 338.

colonial exploration and cultivation. In the words of one commentator, "Religion helped to define the world outside Europe."¹² The texts of nineteenth-century explorers in Africa resonate with the language, images and metaphors of the Bible. The accompanying and supplementary images visually reflect the influence of the archetypal Western European discourse of Christianity on the representations of the landscape. This is consonant with Richard Altick's opinion that "religious events were in no way removed from the broad intellectual currents of the age. On the contrary they were an inextricable part of the cultural fabric."¹³ The European approach to this landscape was deeply coloured and prejudiced by Western Christian myths of creation. The idea of a land untouched by anybody except God appealed to the persistent quest for origins and explanations. It also conveniently appealed to the more mercantile and economic interests of would-be colonists. The colonial world is sacred, pristine and prodigal, embodying the notion of the "oversoul" in which Emerson saw God residing.¹⁴ Regarded as the first fruits of creation, the land was constructed according to a European temporal and mythopoeic trajectory that led, quite conveniently, all the way from Biblical creation up to the nineteenth century. The colonial landscape was somewhere that affirmed Christian, and ultimately Eurocentric, truths about Biblical environments. Of course, this had the added advantage of implicitly excluding the possibility of any aboriginal inhabitants having a claim to this land.

This language of religion and its graphic adjuncts had extraordinary force and power to shape a culture in which Rev. Moffat's Missionary Scenes could sell thirty thousand copies.¹⁵ So popular were contemporary publications of religious activity in Africa, and so assured were they of commercial success, that the publisher John Murray wrote to David Livingstone while the latter was still in Africa, offering him two-thirds of the profits on every edition of a book not yet written about a missionary enterprise not yet completed.¹⁶ And, not only in the abstract world of publishing and literary texts was the prevalence of missionary zeal evidenced - the almost superfluity of missionary organizations and establishments also illustrates the religious fervour of

¹² Jeremy Black, Europe and the World, 1650-1830 [London, 2002], p. 40.

¹³ Richard Altick, Victorian People and Ideas [London, 1974], p. 203.

¹⁴ See Clarke (ed.), The American Landscape, Vol. 1, p. 31.

¹⁵ John MacKenzie, Ten Years North of the Orange River [London, 1871], p. 68, n. 1.

mid-nineteenth-century Britain. The influx of these men of God, promoting the equality of all men before the Lord, was an unpalatable annoyance to some in the fledgling colonial community in the interior – particularly those who resisted British rule.¹⁷ The naturalist and hunter, Charles John Andersson barely conceals his opinion in suggesting that “the South African missions are very numerous; more so, some think, than the country requires.”¹⁸ Nevertheless, its influence due to the widespread dissemination of this idea of the African landscape, and its subsequent representation, suggests that its particular ideological formulation of landscape had strong resonance in Victorian Britain.

These texts were pervaded by the language of the Old Testament. Rather like a manual of metaphors to be consulted at the discovery of some new sight or marvellous new natural phenomenon, the Bible served to firmly anchor textual descriptions in a form familiar to the contemporary Victorian reader. The Rev. Thornley Smith, a Wesleyan missionary stationed in South Africa, provided contemporary justification for this preponderance of Biblical and religious language:

In such a country, the language of the Bible which speaks of pools of water, living water, ever-flowing streams, as an emblem of happiness and joy, is felt to be appropriate, beautiful and expressive.¹⁹

This approach to the Southern African landscape is caricatured in Olive Schreiner’s The Story of an African Farm (1883) where the duplicitous preacher, Bonaparte Blinkins, asks:

Do they not understand that the material world is but a film, through every pore of which God’s awful spirit world is shining through on us?²⁰

The use of Biblical and spiritual exegesis among the preachers and missionaries of Southern Africa is mildly ridiculed here but it nonetheless points to the dominant ideologies and discourses that were prevalent in the cultural context in which many views and descriptions of landscape were formulated.

¹⁶ George Martelli, Livingstone’s River : A History of the Zambezi Expedition, 1858-64 [London, 1970], p. 23.

¹⁷ See Nutting, The Scramble for Africa, p. 46.

¹⁸ Charles John Andersson, Notes of Travel in South Africa, edited by L. Lloyd [London, 1875], p. 260.

¹⁹ Smith, South Africa Delineated, p. 18

²⁰ Schreiner, The Story of an African Farm, p. 92.

The language conveyed a sense of edenic, prelapsarian utopia, as well as the over-burgeoning sense of God's altruism. Even the normally pragmatic and even quite prosaic Scottish missionary, David Livingstone reached rhetorical heights in describing Victoria Falls as being "gazed upon by angels in their flight."²¹ For the rather more poetic Thomas Pringle, the landscape around the Eastern Cape was very reminiscent of the "imagery of the Hebrew Scriptures."²² In his poem "Afar in the Desert," Pringle describes the scene as being "Like the fresh bowers of Eden unfolding to view."²³ In his published articles about the Shire Highlands in Zambezia which appeared in the *JRGS*, Livingstone used such rhetorical imagery to influence and encourage the Universities Missions to Central Africa to send out a missionary party to this area. In his writings, Livingstone had:

represented the Shire country as an earthly paradise, a land flowing if not with milk and honey, with cotton and other products; enjoying moreover a healthy climate in which white men could live at peace with friendly natives, teach them the arts of civilization, and sow the seeds of the Christian faith.²⁴

Using Biblical rhetoric he conjured up an impression that did not conform to the environmental reality of the situation. Notwithstanding that, its deployment illustrates the prevalence of this discourse and the catalytic effect that it could have on the domestic audience that read it.

In the colonial context writers and artists were confronted with a vision of the world that was grossly unfamiliar to them. The subsequent imagining and imaging of this world shows an enormous debt to the religious impulse. For example, Francis Galton described his journey in Damaraland, a totally uncharted country, in the following terms:

It is difficult for me to express the delight we all felt when in the evening of the next day we suddenly emerged out of the dense and thorny coppice in which we had so long been journeying, and the charming corn country of Ondonga lay stretched like a sea before us. The agricultural wealth of the land, so far exceeding our expectations, - the beautifully grouped grove of palms, - the dense magnificent park-like trees, - the broad level fields of corn

²¹ Livingstone, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambezi and its Tributaries*, p. 579.

²² Thomas Pringle, *African Sketches* [London, 1834], p. 157.

²³ Pringle, "Afar in the Desert", line 18.

interspersed with pasturage, and the orderly villages on every side gave an appearance of diffused opulence and content, with which I know no other country that I could refer to for a parallel.²⁵

Galton construes his emergence from the jungle to gaze upon a fertile land of possible future colonial activity in terms of the Biblical myth of the Exodus. The long-wandering travellers eventually discover the promised land of beauty and fertility. Their salvation from the depths of the jungle is implicitly constructed using a Biblical framework of events, within which to narrate and plot the outcome. Yet, there were even more literal uses of the language and imagery of the Bible. I would suggest that the teleological link between nature and its origin in God was a vital and influential factor in the European engagement with, and response to, these new lands. As we have seen, the appearance of the land was described according to, and in terms of, Biblical metaphors; it was lauded or criticized in specifically religious terms and the religious impulse was finally employed to go hand in hand with an economic expansionism. Furthermore, the colonial endeavour was formulated with reference to a quasi-religious zeal and evangelical conviction in its moral propriety – Britain's mission was to civilize and christianize Africa. How these diverse threads fed into the illustrated texts and pictures of the mid-Victorian period will be the focus of this chapter.

²⁴ Martelli, *Livingstone's River*, p. 165.

²⁵ Francis Galton, "Recent Expedition into the Interior of South-Western Africa" in *JRGS*, Vol. 22 (1852), pp. 140-63; p. 151.

In accordance with the idea of the imperial archive, the novelty of exploring Africa was invariably seen in Christian terms and set within a Christian temporal timeframe. Rather than suggesting that this landscape and its peoples were at a different stage of technological development, or outside the European system of knowledge and hence beyond comparison, authors and artists placed the landscape within their own epistemological framework and concepts of linear historical progression. They situated the colonial landscape in the overarching scheme of a Biblical chronology. This unspoiled and uncultivated landscape came to be seen as an Adamic world of fresh opportunities, flush with the vigour of youthful creation. This conforms to Donald Meinig's view of landscapes as "expressions of a persistent desire to make the earth over in the image of some heaven."²⁶ This strategy heightened interest, aided understanding and would eventually be co-opted to play a role in the European ideology of commercial colonization. The use of the Bible became the accepted "cosmogony" of the Victorian mindset.²⁷ By couching the unknown and the strange in the eminently familiar terms of the Biblical creation myth, the explorer and the artist metaphorically denuded the landscape of its otherness and integrated it as another link in the epistemological chain of Western European civilization. This appropriative strategy was not only aimed at allowing readers and viewers to interpret the landscape but it also went towards creating a specific discourse that would be drawn upon by missionaries and advocates of colonialism to corroborate their theories and justify their objectives.

The identification of the landscape as bearing the stamp of God was not a new phenomenon. The elemental composition of Nature was, for artists and authors, a powerful proof of God's bounty and munificence. The exploration of distant lands, with all their concomitant novel physical and geological features, expressed and embodied the glory of God. Their recording by the artist or author, in visual and textual terms, was a furtherance of the witness God's work. Sydney Parkinson, draughtsman to Joseph Banks aboard the HMS *Endeavour* under the command of Captain James Cook, was quite explicit in his viewing explorations of new lands as an opportunity to discern and discover more details about God's universe and man's divinely ordained plan in it:

²⁶ Meinig, "Reading the Landscape", p. 229.

²⁷ Altick, *Victorian People and Ideas*, p. 203.

How amazingly diversified are the works of the Deity within the narrow limits of this globe we inhabit, which, compared with the vast aggregate of systems that compose the universe, appears but a dark speck in the creation! A curiosity...induced some of us to quit our native land, to investigate the heavenly bodies minutely in different regions, as well as to trace the signatures of the Supreme Power and Intelligence throughout several species of animals, and different genera of plants in the vegetable system...and the more we investigate, the more we ought to admire the power, wisdom, and goodness, of the Great Superintendent of the Universe.²⁸

In Parkinson's schema, all living matter is redolent of the imprint of God – the more one sees, the more one appreciates the magnificence of the Divine Creator.

Parkinson's words reflect what many artists, academics and scholars began to glean from the scientific researches of the period. This trend found its culmination in the work of the Rev. William Paley. His Natural Theology, or Evidence of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity Collected from the Appearance of Nature, published in 1802, firmly and inextricably linked the physical properties of each living creature, from the tiniest microscopic organism to mankind at the apex, with the proof of God's benevolence.²⁹ This book was more than just a popular parlour-room talking point. It influenced the whole artistic and intellectual climate. Archdeacon Fisher recommended it to John Constable in 1825 – proving its durability and relevance for the landscape artist.³⁰

This also found expression very forcefully in those writers who recorded their experiences in Africa. For the agent of the London Missionary Society, John Campbell, who travelled around the Colony on their behalf in the early 1810s, the panoply of new flora and fauna evoked a typically pious missionary response. Campbell adduced and emphasized a theological derivation for all things before him:

The immense variety of flowers and flowering plants and trees in Africa is truly wonderful. They proclaim the handiwork of God.³¹

²⁸ Sydney Parkinson, A Journal of a Voyage to the South Seas, in His Majesty's Ship, The Endeavour [London, 1783], p. 11.

²⁹ See Altick, Victorian People and Ideas, pp. 126-7.

³⁰ Anne Lyles, "'That immense canopy': Studies of Sky and Cloud by British Artists c. 1770-1860" in Morris (ed.), Constable's Clouds, pp. 135-50; p. 147.

³¹ Campbell, Travels in South Africa, p. 50.

Indeed, so overcome was Campbell with the landscape and topography that greeted him that, in a classical trick of rhetorical emphasis, he asserted:

I found our language inadequate to convey an idea of my feelings while viewing these wondering [sic] works of the Lord.³²

The Bishop of Cape Town was also sensitive to the beauty of the landscape as conveying the presence and the blessing of the Lord. Descending the “Drakenberg” he writes:

Before us was a vast range of country of an undulating character, an apparently interminable succession of hill and dale. The grass, which on the other side of the mountain was dry and withered, was here, especially in the kloofs, green and verdant, and several sorts of flowers were still in blossom. I know not whether the change of scene affected me at all, but I have seldom enjoyed a two hours' walk more. During the whole of the time I was enabled to maintain an almost uninterrupted communion with God.³³

Not only was it men of God who attributed the landscape and the environment to His making. James Alexander, a captain in the 42nd Highland Regiment, recorded his sensations on seeing a sunrise burst upon the Southern African veldt at Hooge Fontein on the way from Lily-Fontain to Cape Town. The grandeur of scenery, its colour and visual impression are traduced to divine origins. The landscape itself literally becomes a physical accoutrement of Christian worship:

Thus, the Great Luminary converted the mountains into mighty altars, from which immense clouds of vapour rolled towards Heaven, as if Nature were silently but most impressively offering a sacrifice of praise and adoration to its Divine Author.³⁴

Another military man, Captain Alfred Drayson, shows the continuance this strain of thought well into the century. On one of his many hunting excursions he finds himself comparing the natural environment with the scene presented before him in Africa:

Let the admirers of architectural art talk of their edifices and public buildings, they are not equal to a single tree. Bricks and mortar, stones, plaster, chimneys, &c., are heaps of rubbish when compared to a natural forest, every leaf and flower of which is a witness and an evidence of that mighty Power

³² Ibid., p. 70.

³³ Rt Rev. Robert Gray, A Journal of a Bishop's Visitation Tour through The Cape Colony, in 1850 [London, 1851], p. 37.

who creates with as much ease the endless worlds about us as the minutest details of vegetable and animal life, the perfect working and machinery of which are more than wonderful.³⁵

These travellers, with diverse cultural and intellectual backgrounds, are concerned to convey the idea that Divine existence is evidenced in every facet of the natural world. Their various accounts show that God's handiwork is egalitarian and can be ascribed to the tiniest organism as well as to the stupendous display of natural magnificence. Every part of the landscape is arrogated in terms of God's plan and design for it.

The use of religiously-emotive and Biblically-resonant language with which to describe and explain the landscape of colonial Southern Africa was materially, and quite obviously dependent on the author's sophisticated use of language and vocabulary. Nevertheless, pertinent ideas about natural theology and its relevance for colonial landscape representation could also be incorporated into visual representation. In these instances, textual reinforcement plays a large role, but the visual evidence suggests the major impact that religious thoughts had on those upon whom the visual representation of the African landscape devolved. The luxuriance of growth that often confronted the artist and traveller in distant lands is an example of a natural phenomenon being subsumed within the discourse of religious origins. Travelling through the Carolinas, in North America, William Bartram was moved to comment:

This world, as a glorious apartment of the boundless palace of the sovereign Creator, is furnished with an infinite variety of animated scenes, inexpressibly beautiful and pleasing, equally free to the inspection and enjoyment of all his creatures. Perhaps there is not any part of creation, within the reach of our observations, which exhibits a more glorious display of the Almighty hand, than the vegetable world.³⁶

The landscape was inextricably bound up with the view of the world as divinely created and these areas were taken as evidence of the prelapsarian state of bounty and uninhibited growth. David Livingstone was excited and delighted by his first sight of

³⁴ Alexander, *An Expedition of Discovery into the Interior of Africa*, Vol. 1, p. 55.

³⁵ Capt. Alfred W. Drayson, *Sporting Scenes amongst the Kaffirs of South Africa* [London, 1858], p. 47.

³⁶ William Bartram, "Travels through North and South Carolina" (1791) in Clarke (ed.), *The American Landscape*, Vol. 1, pp. 216-90; p. 217.

Africa. He landed at Cape Town in March 1841 and was immediately struck by the beauty of his new home:

This is really a fine world we live in after all. Were it not [for] that hateful rebellion against God, it would be quite a Paradise.³⁷

The prospect presented seemed to be a perfect haven, only spoiled by the misdeeds of humanity. Any landscape untouched and undefiled by sinning human hands could reflect more perfectly the beauty of the world as it had been created by God. Thomas Pringle soliloquized : “As I sit apart by the desert stone... Saying MAN IS DISTANT BUT GOD IS NEAR!” expressing the fundamental link between wilderness and godliness.³⁸ Moffat was very definite in his accreditation of the beauty and splendour of an African panorama:

The Christian Church, and in particular the Directors of the Missionary societies, can now take their stand on Moriah’s mount, and surveying the world at large, gaze on ocean and isle and continent, while with overflowing gratitude they exclaim, What hath God wrought!³⁹

In his portrait of the “roan antelope” (Plate 58), Captain William Cornwallis Harris, one perhaps more famous for his hunting exploits and the so-called “butcher of the veldt,”⁴⁰ showed his sensitivity to the natural beauty of the scene. It is “untouched as yet by any meaner hand/Than his who made it.”⁴¹ The evidence for this region as an unspoiled haven of utopian seclusion is the natural growth; the area is “clad in a broad carpet of green, and enameled [sic] with clusters of brilliant wild flowers, that scent the pure air with their varied perfume.”⁴² The artist was employed most productively by buttressing the idea of an undefiled world through a representation of unusual plants and the luxuriant, overwhelming effulgence of their growth. The visual qualities of the plate reinforce Harris’ view of the landscape as inspired by God. The gentleness and meek posture of the little antelope is the perfect foil to a world of vegetation perceived as new, innocent and uncorrupted. The callow young animal provides a symbolic complement to a world which carries the overtones of an Edenic

³⁷ Livingstone to T.L. Prentice, 5th March 1841; Quoted in David Livingstone, David Livingstone : Letters and Documents 1841-1872, edited by Timothy Holmes [London, 1990], p. 13.

³⁸ Thomas Pringle, “Afar in the Desert”, lines 90-5.

³⁹ Robert Moffat, Africa: or, Gospel Light shining in the Midst of Heathen Darkness [London, 1840], p.

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⁴⁰ Quoted in Marius & Joy Diemont, The Brenthurst Baines [Johannesburg, 1975], p. 56.

⁴¹ Harris, Portraits of the Game and Wild Animals, p. 92.

idyll – a representation of the state of the world before the Fall of Man. As well as offering the pleasure of detailed form and complexity, the recording of natural history in this way stimulated evocative human associations. Therefore, not only was it an accurate portrayal of physical qualities but it was also invested with a transcendental symbolic power. It relied on the power of appreciation implicit in the study of God’s creation, in all its variety. It built upon the common cultural denominator of knowledge of creation as accepted by the vast majority of the Victorian population.

An illustration in Philip Gosse’s book, The Romance of Natural History, shows the Brazilian rainforest, recently discovered and explored by Europeans, teeming with vegetation and life (Plate 59). The artist, Joseph Wolf has depicted the proliferation of greenery suggesting the inability of the frame to contain the burgeoning growth and abundance of Nature in this natural habitat. Wolf’s rendition of the scenery described by Gosse closely accords with the type of material being produced by artists in Southern Africa under the natural theological banner of fidelity to the minutiae of Nature as instruments of God and evidence of His existence. The unfamiliar species of plants and animals to be found in the tropical climates being investigated by Europeans further added to the notion of these landscapes as regions of edenic purity and unexploited possibilities. The extraordinary effulgence of growth is evident in Samuel Daniell’s African Scenery, and the plate “Scene at Sitsikamma,” published on 15th August 1805 (Plate 60). Located about five hundred miles east of Cape Town, the scene is labelled as “wild and uninhabited.” This immediately conjures up notions of virgin and unexplored territory in the middle of that vast “blank” of uncharted territory that existed in early-nineteenth-century Southern Africa. The lack of tangible human presence and the consequent non-intervention of man has enabled a veritable menagerie of animals to accumulate, or rather to remain untouched and unspoilt since the Creation, while the lush concentration of vegetation implies a scene of rank fertility, plentifully endowed by the godhead. The deep ravines of the area are clustered with forest trees, “some of uncommon growth and luxuriance.”⁴³ Not visible in the image, but implied by its visual characteristics, and confirmed by Daniell in the letterpress:

⁴² Ibid., p. 92.

⁴³ Daniell, African Scenery and Animals, Vol. 2, Plate 19.

in these impenetrable forests are buffaloes without number, rhinoceroses and elephants, the last of which, are scarcely to be found in any part of the colony.⁴⁴

The sense of the unspoiled region is aided by the portrayal of the dense vegetation and the evocative use of the properties of chiaroscuro to convey an idea of overflowing growth. Daniell's portrayal accords with the view of the early-nineteenth-century missionary to South Africa, Rev. C.I. Latrobe. He also ascribed the vegetative beauty of the scenery to a superior power:

The bountiful Creator has been pleased to clothe this country, unproductive as it generally is in means of subsistence for man and beast, with an astonishing profusion of vegetable beauty.⁴⁵

The sense of wonder, the idea of the artist gazing upon and recording such scenes for the first time is evident in Baines' depiction of "A Lake in Zululand" (1874) (Plate 61). John Glover had done something similar in the Tasmanian context forty years earlier. His "A View of the Artist's House and Garden, Mills' Plains" (1834-5) (Plate 62) displays a wonderful proliferation of botanical and horticultural detail. The bright celebratory tone of the picture has been seen by some critics as a deliberate attempt to picture and present the fresh, new and unspoilt arcadia available to Europeans in the Southern Hemisphere.⁴⁶ In Baines' work, the amazing proliferation of creatures is set in the balmy environment of a lagoon-like expanse of water. The scene reflects Baines' concern to fill his picture with as much of the wildlife that he saw in Natal as possible. The whole image is a virtual paean to the God who created such wondrous works of Nature. Amongst those unusual animals depicted are crocodiles, flamingos, pelicans and fish eagles. Every inch of the canvas is brimming with the strange and unusual animals which bear testimony to the benevolence of God's creation. The sparkling water, the striking pink plumage of the flamingos and the innumerable degradations of green in the profuse vegetative growth are expressive of the artist's keen eye for natural phenomena, their visual impact and their aesthetic merits expressed through the beauty of colour. The work almost glows with what Cotton

⁴⁴ Ibid., Vol. 2, Plate 19.

⁴⁵ Rev. C.I. Latrobe, *Journal of a Visit to South Africa, in 1815 and 1816* [London, 1818], p. 194.

⁴⁶ Hansen, *John Glover*, p. 215.

Mather called the “clear sunshine of the Gospell [sic].”⁴⁷ However, it is also evocative of the sense of epiphany and revelation attendant on the perception of such a magnificent variety of nature. Baines was, by all accounts, quite a committed Christian.⁴⁸ The Senior Colonial Chaplain, the Rev. George Hough persuaded the young immigrant to help out at Sunday School.⁴⁹ Indeed, this “regular church-goer” was initially persuaded to take up painting professionally by a contact that he met at church in Cape Town – the Irish organist Frederick Logier.⁵⁰ On the passage out with the Zambezi Expedition, the crew stopped at Freetown, Sierra Leone. While the others relaxed on board, Baines and Kirk went to visit the newly enthroned bishop, John Bower.⁵¹ Baines also took Divine Service on many occasions in the interior and organized Sunday worship whilst on expedition in Northern Australia.⁵² Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that Baines was familiar with, and sympathetic to, the teachings of the Christian Church and was certainly one who retained a Christian inclination even when in the wilds of Africa. Baines’ work, loaded as it is with the minutiae of Southern African fauna in the midst of their natural habitat, conveys the idea of a boundless fertility and a harmonious existence among the watering holes of Southern Africa. Here man, civilization and the dreaded curse of Adam have not yet penetrated. The world is as fresh, new and unsullied as the day when God created it.

Going toward Witte Water in Griqualand, Moffat succumbs to the blandishments of a mirage, the result of rarefied air (Map 2; No. 13). In the beauty of his description of this phenomenon, Moffat almost textualized what Baines’ painting conveys visually. He also added the required Biblical associations that were present, explicitly or implicitly, in many of these scenes:

lakes and pools, studded with islets, towering trees moving in the breeze on their banks...lakes so lovely, as if they had just come from the hand of the Divine artist, a transcript of Eden’s sweetest views.⁵³

Baines’ work is the imperfect human expression of this transcription. This recording of the intricacies of the world in all its glorious detail was, in nineteenth-century

⁴⁷ Quoted in Clarke (ed.), *The American Landscape*, Vol. 1, p. 11.

⁴⁸ See Cairns, *Prelude to Imperialism*, p. 53.

⁴⁹ Wallis, *Thomas Baines*, p. 22.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁵¹ Thornton to “A.I.”, 21st April 1858; Quoted in Thornton, *The Zambezi Papers of Richard Thornton*, Vol. 1, p. 15.

⁵² See Russell Braddon, *Thomas Baines and the North Australia Expedition* [London, 1986], p. 50.

terms, an act of worship. The scenes of growth and fertility, with their fussy attention to detail and almost overabundance of visual information may appear far-fetched and exaggerated. However, according to Lieutenant Rose such sylvan and aquatic scenes were in fact commonplace in Southern Africa. Writing about his visit to the home of Mr. Rex, at George, Rose suggested (Map 4; No. 9):

it is impossible for a pen or a pencil to give an idea of the rich and varied vegetation that darkens over an African river: the eye...is now caught by the beds of lilies, with their large leaves and flowers of ivory whiteness; and then by the striking contrast with the sombre deep greens around, produced by the different aloes covering the bank in clustered profusion, and rich red blossom.⁵⁴

The richness of the textual commentary, the careful building up of metaphors and the proliferation of adjectives are verbal traits that artists conveyed through the visual abundance of their images. Just as the descriptions could be used to imply a theological connection, visual equivalents do likewise. For an audience cognisant with religious discourse, the visual material evoked associations with God's creation.

The study of botany in nineteenth-century Britain and its imperial adjuncts could still be envisaged as a union of biblical narrative and scientific observation. For John Ruskin, "botany is surely a clerical science."⁵⁵ The special attraction for clerics in the study of natural history gives a literal emphasis to this notion. J.C. Loudon, in the Magazine of Natural History, recommends its study:

It would be altogether superfluous to insist on the suitability [sic] of the study of Natural History for a clergyman in the country.⁵⁶

By conforming to the standards of mid-Victorian natural history, as evidenced in Bowler's, Baines' and Daniell's works, these adventurers, artists and explorers imbibed and regurgitated the aesthetic of natural theology and its connection to Victorian natural history.⁵⁷ The usefulness and tenacity of this way of formulating the landscape is supported by its continued currency later in the century. Even as late as

⁵³ Rev. Robert Moffat, Missionary Scenes and Labours in Southern Africa [London, 1842], p. 163.

⁵⁴ Rose, Four Years in Southern Africa, p. 267.

⁵⁵ Quoted in Tim Barringer, The Pre-Raphaelites [London, 1998], p. 56.

⁵⁶ Quoted in David Elliston Allen, The Naturalist in Britain: A Social History [Princeton, NJ, 1994], p. 18.

⁵⁷ For a fuller discussion of this phenomenon see Lynn L. Merrill, The Romance of Victorian Natural History [Oxford, 1989].

1882, when Marianne North visited the country, she was conditioned to see it in terms of novelty and divine origins. She wrote in her diary:

A long day's [rail journey] then took me to Port Elizabeth, through a perfectly *new world of vegetation* in Kaffirland.⁵⁸

The tenacity of perceiving the landscape in terms of Biblical exegesis was closely connected to the rise of interest in natural history in the Victorian social milieu.

Biblical imagery becomes part of the European expression of novelty in the landscape. The discourse of religion and Biblical imagery are co-opted to become a strategy in the process of envisaging, imagining and representing the novelty of the landscape. These discourses can simultaneously express the newness and strangeness of the scene whilst also allowing Europeans to imagine it in some sort of recognisable knowledge. The magnificent scenes of growth evidence a concern to express the landscape as new, unfamiliar and strange but, at the same time, to steadfastly lock it into a European chronological chain of progression. By seeing the landscape, flora and fauna of Africa in terms of the Bible or the religious doctrines of their own cultures, explorers instilled in the viewer and reader the possibility that this landscape has a Christian destiny.

However, the use of Biblical imagery need not necessarily mean a positive connotation for the idea of landscape that subsequently appeared. Just as there were divergent and conflicting opinions as to the suitability of the land for settlement so the investing of it with religious resonance could work in many different ways. The excitement at the sense of exploration and discovery, as it was conceived by creationists, could conjure up images of plenitude and vitality. However, the colonial landscape, in its barren desolation and inhospitable aridity, could also be conveyed in terms of a god-forsaken wasteland. Alexander's voyage to the interior of Africa, through the modern-day Namib Desert, brought him to the Orange River. Here he found exploitable mineral resources like iron and copper.⁵⁹ However, travelling northwards he encountered an inhospitable landscape prospect. It is described by

⁵⁸ Marianne North, *Recollections of a Happy Life: Being the Autobiography of Marianne North*, edited by Mrs. John Addington Symonds, 2 vols. [London, 1892], Vol. 2, p. 238 [my emphasis].

⁵⁹ Alexander, *An Expedition of Discovery into the Interior of Africa*, Vol. 1, p. 108.

Alexander in terms of Biblical origins and betokens the stigma of an angry God in order to give it added resonance and recognition factor for the reader:

the appearance of Nature here was as that of a land accursed. We seemed to be on the shores of the Dead Sea, where the cities of the plain had sunk under the fiery wave, and where desolation forever reigns around, to mark an awful judgement; and it appeared as if the glowing hills of Pandemonium had been raised from their dreadful depths to sully the face of the earth with their most forbidding aspect.⁶⁰

The landscape is again co-opted into the Western register of meaning but instead of benevolence of creation bursting forth on the retina, we encounter the desolation of a desert landscape. Alexander also sent periodic letters to the RGS to inform them of his progress and to detail his latest position. In a letter dated New Year's Day 1837, written from Great Namaqualand, Alexander highlighted the barren desolate wastelands between the Kamies and the Orange River, with a succinct and representative comment: "The region seemed accursed."⁶¹ In a similar vein, Moffat recounted the tale of the two Albrechts, fellow missionaries who also encounter the pestilential aspect of this territory. They cross the Orange River and try to "sow the seed of the everlasting Gospel in the most ungenial soil."⁶² The destitute and miserable appearance of the land where they worked led Moffat to comment on its waterless, undulating plains as "bearing the heavy curse of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste brought death into the world, and all our woe."⁶³ John Campbell's diagrammatic rendition of the little missionary village of Bethelsdorp (Map 4; Feature ii) in the Cape Colony expresses the same sense of sparse population and the desolation of the surrounding region (Plate 63). One might imagine that the presentation of the aesthetic and agricultural potential of the region is inhibited as much by Campbell's drawing style (or lack thereof) as the actual physical conditions of the region. Again however, his comment in the text illuminates the reason why Bethelsdorp appears as it does. With recourse to the old staple of Biblical metaphor and symbolism, Campbell states:

⁶⁰ Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 143.

⁶¹ Capt. James Alexander, "Latest Intelligence from Capt. Alexander" in *JRGS*, Vol. 7 (1837), pp. 439-46; p. 443.

⁶² Moffat, *Missionary Labours and Scenes*, p. 66.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 66.

The country wears the aspect of desolation, all things remaining as the deluge left them in the days of Noah.⁶⁴

In explaining images of desolation, it again serves us well to study the accompanying text. The scene depicted is constructed as a wasteland, a void divest of all possibility for cultivation by the comments in the text. The use of Biblical analogy here reinforces this impression. By imbibing the distinctive Biblical inflection with which the landscape was invested, the reader could understand that the image was meant to represent desolation, aridity and infertility rather than unbounded possibilities for colonial expansion.

The use and deployment of religious imagery was very useful for colonial discourse and the imagining of new imperial spaces. It informed the visual adjuncts to its textual exhortations and influenced many images themselves. There existed a Janus-faced trait in the European response to the African landscape, as it was filtered through Biblical imagery. But whether positive or negative, it provided an opportunity for a new landscape to be codified and brought within the pale of the imperial archive by representing these new prospects according to the precepts of an essentially Western cultural phenomenon. The images derived from this process illustrate the sheer sense of excitement and wonder that was frequently expressed in journals and published accounts as travellers and explorers came to terms with a foreign and completely “other” environment. The less promising imagery that many explorers found in Africa could also be couched in language derived from the discourse of religion as it had permeated British consciousness in the nineteenth century. The use of Biblical rhetoric to explain and describe a foreign landscape and an “other” environment was not new. However, in the colonial context, its deployment established a complex matrix of symbols, images and representations which were put into circulation and were further developed as the religious approach to the landscape altered from a more rhetorical and comparative discourse to a more proactive engagement with the landscape in the form of missionary activity and emigration.

⁶⁴ Campbell, *Travels in South Africa*, p. 87.

(b) The Missionary Impulse

Religion and its discourses played a pivotal role in arrogating the Victorian encounter with the colonial South African landscape. However, it also shaped the British response to that encounter. So strong was the theological impulse in nineteenth-century Britain that it was employed to explain the reason for this encounter with Africa and to argue for a specific set of responses and reactions to the new lands of the Empire. Altick comments, regarding nineteenth-century Britain, that “probably in no other century, except the seventeenth and perhaps the twelfth, did the claims of religion occupy so large a part in the nation’s life, or did men speaking in the name of religion contrive to exercise so much power.”⁶⁵ Speaking in the House of Commons, Spencer Perceval attributed the military and commercial success of his country to divine favour. He postulated that Britain’s destiny was vitally connected and inextricably linked to the moral health and spiritual activity of her people:

The prosperity of a nation, like that of an individual, is of God. He only is the author of all the prosperity which the nation has ever enjoyed; and as obedience to God is the cause of a nation’s prosperity...this nation would seem to stand in that position towards the Almighty in which Israel formerly stood.⁶⁶

In the miasma of piety that clung around mid-Victorian society, the British encounter with Southern Africa was imagined as forming part of a divine plan. By obfuscating the boundaries between religious duty and colonial intent, the British public was inured to the idea of their compatriots toiling the bleak wastelands of Africa to further the glory of God whilst simultaneously advancing British interests. Indeed, spreading the faith was seen as a reason why European expansion succeeded – it fulfilled God’s purpose and in return deserved benefits such as trade and land acquisition.⁶⁷ The sense of epic predestination is apparent in contemporary commentary on the perceived role of Britain on the world stage. The Colonial Magazine identified a particular and definite use for Britain’s martial and diplomatic achievements:

⁶⁵ Altick, Victorian People and Ideas, p. 203.

⁶⁶ Quoted in John Wolfe, “Evangelism in mid-nineteenth century England”, in Raphael Samuel (ed.), Patriotism : The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity, 3 vols. [London, 1989]; Vol. 1, pp. 188-200; p. 189.

⁶⁷ See Black, Europe and the World, p. 43.

Last, not least, we are bound by every sacred consideration, to advance the moral and religious instruction of the myriads of human beings which it has pleased an Almighty Providence to place beneath the British sphere of influence.⁶⁸

In another edition of this short-lived periodical, the author of “England’s Destiny – Colonization” built on this idea of Britain’s manifest destiny being to colonize, cultivate and populate the countries under her control for the sake of Christianity. In an article of wide-ranging allusion, England is carefully situated at the hub of Christian civilization for a thousand years. The historical associations and rhetorical exhortations reach a crescendo with a rather hectic and convoluted sentence that proudly catalogues the achievements of the nation under the guidance of a Christian God, as well as positing a view about the future colonial mission. The ecstatic prose and the breathless run-on lines express an almost evangelical zeal amongst the advocates of colonialism:

Was this vast territorial power – this almost illimitable mental energy – this extraordinary moral influence – given thee for thy sole and temporary benefit? Or was it vouchsafed to thee from on high, for the grand and beneficent purpose of peopling the desert places – for reclaiming the wild savage...- above all, and before all, for the hallowed purpose of planting the glorious standard of the Cross among benighted heathens and idolaters [sic] – of inculcating, by precept and example...the supreme laws of Omniscience – and in the fulfillment of thy destiny thus establishing the kingdom of Christ upon earth?⁶⁹

As the incontrovertible proof of this assertion it is “deserving of deep consideration that the Almighty did not permit England to commence her career of colonization until after the doctrines of the Reformation had been espoused by her government.”⁷⁰ Every historical and empirical fact seemed to suggest that God was calling out to his anointed people to advance the witness of his Gospel through the conversion of natives and the spreading of His Word to the darkest corners of the earth. David Livingstone confidently asserted that “the end of the geographical fact is but the

⁶⁸ *The Colonial Magazine*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Jan. 1840), Preface.

⁶⁹ Anon, “England’s Destiny – Colonization” in *The Colonial Magazine*, Vol. 7, No. 26 (Jan. 1842), pp. 129-34; p. 129.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 133.

beginning of the missionary enterprise.”⁷¹ Thomas McCombie concisely encapsulated this:

The mission of the Anglo-Saxon race, the most mighty, cultivated and vigorous that has appeared in any age, is to civilize the dark regions of the globe, to christianize the heathen.⁷²

In this regard, Africa was a prime site for the spreading of the Christian message. British engagement with Africa, taking off at the beginning of the eighteenth century, coincided with a great upsurge in missionary activity and the funding of missionary societies calculated to further the aim of spreading the word of God (and its attendant ideologies).⁷³ The central tenet of this concern was not the propagation of sectarian or denominational differences. The doctrinal difficulties that plagued Europe were almost swept away in the eagerness to convert the natives. While some colonists evidence a sectarian bias, the major impulse was to promote the civilizing influence of the Gospel. The Universities’ Missions to Central Africa incorporated all levels of the Church of England and David Livingstone, perhaps the most famous African missionary, conceived of Christianity as essentially non-sectarian.⁷⁴ Looking on, as the British recaptured the Cape in 1806, Henry Martyn expresses one of the themes that would play an important role in the figuration of the landscape throughout the nineteenth century:

I prayed that the capture of the Cape might be ordered to the advancement of Christ’s Kingdom.⁷⁵

Indeed, the staunchly pro-settler editor of a frontier newspaper, Robert Godlonton, was quite convinced that “the British race was selected by God himself to colonize

⁷¹ Quoted in Richard Lovett, *The History of the London Missionary Society*, 2 vols. [London, 1899], Vol. 1, p. 476.

⁷² Thomas McCombie, “Colonization : The True Policy of Great Britain; or the Mission of the Anglo-Saxon” in *Essays on Colonization* [London, 1850], pp. 1-8; p. 2.

⁷³ For example, the following missionary societies were founded in the space of just over a hundred years: The Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (1698); The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (1701); Baptist Missionary Society (1792); London Missionary Society (1795); Scottish Missionary Society (1799); Central Missionaries Society (1799); Wesleyan Missionary Society (1813). See Black, *Europe and the World*, p. 40.

⁷⁴ Martelli, *Livingstone’s River*, p. 171

⁷⁵ Quoted in Lovett, *The History of the London Missionary Society*, Vol. 1, p. 487.

Kaffraria.”⁷⁶ In the words of Andrew Porter, “Britain’s religion and Britain’s empire were obviously and inextricably linked.”⁷⁷

The Rev. Calderwood, a missionary working in Africa, disavowed any drawbacks or moral reservations connected with the colonization of Africa because it “has already been, and is *destined* to be, an incalculable blessing to Africa. It is the following out of one of the grand designs of a gracious Providence to bless the world.”⁷⁸ The Anglican Bishop of the Diocese of Cape Town, the second-largest Anglican See in the world behind Calcutta, also alluded to the reasons why the territorial possessions of Britain in Southern Africa had increased:

Why is it that these possessions have been intrusted to us? Not surely, for our own aggrandizement; not that we may extend our empire and commerce; not to minister to our pride or our greatness as a nation; but in order that we may become, if we so will, instruments in God’s hands for conveying the blessings which we ourselves enjoy.⁷⁹

Bishop Gray’s comments are coterminous with the wider cultural and social foment in which these sentiments were a commonplace assumption. For many of those writers and artists who influenced the representation of the colonial landscape by their words and images, the process of colonizing and civilizing Southern Africa was, quite simply, “works which God has given the Church and the people to do for Him in Africa.”⁸⁰ I will now show how this evangelical impulse became part of the visual vocabulary of the colonial South African landscape.

This missionary aspect, acted out in the colonies, gave a fresh inflection to the imperial ideology of the control and subordination of the land. In Southern Africa, as elsewhere, the landscape was envisaged as providing fertile ground for the furtherance of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. By adducing human responsibility for the

⁷⁶ Quoted in Robert Ross, *Status and Respectability in the Cape Colony, 1750-1870: ‘A Tragedy of Manners’* [Cambridge, 1999], p. 63.

⁷⁷ Andrew Porter, “Religion and Empire: British Expansion in the Long Nineteenth Century, 1780-1914” in *JICH*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (Sep. 1992), pp. 370-90; p. 373.

⁷⁸ Rev. H. Calderwood, *Caffres and Caffre Missions; with Preliminary Chapters on the Cape Colony as a field for Emigration, and Basis of Missionary Operation* [London, 1858], p. 55 [my emphasis].

⁷⁹ Rt Rev. Robert Gray, “On Missions at the Cape” in *Missionary Sermons, Preached in Hagley Church During the Season of Epiphany* edited by the Hon. and Rev. W.H. Lyttelton [London, 1859], pp. 108-42; p. 119.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

controlling of the land, the will of a Higher Authority was used to envisage the landscape. Building on the already established ideology of seeing the colonial landscape as a religious scene of Edenic purity, the missionaries and their domestic supporters could argue for the conversion of these regions into suitably Christian places to complement their appearance as places of a divinely-created paradise. Travelling through the countryside of the Cape Colony, John Campbell asked the question: "When will this wilderness be transformed into a garden of the Lord?"⁸¹ The answer it would seem, from the evidence of Campbell's narrative, is when European doctrine and intervention combine to civilize the savages of this wild land. The benefits of European intervention are evident in the civilization of the Hottentots to whom he is paying a visit. On ascending the hill outside their small community, Campbell was gladdened by the scene: "I viewed it as garden of the Lord, a field which he had blessed."⁸² He even posits the possibility of these pacified natives becoming missionaries themselves and spreading the European word of civilization and Christianity to Kaffraria. Likening them to the Gallician fishermen of the Bible, Campbell imagined them overturning the "idolatries and superstitions of the past."⁸³ The implication is clear – European technological sophistication and religious doctrine are to be yoked together in the service of God and Britain:

I hope the day is not far distant, when this desert land shall be peopled and cultivated, and men deserving to be called 'trees of righteousness' shall flourish here and glorify the God of Israel.⁸⁴

The wilderness of the desert presented a challenge to the European missionary. The central tenet running through this providentially ordered conception of the Universe as one sustained by God was the religious imperative and duty that Britain had towards her colonial possessions. Religious destiny was seen as concomitant and in no way conflicting with furthering the national cause. Advancing God's kingdom in heaven was perfectly consonant with furthering Victoria's on earth. Louis Lawes saw no contradiction in laying out the grounds of the first mission church at Livingstonia in the form of the Union Jack.⁸⁵ Religious discourse and the language of the Bible

⁸¹ Campbell, *Travels in South Africa*, p. 48.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

⁸⁵ See Cairns, *Prelude to Imperialism*, p. 56.

pervaded the opinions and comments of travellers and explorers in nineteenth-century Britain. Their impressions of landscape could express both awestruck amazement at the wonder of creation or perceive the curse of Adam pandemic in this foreign and “other” environment. However, this mode of perceiving and viewing the landscape fed into the idea that this imperial boon had come at a price. In return for the mercantile benefits extended to Britain, she would respond in kind by converting and proselytizing amongst the native peoples. The analysis of the linkage of landscape representations to the spiritual activity of missionaries is quite appropriate. The popularity of spiritual tracts and texts was evidenced by sales figures like David Livingstone’s Missionary Labours which sold 12,000 copies before publication via subscriptions.⁸⁶ Also, by the mid-nineteenth century, half a million acres of land was under the control of missionaries in Southern Africa.⁸⁷ Obviously they had a major impact on the cultivation and representation of this landscape. Clearly in a country in which landscape was already so heavily invested with symbolism and rhetorical meaning, the landscape of Southern Africa would be a prime territory in which to expostulate and extrapolate and represent the benefits of Christian and missionary endeavour. The missionary imperative as laid down by God was interpreted as encouraging the development and Westernizing of these landscapes. Civilization and commerce became virtually synonymous. The Colonial Magazine wrote of England’s destiny as one where “Christianity and her handmaidens – civilization and commerce” would be spread abroad.⁸⁸ The precepts of Christianity furnished what the Rev. Ellis called in 1837, “a complete moral machinery for carrying forward all the great processes which lie at the root of civilization.”⁸⁹ A specifically Christian envisaging and employment of the landscape became identified with a clear and manifest duty, laid down by God, to cultivate the landscape of Southern Africa.

⁸⁶ Reginald Coupland, Kirk on the Zambesi: A Chapter of African History [Oxford, 1928], p. 73.

⁸⁷ D.M. Schreuder, “The Cultural Factor in Victorian Imperialism : A Case-Study of the British ‘Civilizing Mission’” in JICH, Vol. 4, No. 3 (May 1978), pp. 283-317; p. 315, n. 90.

⁸⁸ Anon, “Colonization – England’s Destiny”, p. 134.

⁸⁹ Quoted in Brian Stanley, “‘Commerce and Christianity’ : Providence Theory, the Missionary Movement, and the Imperialism of Free Trade, 1842-1860” in The Historical Journal, Vol. 26, No. 1 (1983), pp. 71-94; p. 71.

In missionary representations of landscape, a major emphasis was placed on the value of work and productive labour. In the religious climate of mid-Victorian society, where idle hands were always a temptation to the devil, economic productivity went in tandem with spiritual edification and moral improvement. Having been favoured, in many cases, by productive soil and clement climatic conditions, it was the responsibility of the missionary to cultivate and manage this into resembling a “field of the Lord.” The divine mandate to pacify the landscape was just as forceful and legitimate as that to christianize the heathen. The cultivation of nature was as justifiable a glorification of the Lord as educating the wayward savages in the word of God. Furthermore, it was perceived as being more likely to convince the heathen of the benevolence of the Lord if they were exposed not only to the riches of eternal life but also of unlimited social and economic development. In his Kalendarium Hortense; or, The Garden Almanac (1664), John Evelyn acknowledged the necessity for human labour to maintain what God had endowed unto his people:

Paradise (though of God’s own planting) had not been a Paradise longer than the Man was put into it, to Dress it, and to Keep it.⁹⁰

Frequently, the lot of working the soil fell to the missionary himself and was celebrated as a kind of sacrifice to the Almighty and a sacramental union with the land. Bishop Edward Steere at Zanzibar in 1879 characterized the ideal candidate for missionary work as one who “could read a Bible and make a wheelbarrow.”⁹¹ Apparently corroborating the bishop’s view, David Livingstone wrote to his old teacher in Scotland, Dr J.R. Bennett in 1848, describing the typical daily routine at his first posting - the station at Kolobeng:

We have been so fully occupied since we removed to this locality in erecting temporary dwellings and then more permanent buildings – clearing land for corn and teaching [that] I could not allow myself the pleasure of correspondence. Everyday is spent somewhat in the following manner. We rise early and hold school, then manual labour as hard as we can work continues up to the time when the sun declines.⁹²

Writing nearly twenty years later, this time to his Zambezi Expedition companion and fellow missionary James Stewart, Livingstone posited the difference between the

⁹⁰ Quoted in Kemp, “Implanted in Our Natures”, p. 207.

⁹¹ Horace Waller, “The University Missions to Central Africa” in Quarterly Review, Vol. 168, No. 335 (1889), pp. 229-48; p. 235.

domestic pastor and the suitable missionary. Commenting on the appointment of Bishop Tozer⁹³, Livingstone opined:

To my mind he is clever enough as a parochial parson, a good Christian so far as he understands what that means, and as a missionary [a] donkey.⁹⁴

In John MacKenzie's Day Dawn in Dark Places, a book specifically aimed at the younger reader⁹⁵, the tutor at the Moffat Institute in Kuruman, described the life of the missionary in the interior of Southern Africa for the benefit of his readers:

He uses wagons, guns, horses and oxen; he handles trowel, plumb-line, adze, saw and spirit-level, as well as the usual implements of a minister's study. His highest work is to deliver the message of Heaven's mercy, and to explain the Sacred Book in which it is contained, but he seeks also to teach something of natural science. At times he is a school-master; and again he may be seen with his disciples in the garden or corn-field with spade or plough in his hands.⁹⁶

The missionary works hard for his divine master in order to subdue and cultivate the landscape. The physical labour was, as evidenced by these texts, seen as important as the spiritual work. It provided a vital material link between the people of Africa, their land and the European. By moulding it into a European and Christian shape, the missionary converted the landscape to the Christian ideal.

The intervention of the missionary was regarded as having a direct, appreciable and beneficial impact upon the landscape. It civilized and domesticated what had previously been wilderness and offered this work to the Lord. Dr Andrew Smith, travelling in the interior comments on the prospect that met his party at Morija, in present day Lesotho, in October 1834 (Map 1; Feature x):

Though the station had scarcely existed beyond fifteen months, a very considerable progress has been effected. A large stone house has been built...as well as a workshop for the accommodation of the carpenter who is

⁹² Livingstone to Bennett, 23rd June 1848; in Livingstone edited by Holmes, p. 29.

⁹³ William George Tozer, Rector of Burgh in Lincolnshire succeeded the ill-fated Bishop Mackenzie as Bishop to the UMCA. He was consecrated in Westminster Abbey in early 1863 but did not reach the Shire River (the headquarters of his diocese) until the following June. See Martelli, Livingstone's River, p. 216, n. 1.

⁹⁴ Livingstone to Stewart, 31st March 1865; in Livingstone, edited by Holmes, p. 238.

⁹⁵ It was part of Cassell & Co.'s "Catalogue of Books Suitable for Young People and the Little Ones" and retailed at 3s 6d.

⁹⁶ John MacKenzie, Day Dawn in Dark Places: A Story of Wanderings and Work in Bechuanaland [London, 1884], p. v.

farther to be engaged in preparing materials for an extension of the buildings. A large plot of ground has been effectively enclosed for the purposes of a garden and a corn field, and the whole is already under perfect cultivation.⁹⁷

The result of this almost sacramental engagement with the landscape is to be seen in the images produced by the missionaries. These are presented as the products of hard labour and Christian foresight. The landscape is hammered into a suitably pious and respectful form for survey by the Almighty. Rev. C.I. Latrobe eulogizes on the approach to Gnadenthal (Map 4; Feature i), one of the first missionary stations to be established in Southern Africa. His comments are related to the immense improvement wrought by the European on the previously barren landscape of the area. His comments are given visual substantiation in the illustration, which shows the party crossing the River Sonderend (Plate 64):

Little do I now wonder at the rapture with which this place is spoken of by travellers, who, after traversing a dreary, uncultivated country without a tree to screen them from the scorching rays of the sun, find themselves transported into a situation, by nature the most barren and wild, but now rendered fruitful and inviting, by the persevering diligence and energy of a few plain, pious, sensible and judicious men, who came hither, not seeking their own profit, but that of the most despised of nations; and while they directed their own and their hearer's hearts to the dwellings of bliss and glory above, taught them those things, which have made even their earthly dwelling, comparatively a kind of paradise, and changed filth and misery into comfort and peace.⁹⁸

Sir Charles D'Oyly gives us a panoramic view of the missionary station as it appeared in the mid-1830s (Plate 65). The display of neat, well-tended fields seems to corroborate the benefits of Christianity and missionary intervention for the viewer. The arcadian beauty and easeful existence evidenced by these scenes seemed to fly in the face of the sheer hard labour that Livingstone had to perform. Describing the missionary station at Lovedale, Lieutenant John Moodie conjures up an image of the pre-lapsarian lifestyle enjoyed by those serving God in a foreign field:

⁹⁷ Dr Andrew Smith, *Andrew Smith's Journal of his Expeditions into the Interior of Southern Africa, 1834-6. An Authentic Narrative of Travels and Discoveries, the Manners and Customs of the Native Tribes, and the Physical Nature of the Country, with illustrations by Charles Davidson Bell*, edited and introduced by William F. Lye [Cape Town, 1975], p 60.

⁹⁸ Latrobe, *Journal of a Visit to South Africa*, p. 59.

Lovedale is situated in a picturesque valley, sprinkled with mimosas and clumps of small trees, and surrounded by high rocky hills. The habitations of the missionaries, which consisted of low, wattled huts, were erected in a square, and communicated with each other. They had made tolerable gardens, and appeared to live very comfortably, being well provided with all the necessities, and even some of the luxuries of life.⁹⁹

Stephen Kay's "Mount Coke, Missionary Village" (Plate 37) depicts the missionary station established by Kay himself in the territory of the chief S'Lhambi. This agrarian scene of bucolic countryside contentment is presented as the fruits of tough manual work directed by divine knowledge. Its residence is almost Palladian in its symbiotic relationship to the surrounding environment.¹⁰⁰ In the immediate vicinity of the missionary establishment, the land, reclaimed both from heathen unproductivity and barren aridity, is now neat and well-ordered. The vegetation is almost as well regimented and marshalled as the group of natives who are far-removed from the lawn-like expanse in front of the house. This conversion of the land is presented as a productive and progressive effect. The impact of European methods of agriculture is evident in the success which Kay has had in cultivating the mulberry and various other fruit trees which he has planted nearby, about which he eulogizes later in his narrative.¹⁰¹ Their flourishing is proof of a divine blessing and of the necessity of British influence and religion in directing the labour of the land to bring about this bounty. Moffat said in commendation of this idea that "no abodes of Arcadian delight or Elysian bliss, as some have said and sung, are found on pagan shores."¹⁰² The delightful and charming aspect of the landscape as it appears in these works is characterized as a direct result of the intervention of the missionary and his saving message of Christian deliverance through hard work, faith and obedience. It is portrayed in a similar manner to a work like Constable's "Wivenhoe Park" (1816, Washington), where the formal beauty of the scene is ameliorated by the fact that it is seen to be useful and productive with cattle grazing in the estate.¹⁰³ The frontispiece to Moffat's Missionary Labours and Scenes (1842) (Plate 66) is cast in much the same

⁹⁹ Lt. John W.D. Moodie, Ten Years in South Africa : including a Particular Description of the Wild Sports of that Country, 2 vols. [London, 1835], Vol. 1, pp. 252-3.

¹⁰⁰ John Glover's "Montecute, Bothwell" (1838, Private Collection) depicts an almost identical situation in Tasmania. This too shows the triumph of colonial order over an uncultivated southern paradise. See John McPhee, "The Symbolic Landscape" in Hansen, John Glover, pp. 110-21; p. 114.

¹⁰¹ Kay, Travels and Researches in Caffraria, p. 421.

¹⁰² Moffat, Africa, p. 27.

light. As an almost idyllic depiction of missionary life it serves to disguise the heavy physical work that so curtailed the corresponding of Moffat's son-in-law, David Livingstone at Kolobeng. The vivacious and healthy green trees, opposite and providing a counterpoint to the dwelling, are more inspired by English specimens than by the examples that Moffat was likely to have seen at Kuruman, his missionary station in present-day Botswana, which he founded in 1821 (Map 3; No. 7). Dr Andrew Smith describes the settlement which he visited in January 1835:

When we got the first glimpse of this town we were not many hundred yards from the houses and, certainly, that first view was most a exhilarating one. A fine mass of large trees bearing a dense covering of dark green foliage and sheltering a number of well-built stone houses and a large, equally substantial church furnished so powerfully to contrast all we had for many months seen that we were led for a moment to fancy that these objects existed only in our imagination.¹⁰⁴

The delicate auburn light of the setting sun that suffuses the print merely adds to the sentimental and classicizing bent of the image as reinforced by the low horizon and long, uninterrupted recession into the background. The church edifice is typical of the early nineteenth-century missionary station in Southern Africa. It is T-shaped, thatched with hipped ends and appears to have had small turrets at the end of the ridges. The salient point to note in the depiction is the fact that this house of prayer is scarcely bigger or more emphasized than the two small cottages standing beside it. The analogy with these two-roomed domestic dwellings serves to domesticate the scene and emphasize its homeliness in the context of the wilds of Africa amongst which the station is set.¹⁰⁵ The figures take on an important role becoming much more than mere scale-confirming staffage. The bearded one is Moffat himself, descending on the neat, tidy and ordered homestead that he has established and nurtured in the midst of the surrounding wilderness. So domesticated has the scene become that even the wild animals of the veldt seem to almost frolic around the station as they too bathe in the light and favour of a benevolent God. The sentimental addendum of the returning herd of cattle, at the end of the track leading one's eye into the picture, is not

¹⁰³ See Rosenthal, *British Landscape Painting*, p. 102.

¹⁰⁴ Smith, *Andrew Smith's Journal of his Expeditions into the Interior of Southern Africa*, p. 162.

¹⁰⁵ See Dennis Radford, "South African Christian Architecture" in Richard Elphick and Rodney Davenport (eds.), *Christianity in South Africa: A Political, Social and Cultural History* [Cape Town, 1997], pp. 327-36; p. 330.

there solely to evoke the idea that the station is agriculturally self-sufficient and productive. It is a picturesque addition incorporating a nod to certain human associations. What these might be in the Southern African context is alluded to by Lieutenant Cowper Rose. According to him, writing as he approached Grahamstown, “there is nothing that blends so beautifully with the softness of evening landscapes as cattle returning home; they speak not only to the eye but to the mind, telling of a season of rest shared by every living thing.”¹⁰⁶ The image of Kuruman not only conveys the economic benefits flowing from an ordered, managed lifestyle in the service of the Lord. James Chapman commends Moffat’s efforts: “Everyone is struck with the beauty of Kuruman, although the site cannot boast of any natural charms. All we see is the result of well-directed labour.”¹⁰⁷ It also promoted the idea of the earth as subdued beneath God’s all-encompassing embrace. It speaks of the harmony possible under the care and management of God-fearing, divinely appointed missionaries. Thomas Morgan Thomas summarizes this analysis in his published account. On passing Kuruman he muses:

Indeed, it was impossible for any one to pass this little paradise, with its beautiful stream of water, its fertile corn fields, fruitful and well-kept gardens and orchards, its substantial and commodious church, orderly worship and mission printing press; and observe the general aspect of things, and good conduct of the people, without concluding that Christian missions are a great power for good in heathen lands.¹⁰⁸

Kuruman was frequently held up as an exemplary model of what a well-run missionary establishment ought to be. It not only converted the natives to Christianity but also to European modes of dress, hygiene and housing. Kuruman, as a successful missionary station was involved in a more over-arching project than merely winning soldiers for Christ. In the words of Ferguson, “it was not just Christianization that was being attempted here. It was Anglicization.”¹⁰⁹

Rev. Thornley Smith’s account of his travels is another that uses this recurring motif. In the depiction of his missionary station, on the frontispiece to his book, “Somerset, SA” (Plate 67) is seen from a typically elevated viewpoint with well-tended and

¹⁰⁶ Rose, *Four Years in Southern Africa*, p. 48.

¹⁰⁷ Chapman, *Travels in the Interior of South Africa*, Vol. 1, p. 132.

¹⁰⁸ Thomas Morgan Thomas, *Eleven Years in Central South Africa* [London, 1872], p. 40.

carefully arranged fields and dwellings radiating out below and nestling beneath the protective shelter of the mountains to the left. The presence of a shepherd in the foreground with a white lamb seem to deliberately make reference to the calling of the missionary in Southern Africa as the good shepherd looking after the wayward native flock and bringing them back to the Lord.

Missionaries tended to express highly contrived views in their works designed to convey as favourable impression as possible and conceived to extract as much aesthetic kudos from their descriptions. In describing the Moravian missionary station at “Genadenadaal” (Gnadenthal), Morgan judged that it was “situated in the most romantic and sequestered nook among the mountains, and everything has been done which a command of running water can accomplish – and in this country water is everything – to render it fertile and beautiful. It was, indeed, as Campbell the missionary, says on many occasions, ‘a fine situation for a missionary station’”¹¹⁰ The barely concealed hint of irony acknowledges Campbell’s importance in creating a discourse of religious aesthetic, based closely on the ideas of picturesque beauty that were circulating in the first half of the nineteenth century. The fact that Campbell saw so many “fine situations” is a testimony to the kind of standardized appearance of fertility, protection and beauty to which many missionaries aspired for their establishments. This must be set in the context of nineteenth-century ideals of beauty. According to Denis Cosgrove all landscapes are symbolic, even these ostensibly realistic renditions of the missionary abodes.¹¹¹ The peculiar beauty of the missionary station, conforming to these ideas of the picturesque as discussed above, is what one might call the “spiritual beauty” or the visual aesthetic qualities best calculated to foment and promulgate the spiritual exertions of the missionary in South Africa. For, as George Allman opined, beauty is the “twin sister of Religion, - a heavenly sojourner upon the earth, sent to cheer us on the rugged pilgrimage of humanity, and to point to bright glimpses of the spirit-land.”¹¹²

One of the most explicit and potent symbols of the missionary conquest and reordering of the landscape is found in Bowler’s view of “Burn’s Hill Missionary

¹⁰⁹ Ferguson, *Empire*, p. 122.

¹¹⁰ Thomas, *Eleven Years in Central South Africa*, p. 76.

¹¹¹ Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape*, p. 1.

Station” (Plate 52), a Scotch Free Church missionary station, established by Mr. Laing in 1840. It was founded presumably as part of the process alluded to by Charles Bunbury:

Several missionary establishments were formed within the territories of the Caffers, and some progress was supposed to be made towards christianizing and humanizing both chiefs and people.¹¹³

The charming appearance is a wonderful evocation of the ideal missionary station but the facts surrounding its establishment and representation reveal the deeply ambivalent position that missionary stations occupied in the highly-charged political climate. The appearance of this particular station conforms to the typical views of the newly installed missionary with a potentially productive agricultural demesne in the background, merely awaiting its adaptation and modification by Europeans. However, the ordered, harmonious view of the scene is compromised by the accompanying letterpress. In the text we are told that the grave of the great chief Gaika, “who swore that the white man should never taste the sweet water of the Keiskamma, is within the mission lands, and now the highroad to one of the principal military stations in the Keiskamma Hoek passes almost over it.”¹¹⁴ In this statement, not only has the native resistance to European cultural infiltration been eradicated, but any marker or reminder of its existence has been drawn within the pale of European territory and symbolically obliterated by the onward march of European technology and civilization. There is no indication of the plundering of sixty-two military store and baggage wagons in April 1862.¹¹⁵ There is none of the visual evidence or horrific associations that met Thomas Baines when he travelled past the site and “saw the half-burnt wagons that had been taken by the natives at the outset of the late war and their entire escort slain.”¹¹⁶ Gaika himself is cast in the role of the fiendish savage, prey for the devil who died “because his constitution, it is said [was] worn out by intemperance”, the most heinous of Victorian misdemeanors.¹¹⁷ Indeed, any remnants of Gaika’s son, Sandili, whose “kraal *was* on rising ground,” have also been removed from sight. It is helpfully placed, “just beyond the Mission-house in this picture.”¹¹⁸

¹¹² Allman, *The Importance of Natural History Studies to the Artist*, p. 12.

¹¹³ Bunbury, *Journal of a Residence*, p. 21.

¹¹⁴ Bowler, *The Kafir Wars*, Plate 13.

¹¹⁵ Bradlow and Bradlow, *Thomas Bowler of the Cape of Good Hope*, p. 198.

¹¹⁶ Wallis, *Thomas Baines*, p. 37.

¹¹⁷ Bunbury, *Journal of a Residence*, p. 21.

¹¹⁸ Bowler, *The Kafir Wars*, Plate 13.

Bowler conformed to the standard cultural practice of the day in relation to Gaika and his followers. By showing a place of intense inter-racial rivalry like this, in the way that he has, Bowler has effectively neutralized the threat and potential danger implicit in this image and its context. Bowler's image is part of the same cultural and ideological network in which Bunbury iterated the contemporary belief in the beneficial influence of British intervention:

Nevertheless, it is admitted, even by the warmest advocates of the natives, that the conduct of the British government towards them, at this time [Gaika's uprising], was characterized by a spirit of justice and benevolence.¹¹⁹

The visual accomplice to this spirit of justice and benevolence is found in Bowler's work, a perfect ideological accompaniment to the British policy of the day. Bowler's image has succeeded in suppressing the unpalatable reality of colonial settlement. In the words of David Bunn:

The settler landscape cannot afford the Romantic luxury of bathing in the past, in deep history, because the past is the domain of the Other, and history is the history of dispossession.¹²⁰

The missionary station was constructed to be an inspiration to the African natives.

MacKenzie asserts that:

[T]he life of the missionary is such as can be copied by his flock. In the mission-house they can see a home like their own, only better kept, purer and sweeter.¹²¹

The grounds around Moffat's station in Kuruman are depicted in this text on a Sunday morning (Plate 68). The happy sense of community, with pedestrians strolling nonchalantly amongst the houses and the tree-lined avenue, is perhaps the epitome of MacKenzie's ideal missionary station. However, even this must be related back to the Platonic ideal of a distant, metropolitan European standard: "the thorn trees on both sides of the road near Kuruman reminding us of the grounds of a country-house in England."¹²² The accompanying image displays the typical Sabbath-day activities of this paragon of missionary success. The regularity of the layout, the seemingly

¹¹⁹ Bunbury, *Journal of a Residence*, p. 11.

¹²⁰ David Bunn, "'Our Wattled Cot': Mercantile and Domestic Space in Thomas Pringle's African Landscapes" in Mitchell (ed.), *Landscape and Power*, pp. 127-73; p. 143.

¹²¹ MacKenzie, *Ten Years North of the Orange River*, p. 466.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 30.

luxuriant growth and the relaxed harmony of the residents represent the acme of this kind of project of simultaneously christianizing and cultivating the land. So good, so much “purer and sweeter” is this vista that it can actually be equated with a domestic English phenomenon – the country house. The peripheral African missionary station becomes ever more acceptable to God the closer it approaches an English landscape ideal.

The preponderance of churches in nineteenth-century images is another visual manifestation of the influx of Christianity into Southern Africa. It too played an important ideological role in subsuming the native otherness of the environment. Rodney Davenport comments that “colonists themselves saw the churches rather as reassuring cultural props in an unfamiliar environment.”¹²³ The role of churches in the landscape was given expression by Gilbert White. His Natural History of Selbourne was an enduring popular success and recommended that “such objects [church spires] were very necessary ingredients in an elegant landscape.”¹²⁴ For artists, the church and its building acted as a symbolic focal point in the composition. In the frontispiece to her husband’s book, Mrs. Robert Gray depicted the village of New Haven (Plate 69).¹²⁵ Living up to its rather contrived name, the mid-distance of the print is occupied by the church which is the focal point of the whole composition. It is embowered amongst deciduous trees on the right and bays of water on the left. The two ranges of mountains seem to shelter and protect the little settlement as well as drawing the analogy between the church and the stability of the rock. On a slight incline, with fertile land rolling down to the shore of the bay, the picture represents the scene of an idyllic settler community. Gray’s book is full of depictions of churches. Over half of the plates in the book feature churches prominently. One finds that the bishop’s visitation performed a neat traversing of the colony. The book and the geography of the visitation, strategically represented and discussed the churches and establishments at various points throughout the colony. Therefore, the landscape is seen as being liberally sprinkled with the evidence of Christian settlement.

In his Four Views of Cape Town, Bowler has one print in which the spectator looks down on the city (Plate 70). It is one where the steeple of St George’s Cathedral and the tower of the Dutch Reformed Church are clearly visible. Indeed, their forms are the most prominent edifices arising from amongst the monotony of well-regulated buildings and houses.¹²⁶ This trend is retained even up to the end of the nineteenth

¹²³ Rodney Davenport, “Settlement, Conquest and Theological Controversy : The Churches of Nineteenth-Century European Immigrants” in Elphick and Davenport (eds.), Christianity in South Africa, pp. 51-67; p. 51.

¹²⁴ Quoted Murphy (ed.), Literature of Nature, p. 159.

¹²⁵ Gray, Three Months’ Visitation, frontispiece.

¹²⁶ Bradlow and Bradlow, Thomas Bowler of the Cape of Good Hope, p. 192.

century, with photographic albums espousing the same visual composition.¹²⁷ For example, we might consider the “Panoramic View of Cape Town” (Plate 71). Just in case one might not recognise the most prominent, or what should be the most readily identifiable things on the landscape, the accompanying letterpress helpfully guides the eye over the morass of the Capetonian flat-roofed dwellings to settle firstly on

the English [St George’s] Cathedral, with its circular tower, built in 1830, after the model of Christ Church, St Pancras, London, at a total cost of 22,000 [sic] [which] is a noticeable object near the centre of the picture, as is also the graceful spire of the Metropolitan Wesleyan Church, which rises 140 Feet above sea-level.¹²⁸

It is interesting how the letterpress buttresses the prominent visual qualities of the edifices. By alluding to them, the copy-writer privileges their status in the accompanying visual image. By these mutually interdependent strategies, the verbal text and the visual image, the photograph sets up the churches as the dominant foci of the landscape. In this way the photographic image replicates the type of ideological strategy presented in Bowler’s views thirty years earlier.

In his Pictorial Album of Cape Town, Bowler includes no less than five prints of specific churches among the twelve prints of scenes of picturesque views of Cape Town. The first illustrated book of South African scenes to be published in South Africa, its concentration and emphasis on the christianizing bent of the first settlers comes across in the prominence accorded to each church. St George’s Anglican Cathedral, the Dutch Reformed Church, the Roman Catholic Cathedral, the Lutheran Church on Strand Street and the Presbyterian Church may all represent different denominations but there is a unifying bond connecting them. For the artist, and for the settlers to whom he hoped to sell this work, the existence of these churches represented a reassuring statement of the progress and success of the civilizing mission in South Africa. Thomas Baines’ work in oil often represents single individual sites and could not accumulate the narrative and propagandistic power that Bowler could muster by publishing twelve views at once in book-form. However, in Baines’ work, often of settler towns on the frontier of the colony, the church is even

¹²⁷ For example, see Photographs of South Africa [Cape Town : The South African Photo-Publishing Company, 1894].

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

more prominent and ideologically powerful by virtue of its assured existence at the very edges of civilized society. The artist's rendition of the various churches at these sites corresponded to the notion proffered in Bowler's work – the church as an anchor for settler society and a focal point for the nascent European community for which it was built. In "Bathurst" (Plate 72), Baines uses the prominent hilltop position of the church to construct an image of the community, at once ordered and self-sufficient and related to, and controlled by, a divine plan. Its elevated position bespeaks its moral authority (Map 4; No. 17). It is the Church of St John, designed by Major Michell of Cape Town in 1829 and completed in 1838.¹²⁹ Unlike the simple structure of Moffat's establishment at Kuruman, this Anglican church harks back to the architecture of Nicholas Hawksmoor. It was with evident pleasure that the Rev. William Shaw recorded that "this village church, together with the character of the surrounding scenery and buildings, serves to remind an Englishman of many a rural spot in his own country of surpassing beauty."¹³⁰ The church at Bathurst bears a resemblance to that at Sidbury Park in Upper Albany in their similar use of unplastered stonework and a crude classicizing style. Both these churches were used by colonists as places of refuge during the wars with the natives that were so frequent on the frontiers of the Cape Colony.¹³¹ Thus, Baines' picture represents not only spiritual salvation but also physical deliverance from the colonists' enemies and the hands of them that hate them. The ability of the building to act as a haven and succour and to repel the onslaughts of hordes of pagan savages is symbolically powerful. It acts as a symbol for the presence of the European in Southern Africa – a presence sanctioned and blessed by the Almighty.

In the photograph of the Anglican Cathedral at Grahamstown (Plate 73), the composition and construction of the view-point is a major contributing factor to the visual weight of the piece (Map 4; No. 16). The extremely low view-point allows the cathedral to completely dominate the image, as the all-encompassing shadow of the edifice seems to dwarf all that falls under its penumbra, including and especially the municipal buildings in the background. The "width of the streets" for which Grahamstown is noted is displayed in this view but the whole visual impulse is

¹²⁹ Carruthers and Arnold, *Thomas Baines*, p. 140.

¹³⁰ Quoted in Radford, "South African Christian Architecture", p. 330.

¹³¹ Graham Viney, *Colonial Houses of South Africa* [1987; reprint Cape Town, 1996], p. 94.

focused on the vertical thrust of the spire reaching to the heavens. The photograph, as well as depicting what is “considered to be by far the finest specimen of ecclesiastical architecture which the English Church possesses in South Africa” also presents us with an image of the church towering over the land and protecting it under its wing.¹³² Later in the album, in the view of Pretoria, the long avenue of Blue Gum trees are articulated and textually-constructed in the letterpress as being “regularly placed smooth pillars,” making the viewer “feel as if he were in the nave of some grand old roofless abbey.”¹³³ Here again, the landscape is constructed as a physical accoutrement of a divine building and a Christian edifice. However, in order to consummate the view “the Dutch Reformed Church, shown in our last photograph [p. 150] makes a beautiful completion to the picture.”¹³⁴ Thus, the landscape is symbolically co-opted to the organs of church architecture and the culmination of its being is the expression of worship and devotion to its Creator in the precincts of the church. Therefore, in views of churches, as much as in the representations of missionary stations, the harmonious life provided by adherence to the Gospel is given very definite visual elucidation. Far from alluding to the hardships and frustrations of missionary and settler life, the church and its various and manifold impacts on the landscape of Africa are envisaged as powerful forces for the improvement and succour of both natives and colonists alike.

The Church literally effected real change in the landscape of Southern Africa. Robert Moffat pointed out this phenomenon:

The standard of the Cross has been erected, and now the African finds to his everlasting consolation, ‘the shadow of a great rock in a weary land,’ and witnesses with wonder and delight that on his native wastes and burning sands the rose of Sharon blooms.¹³⁵

Andersson, the Swedish naturalist, was quite straightforward in his appraisal of the work done by missionaries in the sub-continent:

That the missionaries do much good work it is impossible to deny, though the good they effect is, in reality, quite different from that which a large portion of those worthy men imagine. Thus, instead of evangelizing the natives (only a

¹³² *Photographs of South Africa*, p. 73.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

very small portion at least), they are civilizing them, which, although not the ulterior object, I consider a grand achievement. They are too fond of making the two – evangelization and civilization – go hand in hand, and use their best endeavours to let the former precede the latter, which, to my mind, is the greatest possible mistake.¹³⁶

Nevertheless, the Christian mission in the colonial landscape of Southern Africa meant that a providential theology was set in train whereby the mutual extension of Christianity and civilization went together in the furtherance of the project of projecting light into the “Dark” Continent.¹³⁷ The idea of converting the “heathen” was, as much for the missionaries as their metropolitan benefactors, inextricably and vitally connected to the notion of civilizing them. The views of John Philip, South African agent of the London Missionary Society and an inheritor of Scottish Enlightenment rationalism, were widely held among those who laboured for the Lord in the deserts of Africa. He stressed the rapidity whereby seismic changes in consciousness among the natives, catalyzed by their engagement with Christianity, could lead to both spiritual salvation and provide the “secondary blessings” of social and economic progress.¹³⁸ For him, missionaries at the Cape were “by the most unexceptionable means extending British interest, British influence, and the British empire.”¹³⁹ An anonymously written tract in the 1830s eulogized the merits of missionary intervention in Southern Africa. In a comment praising the work of the LMS, the author reflects that mid-nineteenth century view of the benefits of missions in domestic Britain. He refers to their establishments as being “already the seats of industry and improvement of agriculture and the arts, which, but for them, would never have flourished in the wastes where they now bloom.”¹⁴⁰

The close association of commercial and religious expansion is a recurring trope in the period and found in the visual representations of the kinds of establishments that were constructed in the Southern African landscape. The frequently questioned

¹³⁵ Moffat, *Africa*, p. 34.

¹³⁶ Andersson, *Notes of Travel*, p. 251.

¹³⁷ See Ryan, *Picturing Empire*, p. 26.

¹³⁸ See Elizabeth Elbourne and Robert Ross, “Combating Spirituality and Social Bondage : Early Missions in the Cape Colony” in Elphick and Davenport (eds.), *Christianity in South Africa*, pp.31-50; p. 47.

¹³⁹ Quoted in Porter, “Religion and Empire”, p. 380.

¹⁴⁰ Anon, *History of the Civilization and Christianization of South Africa; from its first settlement by the Dutch, to the final surrender of it to the British* [Edinburgh, 1832], pp. vii-viii.

motivation of Christian missionaries in the colonial context has worked, it seems to me, to diminish their very real commitment to a cause which they fervently believed in. The landscape of Southern Africa was used as a palimpsest onto which to project their desires, hopes and aspirations. David Livingstone in a rare moment of personal insight, gives us a glimpse at the mentality of those who laboured like him in Africa:

I could become a merchant tomorrow with a fair chance of making a fortune... The people would prefer trading with one who knows the language; and I have been confidentially recommended by some Natives who loved me to give up preaching and praying, for that only bothered them, and become a trader, for though I cheated them, they would much prefer the cheating to the bothering. If I liked filthy lucre better than the works of Christ, I could make £500 every trip.¹⁴¹

Nevertheless, the role of the missionary had to sit side by side with that of the trader and merchant in colonial South Africa. Not only was missionary activity perfectly consonant with imperial epistemological and commercial interests it often collaborated with these aims. Thus, the first missionary settlement in the Cape Colony was established by the LMS with the permission of the War Office through the intervention of Sir Joseph Banks who saw such endeavours as an effective means of spreading imperial influence. The LMS thanked Sir Joseph and assured him that the station would not only advance Christianity but also “enlarge the Sphere of our acquaintance with the productions of nature, and ultimately extend the operations of Commerce.”¹⁴² Haggard’s missionary, Mackenzie, also trades and is referred to as having set up a station in the Africa veldt which “he makes bloom like a rose in the wilderness.”¹⁴³ The next chapter will examine another ideological strand of engagement with the landscape – the use and employment of the landscape and its imagery to promote, encourage and affect public opinion on emigration and its merits. It will be concerned with discussing how temporal traders and settlers effected changes on the landscape – how they manipulated and co-opted its use in order to stake claims for it ownership, settlement and colonization.

¹⁴¹ David Livingstone, *Livingstone’s African Journal 1853-1856*, edited with an introduction by I. Schapera [London, 1963], 2 vols; Vol. 1, pp. 150-1.

¹⁴² John Gascoigne, “Joseph Banks and the Expansion of Empire” in Margarette Lincoln (ed.), *Science and Exploration in the Pacific : European Voyages to the Southern Oceans in the 18th Century* [1998; reprint Woodbridge, 2001], pp. 39-51; p. 46.

¹⁴³ H. Rider Haggard, *Allan Quartermain* [London, 1891], p. 108.

Chapter 6: Emigration

“England is only a small part of the outcome of English history. Its greater issue lies not within the narrow limits of the mother island, but in the destinies of nations yet to be.”

John Richard Green, 1882.

William Boyce, writing about the mid-nineteenth century situation in Britain’s South African colonies, permitted himself to “hope that christianity [sic], with the attendant advantages of civilization in its train, may commence in South Africa a march of triumph going forth conquering and to conquer.”¹ This view became ever more solidified and extended as the century progressed. The British governor in Nyasaland, Sir Harry Johnston, was very favourably disposed towards the missionary effort, especially in light of the fact that, because:

their [missionaries] immediate object is not profit, they can afford to reside at places till they become profitable. They strengthen our hold over the country, they spread the use of the English language, they induct the natives into the best kind of civilization, and in fact each mission station is an essay in colonization.²

Here, both writers, commenting on the situation at either end of the long period of nineteenth-century British imperial and colonial expansion, correlate the advance of civilization and religion. The two are presented as existing in a binary and mutually beneficial bond, similar to the one that has been analysed in the previous chapter.

Boyce suggests that the ultimate fulfilment of the missionary impulse which he identifies (and one perfectly coterminous with any process of political domination) will only be achieved by a serious drive to civilize and, by implication, to colonize the land and manipulate the landscape. The flexing of Europe’s technological, scientific and industrial

¹ William Boyce, *Notes on South African Affairs* [London, 1839], p. 177.

² Quoted in Porter, “Religion and Empire”, p. 372.

muscles in the nineteenth century led to a concomitant broadening of its horizon in terms of settlement and habitation of the foreign lands being opened up by explorers. Thomas McCombie put his finger on the cultural pulse of the age when he asserted:

Colonization considered either in its moral or physical references is one of the most important subjects for intellectual reflection and literary discussion in the nineteenth century. Ignorance and inter-national prejudice have hitherto chained the mind of man to the spot on which he first inhaled the breath of life; but, these mists are fast dispersing, and a higher degree of civilization is dawning.³

The omnipresent and uniform refrain of the century was for people to emancipate themselves from their domestic confines and populate the new colonies which were being constantly added to Victoria's Empire. The economist Adam Smith foretold the expansionist tendencies of the succeeding century when he wrote in his The Wealth of Nations that "it is a sort of instinctive feeling to us all that the destiny of our name and nation is not here in this narrow island which we occupy. The spirit of England is volatile not fixed."⁴ This instinct was codified in the nineteenth century to encompass clear and succinct reasons as to why Britons might emigrate and to encourage them so to do. The anonymous author of the tract published by John Murray in 1821 recounted his experiences at the Cape of Good Hope and was moved to comment on the exodus of his fellow countrymen from Britain:

This is indeed an emigrating age, an age in which not only the poor and destitute, but even those who by birth and education have been formed to move in the higher walks of life, have abandoned their homes for an asylum in a foreign country.⁵

The network of factors that were adduced as justification for this process was complicated and diverse.

One of the primary objectives was to fulfil a religious duty. As we have seen, religion provided a framework around which people could imagine a new landscape. It also

³ McCombie, "Colonization", p. 1.

⁴ Quoted in Shaw, "British Attitudes to the Colonies", p. 83.

⁵ Anon., Notes on the Cape of Good Hope made during an Excursion in that Colony in the Year 1820 [London, 1821], p. 154.

impacted upon how people might affect that landscape. Religious discourse could also impel people to take up the challenge through emigration. It was taken to be an almost moral imperative to travel to distant climes in the name of Christianity. John Centlivres Chase prefaced his paean to emigration with the epigraph resonant of Biblical rhetoric. The high-fluting flourish reverberates with spiritual intensity, giving Chase's advice to people in distant colonies almost pseudo-spiritual approval:

For thus saith the Lord, who created the heavens, God himself who formed the earth and made it; He hath established it; He created it not in vain; He formed it to be inhabited.⁶

Here Chase consolidated his views on the moral rectitude and economic benefits of emigration with a suitably pious imploration. The Lord himself sanctions this process and hence for the Victorian reader, emigration became a duty to be fulfilled rather than a risk or adventure to be undertaken. McCombie also reasoned that "the Almighty Ruler in His omnipotence did not form the waste lands of the world to remain unpeopled."⁷ Thus, divine sanction was seen to be given to the project of removing people from Britain and resettling them elsewhere in the Empire. This imperative was not only confined to those with particular interest or expertise in colonial affairs. John Ruskin's response, enunciated only twenty years later, bespeaks the level of cultural saturation achieved by colonial issues. In his inaugural lecture at Oxford University in 1870 he also commented on the sense of duty and mission that clung around the impulse to emigrate:

There is a destiny now possible to us, the highest ever set before a nation to be accepted or refused.... Will you youths of England make your country again a royal throne of kings, a sceptred isle, for all the world a source of light, a centre of peace... This is what England must either do or perish, she must found colonies as fast and as far as she is able, formed of the most energetic and worthiest of men; seizing every piece of fruitful waste ground she can set her foot on...⁸

These sentiments were remarkably durable. John MacKenzie, a Christian missionary, also descanted on the civilizing mission discussed by Ruskin, entwining the moral imperative

⁶ Chase, *The Cape of Good Hope and the Eastern Province of Algoa*, epigraph.

⁷ McCombie, "Colonization", p. 2.

⁸ Quoted in Thomas, *Rhodes*, p. 102.

with the domestic benefits which emigration would bring to England. In his speech to the missionaries at Kuruman in 1875, he pronounced:

England has a great and incumbent duty to perform. It is within her power to cause that the European population of South Africa shall be as loyal and attached as in Australia or Canada. On the other hand it is quite possible for her to see growing up beside her Cape Colony, states whose bitter dislike of her government shall equal, if not exceed, any such feeling entertained now or at bygone times, by the people of the United States...Let England then come forward and avowedly take charge of and direct the northward progress of Europeans in South Africa.⁹

For MacKenzie, emigration had the dual benefit of relieving social tension at home and securing the colonies abroad.

Wedded to the religious impulse and imperative was a feeling the Briton, with his industrious and commercial habits, could aid the African to develop his native climate and resources. The toil and labour required to build the fine churches and establish the self-sufficient missionary station were carefully submerged beneath the representation of these institutions and edifices as anchors in the community and pillars of society. The status of the native is alluded to in some texts, regarding the building of these establishments. However, in the majority of visual representations a closely monitored image of agricultural plenitude, achieved without indigenous help, is presented. David Livingstone was one of the most prominent promulgators of the connection between commerce and Christianity that developed in the nineteenth century. It became a recurrent anthem in Britain and the idea that Christianity could only succeed where commerce, trade and industry had taken root was one of the most potent tools of imperial ideology. Livingstone's sometime colleague on his Zambezi expedition agreed with the Scotsman's pronouncements. Writing to James Stewart, John Kirk insisted that "if the country is not opened up to Commerce [sic] I think that the prosecution of any missionary work is impossible."¹⁰ The self-styled mission that British authorities adapted fed into the representation of the landscape in Southern Africa. The twin bastions upon which

⁹ MacKenzie, *Ten Years North of the Orange River*, p. xxiv.

¹⁰ Kirk to Stewart, 25th February 1863; Quoted in Stewart, *The Zambesi Journal of James Stewart*, p. 222.

Western society was based – Christianity and commercial enterprise – were yoked together in order to promote an image of Africa that presented the boons and benefits of colonial intervention as well as providing encouragement and impetus for settlers to come and continue the civilizing mission. The idea that Christianity was vitally connected to this process was perhaps instigated and detonated by a renewed drive in Britain to destroy the remaining vestiges of the slave trade. Sir Fowell Buxton was principal among those advocating the abolition of this trade in human flesh. His dictum may be summed up in the pithy reply as to what may be done to remedy this moral aberration: “the native mind of Africa, must be raised, and the capabilities of her soil must be called forth.”¹¹ This idea is expanded upon later in his tract where his plan is:

To elevate the native mind by aiding the general diffusion of religious truth; to subvert the Slave Trade by disclosing the wonders of the native soil; by promoting agriculture; by encouraging legitimate commerce; to cherish free industry and trade by all the application of British capital, skill and example; and to throw over the nascent civilization and prosperity of Africa, the ample shield of British protection.¹²

David Livingstone’s mantra, to open a “path for commerce and Christianity,”¹³ must be set against this missionary environment. The elevation of the native could only exist in parallel with industrial advancements and the presence of Britons among the natives. The religious impulse to see the land as endowed by the Almighty to be developed according to His wishes now assumed a specific liberal and mercantile ideological aspect, justifying British intervention. The Universities Mission to Central Africa understood that:

The great object of this mission is to make known the Gospel of Christ, but as the committee are well aware that in Dr. Livingstone’s words, ‘civilization and Christianity must go together,’ they think it advisable to state that it will be their aim to encourage the advancements of science and the useful arts, and to direct especial attention to all questions connected with the slave trade as carried on in the interior of Africa.¹⁴

¹¹ Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, The African Slave Trade and its Remedy [London, 1840], p. 27.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 37.

¹³ Coupland, Kirk on the Zambezi, p. 185.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

Samuel White Baker also encapsulated this patrician and ostensibly altruistic approach to Africa by concluding that “true Christianity could not exist apart from civilization; thus the spread of Christianity must depend on the extension of civilization; and that extension depends upon commerce.”¹⁵ The effortless progression from christianizing mission to colonial and commercial activity is presented as quite logical and indeed a moral imperative. In the self-effacing world of mid-Victorian piety, much hand-wringing and soul-searching was conveniently avoided by the idea that, by establishing trade connections and commercial links in Africa, Britain was actually benefiting the native and the colonist. One wonders if the native conception of this benevolence was as straightforward as that professed by James Stewart, Scottish Free Church Missionary and friend of Livingstone. Writing in his diary in 1862, Stewart states that the natives understood the European mission to be “that the English wished a place on the hills in which to come and teach the people about ‘Muringo’ or the Good Spirit; that they would buy everything, take nothing; teach the people and bring as much cloth into the country as one hundred men could convey.”¹⁶ The simplicity of the native idea of British involvement belies the fact that in order to achieve these stated objectives a complex process of civilization, emigration and cultural colonization was required. Some writers even presented the indigenous tribespeople as being perfectly comfortable with the notion of British commercial interests coming to bear on the continent of Africa. According to one author:

It is much easier to persuade the Africans that we travel through their country for the purposes of commerce and its ordinary results, *profit*, than to persuade them that we are so anxious to ascertain the courses of their rivers. Accordingly, it was aptly observed by the natives of Congo, when they learned that Major Peddie came not to make war nor to trade ‘What then come for? Only to talk, walk and make book?’¹⁷

It was confidently asserted that the only way to fulfill the evangelical mission of saving the heathen was to develop and promote those structures of civilization that would

¹⁵ Sir Samuel White Baker, The Albert N’Yanza : Great Basin of the Nile and Explorations of the Nile Sources, 2 vols. [London, 1866], Vol. 1, p. xlii.

¹⁶ Stewart, The Zambesi Journal of James Stewart, pp. 95-6.

¹⁷ ‘Vasco da Gama’, “Hints Concerning the Colonization of Africa” in Blackwood’s Magazine, March 1819, pp. 652-4; p. 653.

advance the cause of Christianity. Principal amongst those policies was the attracting of European settlers to Africa.

Yet, emigration was also held up as an advantageous course of action for the Mother Country. For Great Britain, an island with a limited land mass and a teeming population, emigration was a useful escape valve for an increasingly overcrowded and restless population. Thus, one of the reasons advanced for promoting emigration was one of political expediency. Colonization would, in the words of a contemporary commentator, “eliminate class struggle and nationalistic rivalries.”¹⁸ By removing troublemakers, the government could alleviate the pressure of revolutionary discontent. McCombie again comments on this aspect of the process:

There are great moral causes at work in Great Britain, which must end in a social and political revolution, unless the tide be properly directed.¹⁹

For him, this potentially “revolutionary torrent” could be redirected into a “fertilizing stream” if it was judiciously directed to the colonies.²⁰ This impulse remained strong throughout the nineteenth century and the diverse advantages for promoting such emigration is neatly summed up by a writer describing the Canadian Mid-West to a domestic audience in the 1880s:

We should like at once to give freehold there...to a million of the poor Irish peasantry who are starving in Galway, in Donegal, in Clare, and in Kerry, and whose misery cannot be helped by ‘Home Rule’ while they stay in Ireland.²¹

The trend towards promoting emigration flew in the face of the pre-Malthusian economic concept that a loss of population would result in decreased economic productivity which was still a widely-accepted theory. For example, as late as 1803, the Passenger Act was pushed through Parliament in order to prevent an exodus from Highland Scotland.²² However, this notion was shattered by the growth of an ever-more destitute section of society – an underbelly of poverty-stricken labourers displaced by the pace of agricultural enclosure and rapid industrialization. It became apparent that emigration was going to

¹⁸ Anon., “England’s Destiny – Colonization”, p. 129.

¹⁹ McCombie, “Colonization”, p. 3.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

²¹ Anon., “Dominion of Canada” in *Illustrated London News* (14th August, 1886), pp. 177-8; p. 178.

²² Johnston, *British Emigration Policy, 1815-1830*, p. 2.

happen regardless of government approval or not. By the second decade of the nineteenth century, over two hundred emigrants left the United Kingdom every week to go to the United States.²³ Thus, political expedience as well as humanitarian considerations led to the beginning of government-sponsored emigration projects. By 1848, according to Shaw, the process of emigration had replaced trade as the main *raison d'être* of Britain's formal empire.²⁴ It was argued that by removing these people overseas the Mother Country would alleviate the distress whilst simultaneously benefiting the nascent colonies, struggling for want of labour. According to McCombie this policy would mean that "our empire might be expended, and the suffering of our population assuaged by a judicious colonization."²⁵ Not only would this benefit the indigent population of Britain and ease the tensions of the domestic social environment, but it would also greatly aid the colonies in their growth and development. He believed that such an influx to the colonies, the "waves of human life," would "irrigate a land in a state of the utmost sterility for the want of this vitality."²⁶

Eventually British politicians realized that instead of subsidizing pauperism in the United Kingdom, a policy of emigration would replace this latent social time bomb with the creation of a potential market for British goods. To this end, between 1815 and 1826, the government of Lord Liverpool conducted six separate emigration experiments. These were vigorously championed by R.J. Wilmot-Horton, the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies.²⁷ An article in The Times of 1819 made special reference to Britain's possession at the tip of Southern Africa.²⁸ It presented a plethora of reasons for the promotion of colonial and emigration policy to the Cape of Good Hope:

1st, an outlet, and that of a most superior description is offered for our redundant population; 2dly, a vent to our manufactures of every description, and a consequent increase of employment at home, as every article (from a nail

²³ Anthony Kendall Millar, Plantagenet in South Africa: Lord Charles Somerset [Cape Town, 1965], p. 120.

²⁴ Shaw, "British Attitudes to the Colonies", p. 86.

²⁵ McCombie, Essays on Colonization, p. 2.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

²⁷ Johnston, British Emigration Policy, 1815-1830, p. 1.

²⁸ For a detailed account of British emigration in the Eastern Cape in the 1820's see Harold Edward Hockly, The Story of the British Settlers of 1820 in South Africa [1948; 2nd edition, Cape Town and Johannesburg, 1957].

upwards) requisite for the colony, must be supplied from home; 3rdly, the enrichment of ourselves instead of our neighbours, by the sale of wines made in our own colony; 4thly, to small capitalists, say of 100*l.*, an opportunity is presented of employing it most advantageously, and thereby acquiring a handsome independence for themselves and their families, as indeed large families for the purposes of colonization are riches; and lastly, that which can never be regarded as of doubtful importance, the diffusion of the knowledge of Christianity throughout the vast regions of Southern Africa.²⁹

Emigration fever had certainly taken hold in Britain. John Barrow, in an article in The Quarterly Review, commented:

The discouragement of colonization is certainly not the feeling of the great majority of the people of England, and it is equally certain that it is not the policy of this empire.³⁰

This was certainly the case in relation to Southern Africa. Eighty thousand people applied to go to the Eastern Province in 1820 when there were less than four thousand places available.³¹ The driving instinct of self-improvement and economic amelioration added fuel to the flames of altruistic zeal in order to make the colonization question a central issue of the day, seizing the popular imagination and consequently influencing the visual and textual construction of the colonies and their spaces.

The apparent wastage of her natural resources at the hands of inept natives became a recurring motif in the argument to colonize Africa in particular. The bounteous panorama presented by the continent was construed as a stigma and a reproach to Europeans, who by their tardiness were allowing this divinely blessed region to go to waste. John Hanning Speke was aghast at the waste that he perceived before him and dreamed of the effects which a European colony would bring to the area:

²⁹ The Times, 1st June 1819, p. 2.

³⁰ John Barrow, "Regulations for the Guidance of those who may propose to embark, as Settlers, for the New Settlement on the Western Coast of New Holland" in Quarterly Review, Vol. XXXIX, No. LXXVIII (April 1829), pp. 315-44; p. 340. Quoted in Shaw, "British Attitudes to the Colonies", p. 82.

³¹ Morton, In Search of South Africa, pp. 142-3.

An extensive market would be opened to the world, the present nakedness of the land would have a covering and industry and commerce would clear the way for civilization and enlightenment.³²

This is symbolically represented in Baines' painting "The Discovery of Gold" (1874) (Plate 74). The gold and ivory depicted here were heavily exploited during the process of colonization. The huge elephant lying at the feet of the explorer, Henry Hartley, advertises his active role in the killing of the animal. Underneath the giant mammal is yet more wealth. The English interloper is seen to be in control of the situation. The artist gives him a prominent central position in the composition at the focus of our gaze. Gold is seen to be the white man's own discovery. The natives in the painting seem to radiate out from Hartley, relying on his instructions for guidance. Furthermore, the image of the white horse, also in a prominent position, alerts us to the equestrian and martial prowess of this man, a natural leader in the field and creator of wealth.³³ However, the complacent attitude of Westerners in relation to the extraction of wealth from the South African landscape, given visual enunciation in Baines' painting, does not sit with the facts. Eric Walker and others have established that the Bantu had been mining for gold in this region since the seventeenth century.³⁴ Therefore, the visual rendition presented to us by Baines is closely bound up with the ideologies and beliefs held by his society in relation to the white man's monopoly on entrepreneurial skills in an African context.

³² Quoted in Youngs, *Travellers in Africa*, p. 92.

³³ See Carruthers and Arnold, *Thomas Baines*, pp. 122-3.

³⁴ Walker, *A History of Southern Africa*, p. 31.

The popular impetus to emigrate and colonize the territories explored by British travellers earlier in the century was prevalent in the cultural milieu of the mid-nineteenth century. Sustained emigration appeared to be a politically expedient, morally secure and economically viable way of furthering the idea of British mercantile expansion into the colonial space of Britain's sphere of influence, including Southern Africa. Books and their images indubitably played a pivotal role in the emergence of this strategy. The idea of the landscape that was transmitted to the public in those forms was of the utmost importance in influencing attitudes and in formulating trends. Only one in twenty emigrants was a member of an official government-sponsored emigration party.³⁵ Thus, for individual colonies there was an opportunity to, and much to be gained from, attracting the most enterprising settlers. This could be achieved by proffering a view of the colony to the world that was favourable to the potential settler. The discussion of agricultural prospects, the development of towns and urban centres and communication links served to highlight the progress of the colony and carried an ideological weight behind these apparently objective documentary scenes. However, before discussing these, it is necessary to appreciate how diverse and varied the view of the colonies actually was and secondly, to consider some of the means by which ideas and opinions could be influenced and manipulated through text and image.

The idea that the colonial landscape was a veritable paradise, waiting for the arrival of doughty English settlers to cultivate their untapped yet burgeoning luxuriance was not a unquestioned view accepted by all. In his Weekly Political Register (March 1830), William Cobbett was very unforgiving of the colonies being promoted as second Edens and havens of bucolic blessing, calling them "these worthless tracts of rocks, sands and swamps."³⁶ Even within the Establishment, doubts lingered at the outset as to whether colonial expansion would bear sufficient economic fruit or not. Speaking to Parliament on the occasion of a debate on the proposed government assisted emigration scheme for destitute workers, Lord Bathurst reminded the members that most of the colonies were barren wildernesses, and despite the laudatory claims of travellers, "consisted of immense

³⁵ Johnston, British Emigration Policy, 1815-1830, p. 1.

³⁶ Shaw, "British Attitudes to the Colonies", p. 130.

tracts of land, on which no house was erected, and which were covered with immense forests.”³⁷

In relation to South Africa, opinion oscillated greatly. It was relatively underpopulated and could accommodate many more emigrants.³⁸ For some, it compared very favourably with other areas of potential emigration having “a climate and a fertility known only in romance” according to one admirer.³⁹ Henry Goulborn wrote that the settlers, in contrast to those in Canada, would have “no forests to clear nor winters to contend with. A settler could plough the land without preparation and could grow more than one crop in a year.”⁴⁰ The article in The Times characterized the Cape of Good Hope as “the most precious and magnificent object of our colonial policy, and the most fruitful field of adventure to our emigrant population.”⁴¹ The piece went on:

It is the natural key to India, the bridle of America, and is capable of superseding the whole of Europe in supplying this country with her accustomed articles of importation.⁴²

Blackwood’s Magazine, carrying an article advising prospective colonists, best summarized the prevailing positive attitude to the Cape by claiming that “there are few countries on earth where so many components of happiness will be found to concentrate.”⁴³ The prospective readership of this magazine, generally more educated and of higher social status, would be useful in attracting those in the “higher walks of life” that were seen as most desirable kind of settlers. In the colony itself, the view was also promoted that an influx of settlers would be propitious for the local economy. An article in the government-sponsored South African Chronicle and Mercantile Advertiser proclaimed:

³⁷ Quoted in Neville Thompson, Earl Bathurst and the British Empire 1762-1834 [Barnsley, 1999], p. 182.

³⁸ In 150 years of rule under the Dutch East India Company, little more than 2,000 adults, almost 50% of whom were German, had emigrated to the Cape from Europe. See Nutting, The Scramble for Africa, p. 37.

³⁹ W.W. Bird, State of the Cape of Good Hope in 1822 [London, 1823], p. 233.

⁴⁰ Johnston, British Emigration Policy, 1815-1830, p. 38.

⁴¹ The Times, 18th June 1819, p. 2.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁴³ Anon., “Emigration to the Cape of Good Hope” in Blackwood’s Magazine (August 1819), pp. 523-7; p. 527.

What is wanted is a more numerous and effective population; effective demand for commodities; [it is] not poverty of soil or want of capital but want of consumers that retards cultivation.⁴⁴

As late as 1929, the quality of South Africa as a place for British emigrants is reinforced by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. He quotes the statistic that only three per cent of those that move to South Africa from the United Kingdom are “failures” in comparison with forty-five and thirty-five per cent in Canada and Australia respectively.⁴⁵ Thus, the prevailing impression of Southern Africa as a British possession, was carefully and repeatedly emphasized as one where the emigrant could settle in the happy knowledge of having removed to a socially secure and economically productive corner of the Empire. Furthermore, the situation in the colonies was carefully fostered in order to present the cultural and political phenomenon of emigration as one to be welcomed and encouraged.

However, by contrast, the famous Captain Cook was distinctly unimpressed by the prospect of the Cape when he anchored there. He apparently chastizes, *avant la lettre*, the efforts of those nineteenth-century writers quoted above:

I cannot help observing that most Authors...have heightened the picture to a very great degree above what it will bear, so that a stranger is at once struck with surprise and disappointment, for no Country we have seen this Voyage affords so barren a prospect as this, and not only so in appearance but in reallity [sic].⁴⁶

Contrary to popular imagination and the travel literature being circulated, both at the time and later during the emigration push, “not one thousand part of [it] either is or can be cultivated.”⁴⁷ Indeed, the polymath Joseph Banks, who accompanied Cook on his second voyage was equally scathing, rounding off his assessment with a particularly bleak British comparison:

The country in the immediate vicinity of the Cape [does not] give any reason to contradict the idea of immense barrenness which must be formed from what I

⁴⁴ Millar, *Plantagenet in South Africa*, pp. 204-5.

⁴⁵ Doyle, *Our African Winter*, p. 3. Needless, to say Doyle does not quote his source nor does he suggest by what criteria he is measuring the success or otherwise of British emigrants. Nevertheless, his words do serve to illustrate the prevailing attitude of assessment in relation to colonial endeavours.

⁴⁶ Cook, *The Journals of Captain James Cook*, Vol. 1, pp. 463-4.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 464.

have said. The country in general is either bare rock shifting, or grounds covered with heath, etc., like the moors of Derbyshire and Yorkshire.⁴⁸

During the first British occupation of the Cape, Lady Anne Barnard was acting as the First Lady of the fledgling colony. She records the rather testy comments made by several of her official acquaintances. In the course of a social gathering Lady Anne tells us:

I listened to the dislike every individual expressed of the Cape without reserve...General Craig appeared much less sanguine in his expectations of the benefits arising to England from the Cape, or from the possibility of its being rendered flourishing, convenient, or any *real acquisition* to us, than I had imagined he would have been. He boldly said that the expectations formed from it, and of it, were too high.⁴⁹

Another official, Admiral Pringle, was even more outspoken in his criticism of the Cape, roundly castigating its suitability as a naval base and proceeding to extend his criticism by “swearing that the Cape was the ‘cursedest place’ ever discovered, with nothing good in it, and that even the hens did not lay fresh eggs, so vile was every animal that inhabited the place.”⁵⁰ Even John Barrow, who favoured the use of the Cape as a fuelling depot and military station, opined that “as a mere territorial possession, it is not, in its present state, and probably never could become by any regulations, a colony worthy of the consideration either of Britain or any other power.”⁵¹ This apparent counter-narrative, running contrary to the received opinion of many travellers was a strain of thought that continued into the nineteenth century. One visitor was so disappointed with the prospect presented at the Cape that he succinctly described the scene thus: “Her Majesty possesses not, in all her empire, another strip of land so unlovely.”⁵²

These contradictory opinions were circulating at the same time in nineteenth-century Britain. Lieutenant Moodie provides an answer as to why such a divergence existed among visitors to the Cape:

⁴⁸ Sir Joseph Banks, *The Journal of the Right Hon. Sir Joseph Banks*, edited by Sir Joseph D. Hooker [London, 1896], p. 438.

⁴⁹ Barnard, *South Africa A Century Ago*, p. 53.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

⁵¹ Quoted in Lloyd, *Mr. Barrow of the Admiralty*, p. 67.

⁵² Quoted in Thomas, *Rhodes*, p. 66.

When we consider that the settler is often influenced in his opinions by interest, and that the traveller generally has many native prejudices to get rid of, we need not be surprised at the discordant accounts we receive of the same country.⁵³

Thus, it is the subjective judgements of the writers and authors that we are witnessing. The conflict that has been outlined could not bode well for the attraction of potential settlers. In this climate of claim and counter-claim, the influence of exploration narratives and the accompanying illustrations could have a major impact. In a review of Chase's book, The Colonial Magazine confirmed the idea of the Cape as a beautiful idyll – “the capabilities, climate and situation of the Cape of Good Hope are beyond all comparison, superior to those of any other British colony” – and yet proceeded to ask the question as to why people had stopped emigrating there.⁵⁴ Therefore, in order to encourage the resumption of the emigration stream it was necessary to present as favourable a view of the region as possible. One of the principal means of encouraging a positive view of the landscape of Africa was through artistic media which could include a large amount of putatively factual information, what Richard Philips calls “info-tainment.”⁵⁵ H. Rider Haggard, returning to the scene of his greatest literary triumphs in 1914 as part of an official delegation recounted an incident with a young clerk in Rhodesia who wanted to tell the author that it was “his books which sent him to the interior of Africa... and I have heard of sundry other cases in connection with my works of fiction, so at least I have helped to populate the Empire.”⁵⁶ Here is a documentary example of the power that cultural and artistic products could have in the encouragement of people to emigrate. These effects needed to be successfully channelled by colonial authorities so that visual and verbal information could work together in a carefully constructed presentation of the colonial landscape to the domestic audience. This advertising and propagandistic mission was one that could harness the impact and power of the visual image. In the written accounts of the colonies the visual accompaniment could be employed to infer and suggest advantages in the landscape and to buttress the textual accounts of the travellers. This is partly related to the ability of the visual to transcend the imprecation of

⁵³ Moodie, Ten Years in South Africa, Vol. 1, pp. 2-3.

⁵⁴ The Colonial Magazine, Vol. 3 (May 1843), pp. 482-3.

⁵⁵ See Richard Philips, Mapping Men and Empire : A Geography of Adventure [London, 1997], p. 163.

⁵⁶ H. Rider Haggard, Diary of an African Journey (1914), edited by Stephen Coan [London, 2001], p. 150.

subjectivism that blighted the written accounts of the region. The purely textual account was inherently and fatally compromised by the divergent opinions of the writers cited above. The path most likely to bear fruit in the drive to attract settlers and encourage emigration was one that could incorporate and mobilize captivating and persuasive visual imagery.

A major conduit for the projection of colonial ideology and landscape views for the settler community and to entice others to follow them was the preponderance of colonial and trade fairs that followed in the wake of the Great Exhibition of 1851.⁵⁷ These took place all around the country and were a major source of entertainment and information for the Victorian public.⁵⁸ These allowed people who may have been interested in settling at various different colonies to come along and to see for themselves. It was also a highly visual and tangible experience for the visitor.⁵⁹ Thus, it required a carefully stage-managed performance and organization by the authorities. Exhibitions allowed a country or colony to put itself on display, as it were. They were used by the authorities in order to encourage emigration (and increasingly in the early twentieth century, tourism). As Robert David has pointed out:

national pavilions aimed to entice visitors, businessmen, and potential immigrants to the exhibiting countries by reflecting the quality of life, good government and the scenic and sporting opportunities to be found there.⁶⁰

By virtue of the displays and physical material on show, these exhibitions encouraged people to see emigration as a positive step. These were supplemented by the guide books written to accompany the exhibition and recommended to prospective settlers.⁶¹ They embarked upon this journey, according to Lieutenant Moodie,

⁵⁷ Colonial Fairs were by no means the only way of bringing the imperial frontier to a metropolitan audience. For example, William Barrymore's melodrama "The Cape of Good Hope; or, Caffres and Settlers" was performed at Astley's Amphitheatre in Westminster Bridge Road, London on 25th October 1819 and included nine elaborate episodes each with a special scenic backdrop painted from views taken on the spot in South Africa. See Hockly, *The Story of the British Settlers of 1820*, p. 25.

⁵⁸ See Sweet, "The World of Art and Design", p. 346.

⁵⁹ See Richard Altick, *The Shows of London* [London, 1978].

⁶⁰ David, *The Arctic in the British Imagination*, p. 161.

⁶¹ See Anon., "Dominion of Canada," p. 178.

[I]n the confident expectation that there [the colonies], as a matter of course, all their difficulties will cease, and that they will forthwith enter on the enjoyment of all the independence and luxuries which in England are usually the fruits of long and persevering industry, or superior sagacity and success in business.⁶²

The partially ironic and pejorative tone of Moodie's comment is illustrative of the fact that colonial propagandists were not above trying to seduce people with economic and social ambitions to emigrate. Such was the agreeable aspect presented in these exhibitions that callow and naïve Englishmen could be tempted to fritter away their lives in pursuit of wealth at an outpost of the Empire where the prospects were just as dismal as some of the published accounts made them appear good. This was noted at the time, with George Nicholson writing a corrective to Chase's book, which he castigated as a "lure to the people in England."⁶³ The climate of claim and counterclaim led to an ideological fog in which every cultural product, text or image, could be employed in order to serve a specific political end. The authorities were eager to present an impression of easeful existence at the colonial fairs where artefacts and visual images played an important role in conveying a message to spectators. Describing the Colonial Exhibition of 1885-6, MacKenzie extols the success of the Australian exhibition:

On every side of you you found, in gold and in grain, in wool and in leather, in wood-work and in iron-work, *in photography and in painting*, the abundant evidences of the vitality and ability of the English stock in the land of the South.⁶⁴

This visual and physical display was very influential, as evidence by MacKenzie's commentary, in forming his opinion on the capabilities of the soil and landscape of Southern Africa. In the Dublin Exhibition of 1865, the only visual material on display in relation to South Africa was a collection of some architectural and other drawings from Natal, the Cape not contributing anything on this occasion.⁶⁵ The accompanying commemorative catalogue included a wonderful account of the vegetative and

⁶² Moodie, *Ten Years in South Africa*, Vol. 1, pp. 1-2.

⁶³ George Nicholson, *The Cape and its Colonists: with Hints to Settlers in 1848* [London, 1848], p. 113.

⁶⁴ John MacKenzie, *Austral Africa: Losing It or Ruling It*, 2 vols. [London, 1887], Vol. 1, pp. 2-3 [my emphasis].

⁶⁵ Henry Parkinson and Peter Lund Simmons (eds.), *The Historical Record and Descriptive Catalogue of the Dublin International Exhibition of 1865* [Dublin, 1866], Preface.

agricultural exports of this colony written by the eminent polymath John Robinson.⁶⁶ The competition between the Cape Colony and the relatively young colony of Natal was quite intense at this time. An example of this occurs in the 1867 edition of the JRGS. In this volume R.J. Mann, Superintendent-General of Education in Natal promulgates the kind of propagandistic information that colonies were anxious to convey to metropolitan audiences.⁶⁷ More than simply giving the objective facts of the situation, Mann seems to be actively canvassing for emigrants by favourably comparing the colony to its larger, more established neighbour, the Cape of Good Hope, and by judiciously selecting the facts that he included in his paper. For example, he maintains: “the winter in Natal is a season of almost constant genial and June-like sunshine.”⁶⁸ Whatever about the veracity of these statements, the florid language in which they were couched suggests the ideological impulse behind them. In a show like that held at Dublin, the visual and physical quality of exhibits could also aid the promotion of the colony. Similar events held at cities and towns all over the United Kingdom attracted the attention of colonial authorities seeking immigration. While popular art forms such as prints and panoramas were generally more successful in appealing to the public, the value of paintings was recognized. The authorities on the South Island of New Zealand, for example, paid Nicolas Chevalier two hundred pounds for pictures to be displayed at the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1867 “in order to spread the fame of New Zealand scenery through his pencil” and with the express desire of inducing “settlers and tourists to come to this part of New Zealand.”⁶⁹ And, when the idea of establishing a “museum” in London to increase immigration to Victoria was mooted in 1862, the Melbourne Age advised that:

A few of Mr Chevalier’s sketches of our glorious mountain country, woodlands, and plains would not be less useful than any amount of descriptive lecturing we might be able to bring down on the subject. We speak advisedly on this point,

⁶⁶ Robinson is described in the catalogue as being a Fellow of the RGS, a Member of the Legislative Council of Natal, editor of the Natal Mercury and the author of the popular A Practical Guidebook to the Colony.

⁶⁷ R.J. Mann, “The Physical Geography and Climate of the Colony of Natal” in JRGS, Vol. 37 (1867), pp. 48-67.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

⁶⁹ Tim Bonyhady, Images in Opposition : Australian Landscape Painting, 1801-1890 [Melbourne, 1985], pp. 99-100.

having noted the effect produced on the crowds that daily surround the pictures in the Victorian Court in the Great Exhibition.⁷⁰

In the Dublin show, the visual accompaniment to promotional material in the form of descriptive texts and travelling advice was the six drawings by William Edward Hall. These conform to the type of images that one would expect to be promoted by the authorities, keen to entice people to come to the Colony of Natal.⁷¹ This visual advertising was part of a raft of material that was launched at the British and Irish public at this time. The Dublin Exhibition is almost contemporaneous with a book by R.J. Mann specifically written to dispel any lingering doubts amongst those who may have been considering emigration to Natal.⁷² The selection and range of drawings in the exhibition appealed to Victorian ideas of intellectual progress and communications technology, as well as moral edification. A ground-plan of the Pietermaritzburg Collegiate School, the town hall and the Freemason's Hall represent the establishment of British civic, educational and cultural institutions in Natal and provide comforting reassurance for any Dubliners contemplating the journey that their familiar domestic habits and customs would be catered for. The watercolour of Queen's Bridge on the Lower Umgeni River depicted the rapid technological and engineering progress that was the natural by-product of an influx of skilled and hard-working emigrants, who were developing the colony in preparation for another influx. In the drawing of the prison, the recent border skirmishes with the Xhosa were alluded to but necessarily neutralized and made safe for domestic consumption. Rather than illustrate the incidents of warfare, or depict Kaffir irruptions into colonial territory, Hall has given the potential settler a comforting view of British standards of justice being brought to bear on the savages. The final work on view is a picture of the Church of St James in the same village as the prison. As a vital catalyst for colonial expansion and a point of anchor and reference for the settler, the role of the church and religion has been discussed. Here, in the context of the other works on display, it provided a specific contrast to the prison scene. Whilst both are in the same

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 99.

⁷¹ This is particularly interesting in view of the fact that Natal had only been separated from the Cape Colony in 1856 and created a Crown Colony. With only 8,000 Europeans it clearly required an influx of productive settlers. See Nutting, *Scramble for Africa*, pp. 60-1.

⁷² See R.J. Mann, *The Emigrant's Guide to the Colony of Natal* [London, 1868].

town, the landscape surrounding the prison displays “a dry and hot appearance, with here and there large patches of land covered with the ashes of its grass-fire.”⁷³ Complementing the image of the prison, the landscape acts as a symbol of the unforgiving and punishing nature of the country towards those who offend against the received laws of civilized society. The barren soil becomes a metaphor suggesting that this is an inhospitable place for the “savage Kaffir” who would fain upset the new colonial order. In the picture of the church, the use of landscape surrounding it is equally invested with meaning and not uncoincidentally contrasted to the scenery around the prison. According to the catalogue the view was taken after the first spring rains and thus the “appearance of the country...is of the most vivid green colour.”⁷⁴ As further proof of “the moral and Christian progress of the colony of Natal” the catalogue appended notice of “three American mission stations, and one Norwegian mission station” in the district of Umhlati.⁷⁵ The visual evidence of Christian presence is corroborated and enforced by the editors of the catalogue. Their aim was to contradict the assertions of those who, like William Cobbett and Lord Bathurst, would calumniate the progress of civilization in these areas. That strategy was contrived by the use of the visual imagery on display which was carefully chosen to present a specific ideal notion of the country as a potential colony for those attending the colonial fair.

The process of selection and editing a choice of pictures with the aim of presenting a specific view of potential future colonies was widespread. For example, John Glover sent sixty-eight paintings to the 106 Bond Street Gallery in 1835 for display. Of these, thirty-eight were “characteristic of the scenery and customs of the inhabitants of Van Diemen’s Land.” His self-conscious mission to communicate the unusual and the new to the metropolitan audience suggests the importance of conveying colonial landscapes through visual images.⁷⁶ One of these was “Hobart Town, taken from the garden where I lived” (Plate 75), where Glover depicts the fertile garden surrounding his first Tasmanian residence which overlooked a developing town with the attributes of civilized society and

⁷³ Parkinson and Simmons (eds.), The Historical Record...of the Dublin International Exhibition of 1865, p. 362.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 362.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 362.

⁷⁶ McPhee, “The Symbolic Landscape”, p. 110.

good government – a church, a military barracks and a civil authority building. John McPhee argues that this depiction is one of Glover's finest in assuring those in England that the former convict colony offered the prospects and comforts of Victorian society.⁷⁷ In another work, "A View of the first Farm purchased by the Artist. Fifteen miles from Hobart Town, near Brighton; Painted to give an idea of the style of living in Van Dieman's Land", the very title conveys the information-laden propaganda potential of colonial imagery.⁷⁸

In a similar vein, Thomas Baines sold 127 paintings to Robert White, a newspaper publisher from Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape, for the modest sum of £160 in March 1866.⁷⁹ Some of these works were subsequently put on display the following year at the shows in Alexandra Palace and the Dublin Exhibition. Twenty of the paintings were selected to appear at the Paris Exhibition of 1867.⁸⁰ Baines was very disappointed with the pictures chosen. To his romantic bent, describing the works sold to White as "a greater part of myself," and comparing their sale to "parting with flesh and blood,"⁸¹ the selection of a group of propagandistic images was anathema. He wrote bitterly that "they chose all the pretty homesteads that would encourage immigrants to go to the Cape, and not my best pictures."⁸² Baines' idea of quality and artistic merit obviously did not accord with the intentions of the organizers of the colonial display. Baines' chosen work probably conformed to those of "farms with their clean-washed houses, their vineyards, their orchards, and their avenues of oak,"⁸³ which Henry Lichtenstein had identified at the beginning of the century on his journey from Graaf Reinet to Cape Town as being attractive to the wandering European:

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 112.

⁷⁸ Bonyhady, *Images in Opposition*, p. 97.

⁷⁹ Wallis, *Thomas Baines*, p. 154.

⁸⁰ See Frank Bradlow, "Robert White, Thomas Baines and The Gold Regions of South Eastern Africa" in *Africana Notes and News*, Vol. 23, No. 4 (1978), pp. 131-47. These works were a representative cross-section of Baines' oeuvre focusing on seascapes, frontier settler towns and dwellings and landscapes.

⁸¹ Wallis, *Thomas Baines*, p. 238.

⁸² Ibid., p. 238.

⁸³ Henry Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa in the Years 1803, 1804, 1805 and 1806*, translated by Anne Plumptre, 2 vols. [London, 1812], Vol. 2, p. 99.

The appearance of plenty not less than these objects, so pleasing to the eye,
[going] towards rendering a journey through this valley extremely delightful.⁸⁴

It appears that Baines' work was being co-opted at Paris to convey such an appearance of domestic bliss and commercial plenitude. It is interesting in this context to consider that writing to his cousin Robert, the man who bought Baines' pictures, Thomas White suggested that "this is a beautiful country...it only wants filling up with English farmers."⁸⁵ Baines' work would appear to have been specifically selected for those pictures which would best convey the beauty, fertility and promise of the country and thus entice the requisite farmers and agriculturalists to complete the picture. In this instance it appears that patrons of art sought to harness visual imagery in order to pursue particular commercial and demographic project of the age – emigration.

Artists conformed to the prevailing winds of patronage pertaining at the time. Thomas Bowler, the only South African contributor to the Royal Academy in the nineteenth century, also evinced a concern in his work to present progress and a suitably advanced society to which settlers would be encouraged to come.⁸⁶ In 1860, he exhibited a work showing the dockyard at Simonstown at the Royal Academy (Map 5; No. 4). It details a large vessel undergoing repair. By showing a wealth of detail and activity in the vicinity of the naval base, Bowler has conveyed the impression of a bustling commercial entrepôt where modern technology is a natural part of the surroundings. The selection of this work for an important display venue somewhat betrays the expectations of the selection committee and the viewing public that they were hoping to target and satisfy. Of the myriad works that could have been chosen, we have Bowler's paeon to industrial progressiveness in Southern Africa. He also exhibited four works at the Paris Exhibition of 1867, three of which were specifically painted for the show. The theme of industrial and technological progress was a specific feature of this exhibition. Bowler's work presented both the indigenous scenery and the industrial progress of the Cape.⁸⁷ As well as paintings of the scenic Cape Point and the Paarl, Bowler exhibited a painting of Cape

⁸⁴ Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 99.

⁸⁵ Bradlow, "Robert White, Thomas Baines and TGRSEA", p. 135.

⁸⁶ Gordon-Brown, *Pictorial Africana*, pp. 126-8.

⁸⁷ See Bradlow and Bradlow, *Thomas Bowler of the Cape of Good Hope*, pp. 91-2.

Town with the city's newly constructed breakwater.⁸⁸ Modern technology and the rapid progress of South African society under colonial auspices are also alluded to in final work on display – his watercolour of “Train crossing the bridge over the Berg River bound for Wellington with the Fransch Hoek and Drakenstein Mountains in the distance, 1866” (Plate 76). Whilst the title may immediately conjure up images of a picturesque rendition of this homely little settlement east of Cape Town, an analysis of the visual evidence illustrates the kind of message which the colonial authorities wanted to present to the exhibition-going public. Writing in the 1830s, in the JRGS, Major Mitchell had clearly warned that the development of communications networks was an absolute prerequisite for the promotion of civilization in the colony:

The advancement of civilization in the colony, and the development of its capabilities, are almost paralysed by the want hitherto experienced, of means to remove or surmount the natural objects above alluded to [mountains, plains, etc.].⁸⁹

In this image the colonial authorities have chosen one that will address that lack and present the image of a go-ahead society. The composition is organized around the progress of a steam train crossing the bridge over the Berg River. The line had only been opened three years previously on 4th November 1863.⁹⁰ It was seen as a clear indication of the inestimable benefits of colonial intervention in Southern Africa. The Illustrated London News eulogized this boon of modern technology for the colonists. It ran for fifty-three miles from Cape Town to Wellington.⁹¹ The Drakenstein Mountains and the town of Fransch Hoek are relegated to the distance as the left to right progression of the train through the landscape evokes ideas of speed, economic progress and greater accessibility. W. Cope Devereux commented on the development of the Cape railway line:

We next look at the commencement of the Cape railway... This is just the thing wanted to open up the country. The railway will, doubtless, do more for

⁸⁸ The breakwater was only begun in September 1860. See Bradlow and Bradlow, Thomas Bowler of the Cape of Good Hope, p. 128.

⁸⁹ Major C.C. Mitchell, “On Roads and Kloofs in the Cape Colony” in JRGS, Vol. 6 (1836), pp. 168-74; p. 168.

⁹⁰ Bradlow and Bradlow, Thomas Bowler of the Cape of Good Hope, p. 128.

⁹¹ “Opening of the First Railway at the Cape of Good Hope” in The Illustrated London News, 16th July 1859, p. 59.

commerce, civilization, Christianity, and for the suppression of the slave trade than all our expensive cruisers, costly subsidies, and useful palavers.⁹²

As an image of colonial prospects, it preserves the scenic beauty for which this area was renowned but it appends a contemporary technological enhancement. The British effect on the landscape is here presented as something both tangible and beneficial which will render the lives of future colonists in South Africa more productive and more akin to home. The implicit ideology of the work comes across in a similar image which has a textual appendage. In the late nineteenth-century photograph of "Bridge over the Buffalo River, King William's Town" (Plate 77). The natural beauty of the stream, "with its lights and shades, its torrents swirling around boulders, and pools sleeping in the sunshine, is rendered even more beautiful by the elegant structure which here leads the passenger from the north and west into King William's Town."⁹³ The ghastly metal bridge that spans the river in the image is here aestheticized by the copy-writer in order to appear to be something of as much beauty as the natural surroundings over which it, as a symbol of European technological advancement, asserts ultimate control. The natural splendours of the area are rather spoiled by the modern addition but yet this is explained away by the author's justifications. Later in the century, the author of the letterpress to accompany an album of photographs relating to the Transvaal, extols the merits of the railways in stark terms:

The word "Railway" seemed to mean "civilization." Instead of an isolated community, Johannesburg was able to feel it was part of the outer world, which had suddenly been brought within measurable reach.⁹⁴

This example of Bowler's work can be read as one that encompassed a large body of social commentary. The frequency of the occurrence of references to the railway in contemporary literature means that one cannot read this image as a purely innocent, value-neutral realistic rendition. The selection and appearance of a work like Bowler's "Train crossing the bridge over the Berg River" at an exhibition in the imperial capital surely adds to the sense that the authorities were fully aware of the kinds of landscape depictions that would be favourable to potential settlers and domestic opinion-formers

⁹² W. Cope Devereux, *A Cruise in the 'Gorgon'* [London, 1869], p. 41.

⁹³ *Photographs of South Africa*, p. 83.

⁹⁴ The Art Photo Publishing Company, *Scenes and Life in the Transvaal* [Johannesburg, 1897], p. 31

alike. This survey of the images selected to appear at various mid-nineteenth-century exhibitions shows the remarkably tenacious and consistent line of reasoning in the types of images being presented. These images fit into the overarching project of creating a suitable impression of a colony.

The visual images used to portray Southern Africa were united in a common effort to portray the colonies as worthy of agricultural investment, as places where civilized society had been firmly planted and had taken root, and where the scientific and technological advancements of the nineteenth century were being deployed to the benefit of the settlers. The common visual strategies were part of a clear and concerted effort to convey this idea. As shown by the catalogue of the Dublin Exhibition, the textual accompaniment went a long way to advance the stated or implicit objective of encouraging settlers. I will now analyse how the various strategies and ideologies of emigration, identified above might have played out across the plethora of texts and images that flooded the mid-Victorian reading market. Only one in twenty emigrants was a member of an official government-sponsored emigration party.⁹⁵ Therefore, the choice of where to go, the selection of a new home where one hoped to gain greater prosperity and a higher standard of living than that available in one's own country was influenced very much by popular tracts and illustrated travel accounts which, as I have shown, were vital conduits for the dissemination of knowledge in the nineteenth century.

The agricultural prospects for newly arrived settlers, as we have seen, were a matter of great contention and considerably varied opinion. The argument for the benefits of European intervention was clear to all who saw the growing, bustling towns where cultivated landscape was a herald of civilization. Lieutenant-Colonel Napiers stood very much on the side of agricultural development being promoted as a progressive step at the Cape:

Let anyone visit the neighbourhood of Wynberg and Constantia, after reading the old chronicles of the Cape, and he will require no further proof of the futile

⁹⁵ Johnston, *British Emigration Policy, 1815-1830*, p. 1

puerility of those 'Jean Jacques Rousseau' [sic] opinions and Utopian arguments extolling the primitive savage state, over that of culture and civilization.⁹⁶

The peculiarly British inflection that formed part of the depiction of such scenes was not confined to having purely aesthetic considerations for homesick colonists. For those at home it presented a congenial view of a place to which one might emigrate "without being required to make so great a sacrifice as that of their nationality, and of all further connexion [sic] and sympathy with the land of their forefathers."⁹⁷ British settlers could happily travel to the Southern tip of Africa and retain their customs and traditions, as well as having the freedom to develop and cultivate a fertile colonial territory.

Captain Alexander's description of Wynberg, quoted above, is an admixture of fertile English domestic landscape and a bucolic pre-lapsarian haven offering respite from urban squalor:

Among its shady avenues of oak and pine, the fruit and flowers in the gardens, the abundant vegetation, the sublime mountain rising behind with its varying canopies of clouds, the running streams, and the air ever fresh and light, I felt I could live with exceeding pleasure in company with some suitable Eve.⁹⁸

In a dainty sketch, "View of Wynberg, from Wynberg Hill, False Bay in the Distance" (Plate 78), Thomas Bowler provides another image of safety and security for the prospective emigrant. The domestic homeliness and sanitized appearance described and depicted by Alexander and Bowler has the effect of encouraging prospective settlers to look upon South Africa as a home away from home. David Hume identified the mental equation made by viewers between beauty and utility:

Most of the works of art are esteemed beautiful, in proportion to their fitness for the use of man, and even many of the productions of nature derive their beauty from that source. Handsome and beautiful, on most occasions, is not an absolute

⁹⁶ Lt-Col. E. Elers Napier, *Excursions in Southern Africa*, 2 vols. [London, 1849]; Vol. 1, p. 182.

⁹⁷ William John Burchell, "Hints on Emigration to the Cape of Good Hope" in *The Pamphleteer* Vol. XVII, No. XXXIII (London, 1820), pp. 97-120; p. 98.

⁹⁸ Alexander, *Narrative of a Voyage of Observation*, Vol. 1, p. 325.

but a relative quality, and pleases us by nothing but its tendency to produce an end that is agreeable.⁹⁹

These images attempt to tap into that phenomenon by presenting a pleasing view to the potential colonist and thus arguing for the landscape's suitability for cultivation and habitation. The clearly English resonance of the area, drawing the depiction into the British aesthetic category of the Picturesque, is also an encouragement to people. By adopting proper farming techniques and employing good husbandry, every Englishman can live in such charming surroundings or so the image seems to imply.

The indubitable confidence in the ability of the settlers to subdue the landscape of South Africa is of vital consideration in the encouraging of people to consider it as a possible emigration destination. The role of visual imagery in abetting this process can be seen in the work of Samuel Daniell. In "Military Station of Algoa" (Plate 79), Plate 13 of his series of views in South Africa, the reader of the illustrated book is confronted with the image of one of the earliest British settlements on the eastern seaboard of South Africa, about five hundred miles from the Cape, at what is now Port Elizabeth.¹⁰⁰ The rolling countryside and the idyllic prospect presented in the plate are reminiscent of the archetypal British parkland, such a beloved trope of the early nineteenth-century colonial artist. Rather than present this as a natural phenomenon, Daniell adds to the propagandistic impulse of the work by recounting, in his letterpress, the foundation and development of the station. The whole area was, according to Daniell, transformed by the doughty efforts of Lieutenant-General Dundas' troops:

The face of the country, surrounding the bay, was soon completely changed, by the labours of the soldiers, from a barren waste to a suite of fertile gardens.¹⁰¹

The implication is that such a tranquil place of vernal delight and presumable fertility is available to all those who come to South Africa. With dedication and application even the

⁹⁹ Quoted in Hipple, *The Beautiful, The Sublime & The Picturesque*, p. 40.

¹⁰⁰ Daniell has depicted Fort Frederick which was a twenty-four square metre military complex with three metre-high walls. Named after Frederick, Duke of York, it was erected near the Baakens River in 1799 after the Third Xhosa War. It was abandoned in 1868. Port Elizabeth City Council acquired the site in 1940 and it subsequently became a national monument. See Samuel Daniell, *African Scenery and Animals. A facsimile reprint of the aquatint plates originally published in 1804-5*, with an introduction and notes by Frank R. Bradlow [Cape Town, 1976], p. 71.

¹⁰¹ Daniell, *African Scenery and Animals*, Vol. 1, Plate 13.

most barren of wastes can be transformed. It is an endearingly optimistic view of the propensity of the soil and climate of Southern Africa for cultivation. In his analysis of the prospects of settlers at the Eastern Cape, George Thompson is quite insistent on the potential of the area. He claims that while some soil and climatic conditions may oppose the introduction of agriculture, they are conducive to the grazing of livestock. In a direct challenge to the conditions in a competing colony, Thompson argues:

Four thousand head of cattle may be here maintained with less labour and expense than would be required in North America, where winter fodder is necessary for the support of ten.¹⁰²

The adjoined vignette (Plate 80) gives a “deeper idea of the scenery of Albany, and of the picturesque cottages with which the superior class of settlers have now, in many places, embellished it.”¹⁰³ As David Bunn has pointed out, the domestic virtues of the hearth and familiar surroundings radiate from this depiction.¹⁰⁴ The homely quality of the woodcut vignette provides stability and visual evidence of the beginning of the cultivation of Albany. Thompson’s rallying cry is meant to convince the potential settler that just such a haven of domestic bliss would be available to him in the Eastern Cape.

The book-length eulogy of Southern Africa delivered by Chase included specific quotations from Major Tulloch who regarded the climate as exceedingly beneficial to settlers. Even the temperatures do not “seem by any means prejudicial for health, for in 1833 the deaths were only 681 out of a population of 31,167, being 1 in 46, while in the United Kingdom, according to the last census, the mortality of the population was 1 in 47½.”¹⁰⁵ These sentiments of concern for physical health and temperature were a recurring motif for settlers. The mid-Victorian concern for temperature has been analysed by Dane Kennedy as one where a debate about climatic conditions provided a canvas on which to paint the various “political choices and constraints” of imperialism.¹⁰⁶ David Livingstone feared that inter-tropical Africa might prove to be inaccessible to the white man by virtue of its infamous reputation for diseases. Only the black man could withstand

¹⁰² Thompson, *Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa*, Vol. 2, p. 163.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

¹⁰⁴ Bunn, “Our Wattled Cot”, p. 151.

¹⁰⁵ Chase, *The Cape of Good Hope*, p. 25.

¹⁰⁶ Kennedy, “Perils of the Midday Sun”, p. 118.

its horrors due to his “copious evacuation of bile.”¹⁰⁷ Joseph Conrad attributed the various misdemeanours and eventual insanity of a Belgian colonialist in An Outpost of Progress to the baneful effects of the merciless sun. One of his successors at the station, Kayerts is quite insistent on the potential risk for the white man in the tropics. Speaking to his companion he asserts:

I’ve been told that the fellow exposed himself recklessly to the sun. Do you hear that Carlier? I am chief here, and my orders are that you should not expose yourself to the sun!¹⁰⁸

But, the ideological propaganda of colonial writers trying to entice settlers could not permit such portrayals in their work. Even in John MacKenzie’s representation of an area of extreme heat and danger, the effects of the dangerous rays of the sun are neutralized and controlled completely within an image of the colonial settlement of the region. The main impulse of the image and text is to consolidate the belief in the European capacity to overcome any obstacle to the colonization and civilization of the regions of Southern Africa. Despite the foreign climate and “though rough-looking on the outside, [their African homestead] forms a delightful shelter from the scorching rays of the sun.”¹⁰⁹ MacKenzie is paraphrasing a letter written by Mrs. Helmore, the wife of one of the missionaries, to her sister-in-law in England. Although using indigenous materials, the shelter is symbolically conjoined to British cultural norms by the quintessentially English and paradigmatic name given to it:

I write this in a pretty little hut, 14 feet by 12, built by your brother. The walls are of palmyra wood, and it is thatched with palmyra leaves, so it answers literally to the name we have given it – Palmyra Lodge.¹¹⁰

The process of “naming and claiming” is here writ small. The humble indigenous dwellings in which the missionaries reside make the surrounding landscape safe for European habitation, both physically and psychologically, by their resistance to the merciless rays of the sun and by its naming as a typical English country residence

¹⁰⁷ David Livingstone, “Letter from Dr David Livingstone dated 24th August 1850” in JRGS, Vol. 21 (1851), pp. 18-24; p. 21.

¹⁰⁸ Conrad, “An Outpost of Progress”, p. 7.

¹⁰⁹ MacKenzie, Ten Years North of the Orange River, p. 121.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

The illustration which accompanies the text in Day Dawn in Dark Places represents “European Huts in South Africa” and shows how European colonizers could show themselves appropriating the very products of the landscape. The palmyra leaves found in Africa are turned to good use, by European ingenuity and resourcefulness, in defending the missionaries from the infelicities of that landscape. In a similar vein, earlier in the century, the Rev. Stephen Kay was effusive in his praise of the settlers who had come to South Africa in 1820. He sees the effect of this transplantation only in positive terms:

A comparatively short period, however, elapsed after 5,000 British subjects had been placed upon it [the land], before a very different scene presented itself. The desert and the solitary places were cheered by the presence of man, to make room for whom, the beasts of the field deserted their ancient haunts: houses arose, and villages sprang into existence, as if by magic: thousands of acres which, until then, had lain untilled, were disturbed by the plough, and rendered productive of the staff of life.¹¹¹

The mastery of the agricultural and vegetable kingdom represents a British subduing of the environmental perils of the colonial landscape.

¹¹¹ Kay, Travels and Researches in Caffraria, p. 21.

Thomas McCombie was concerned to portray the colonization of fertile climes as producing important benefits for the recipient country, bringing “the waves of human life to irrigate a land in a state of the utmost sterility for the want of this vitality.”¹¹² In this he echoed what the Commons Select Committee on Emigration had noted in 1827. The report of the committee had also emphasized the difference between “Colonization and Emigration, that is, between planting colonists in a soil prepared to receive them to take root and flourish, and the mere pouring out of an indefinite quantity of Emigrants without capital.”¹¹³ The pictures and images used in the texts written by the proponents of colonization were engineered to conform to the view of landscape as one ready and able to receive Britain’s heaving masses. The seemingly limitless agricultural prospects encouraged men to seek their fortunes and a higher standard of living for their families on the frontiers of Britain’s expanding empire. Carefully controlled images like these enunciate the desire amongst the authorities to convey a pretty landscape prospect rather than presenting the scene as it actually was. Even natural conditions and climatic extremes, such as the widely acknowledged danger of the blazing sun could be neutralized by English effort, enterprise and inherent ability to protect and shelter its colonists.

In the process of building up an image and an idea of the landscape, the representation of towns was a vital component. As symbols of European cultivation and dominance over the landscape, the town and urban development was particularly comforting. The use of urban imagery at the Dublin Exhibition could convey an image of a settled and prosperous society, flourishing under the benevolent control of British rule. In the defense of its aesthetic merits, Lichtenstein posits the portrayal of human settlements as worthy of artistic appreciation. He acknowledges the peculiarly sparse appearance of the vista and its “dry and naked uniformity” mean that the picturesque traveller must search for something else to excite their fancies. Lichtenstein suggests that such a wanderer “must call to his assistance either the habitation of mankind, or their employments.”¹¹⁴ His opinion could be used to explain the concentration on agriculture and scenery.

¹¹² McCombie, “Colonization”, p. 2.

¹¹³ Quoted in Shaw, “British Attitudes to the Colonies”, p. 87.

¹¹⁴ Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa*, Vol. 1, p. 34.

However, the archetypal scene of human activity was the town. It operates as a symbol of European culture and its presence in the landscape. It was a reassuring reminder of the tenacity and infiltration of Europeans into the landscape of Southern Africa. In differing ways, both agricultural prospects and townscapes boldly called attention to the powerful impact that the European engagement with the landscape facilitated. Moreover, the town evidenced the progressive and organized nature of that engagement. By regulating and ordering urban development, the European was appropriating the landscape as surely as by cultivating and farming it. Thus, the landscape of towns is frequently written and imaged with concentration on the delineation and neatness of European order.

The most advanced and progressive town, in European terms, in nineteenth-century South Africa was Cape Town. It had been built up throughout the century by the British since they had wrested control of the Cape from the Dutch. The inevitability of the European concentration on the establishment and improvement of urban settlements is given weight by Robert Semple, who was at the Cape during the first British occupation of the territory. He maintains that the British will, indubitably, expunge the tinge of barbarism that still clings to Cape Town and will initiate those things like pavements and street lighting that would make this town an important entrepôt for colonial commerce as well as an attractive site for potential emigrants:

The English, however, who are every day improving and beautifying the town, will, no doubt, before long, cause all such defects to be rectified.¹¹⁵

Its appearance, according to Lieutenant-Colonel Napier had always stamped it as “one of the finest cities amongst our numerous colonial possessions.”¹¹⁶ It acted as a mediator between European civilization and the colonial frontier, as well as functioning as an exemplar of colonial development for the nascent settlements along the frontier. It provided an image of a landscape subdued under British control as well as the buildings that evidenced the establishment of European institutions and cultural values in the colonies. Napier, although disappointed with the view of Cape Town which greeted him in 1849, is still enthralled by the cultivated and extensive parade. It covered several acres,

¹¹⁵ Semple, *Walks and Sketches at the Cape of Good Hope*, p. 20.

¹¹⁶ Napier, *Excursions in Southern Africa*, Vol. 1, p. 154.

in the midst of which stood “the handsome building of the Commercial Rooms, and the far-famed library of Cape Town.”¹¹⁷ The parallel concerns of business, learning and culture are entwined here and presented as being firmly planted in the Capetonian soil. Such is the impressive transportation of culture to these climes that “the spectator – but for the unrivalled feature of the scene, the lowering mass of Table Mountain – might almost imagine himself amid the wooded Sierras of Andalusia [sic], or the wide-stretching Campagna of Rome.”¹¹⁸ The same inflection is evident in the frontispiece to Thompson’s travels, an engraving by Fielding after an oil by a Dr Heurtley (Plate 36). The high quality of the print aids the depiction of the ordered expanse of the town from a typically high viewpoint. In his explanation of the “accurate and pleasing” scene, Thompson describes the unique topography and situation of Table Bay and Mountain. His written account goes further by calling attention to the Government Gardens occupying the space in the foreground; the steeple of the Calvinist Church and the barracks, the “long range of buildings with the Castle immediately adjoining.”¹¹⁹ The relevance of these edited highlights is that they represent the European cultivation and mastery over the environment (the Botanical Gardens), the imposition of European cultural values in the Christianity expressed by the church and the rule of European law as conveyed by the prominent position of the barracks. The inclusion of the gardens is an interesting development because the botanic garden, as noted by Donal McCracken, was an important feature in the acculturation of settlers.¹²⁰ However, when this print was made the Cape Town gardens had been lying in rather dishevelled state since the Dutch departure and had acquired a distinctly unsavoury reputation as “a mere lounge for the townspeople attracted thither twice a week by the presence of a band of music.”¹²¹ That neither the image nor the letterpress allude to this is hardly surprising in the context in which the image was to be viewed – as an inducement to emigrate and a reassurance to those already at the Cape.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 157.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 158.

¹¹⁹ Thompson, *Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa*, p. 2.

¹²⁰ See McCracken, *Gardens of Empire*, pp. 30-1.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 41.

Cape Town was a bastion of European values and the expression of a transplanted British culture. For example, in Daniell's plate where he records the landscape and the atmospheric phenomenon of an "incipient South-easter", with its concomitant effect of producing the spectacular "Devil's Tablecloth" on Table Mountain, we also encounter a mediated statement on the idea of the town in Southern African and colonial landscape. The title and view presented conform to an agenda that sought to promote and advertise the establishment of European culture at Cape Town by showing and alluding to "The New Theatre in Hottentot Square" (Plate 81).¹²² The artistic feat of capturing the momentary atmospheric effects is evident in the print. However, the image also gives prominence to the establishment and the nurturing of the arts in the colonial context. Theatres and theatre-going is presented as not just the preserve of a cultured coterie in the imperial capital but also gaining a footing in the outlying colonial areas. Indeed, such themes persisted into the twentieth century in white European settler communities in Southern Africa. Peter Godwin and Ian Hancock have shown how the ruling white minority of Rhodesia in the 1960s and 1970s "worked earnestly in transplanting the traditions of British theatre" to the veldt.¹²³ The promotion of culture would, no doubt, add a certain lustre to the region as it attempted to attract people from all sections of society, "an admixture of both poor and rich, [emigrating] from choice" rather than merely "the expatriation of the poorer classes of the parent country from necessity."¹²⁴

In Bowler's various illustrated texts he depicts the flourishing industrial market that was growing up in Southern Africa. As an inducement to prospective settlers, the vision of a busy and bustling "Market Square, Port Elizabeth" (Plate 82) was calculated to strike a chord with domestic viewers. The typical covered ox-wagon and the highly animated scene bespeak the pursuit of trade that drove the colonial society.¹²⁵ This view of Port Elizabeth as a bustling centre of trade was maintained throughout the nineteenth century as the "Colonial Liverpool" continued to attract comments about its trade and mercantile

¹²² The theatre was established by Sir George Yonge in 1799 and built by public subscription. See Daniell, *African Scenery and Animals* [1976], p. 59.

¹²³ Peter Godwin and Ian Hancock, "Rhodesians Never Die" : The Impact of War and Political Change on White Rhodesia, c. 1970-1980 [Oxford, 1993], p. 36.

¹²⁴ McCombie, "Colonization", p. 2.

¹²⁵ Bowler, *The Kafir Wars*, Plate 3.

reputation. At the end of the century, in Photographs of South Africa, one image of the city shows the jetty that permitted the docking of six hundred ships per annum with a combined tonnage of one hundred thousand (Plate 83). The town is construed and envisaged according to its “go-ahead public spirit.”¹²⁶ The stereotypical “general view” of Port Elizabeth thus remains static over the fifty years between these two visual depictions but serves to stress what artists saw as being the most noteworthy and attractive feature of this town. In the final plate of Bowler’s The Kafir Wars, the artist gives a rendition of “King William’s Town” (Plate 84) (Map 4; No. 19). It shows the burgeoning frontier settlement nestling in the distance with this view “taken from the grounds of the hospital, one of the most imposing buildings in the colony.”¹²⁷ Bowler has used the Lieutenant-Governor’s residence to frame the view on the right. By so doing, he has imposed colonial and European closure on the scene, preventing the eye from wandering off into the wilderness of the Eastern Cape. The composition also visually places the residence of the representative of British law and order on the same level as the surrounding country side, simultaneously lording it over and protecting the town in the distance. Bowler’s Pictorial Album of Cape Town was the first illustrated book published in South Africa and develops the sense of colonial progress and advancement that his townscapes already display. Published in 1866, Plate 3 shows “St. George’s Cathedral from Wale Street” (Plate 85) completed in 1834.¹²⁸ The flag flying atop the Post Office, the building closing the vista, would have been recognized in the nineteenth century as signalling the arrival of a consignment of mail. The image encodes the establishment of Western ideas and philosophy in the cathedral building as well as suggesting the maintenance of a link with the outside world and the colonial metropole by virtue of the postal system. The inclusion of a Post Office as a prominent building is a motif that runs throughout the visual imagery of the colony in the nineteenth century. In a photograph of Port Elizabeth, taken in the 1890s, we are shown the Main Street of the city (Plate 86). The letterpress calls attention to it as being the Post Office, standing on “one of the handsomest and best built streets in South Africa.”¹²⁹ The building again is clearly

¹²⁶ Photographs of South Africa, p. 63.

¹²⁷ Bowler, The Kafir Wars, Plate 20.

¹²⁸ Bradlow and Bradlow, Thomas Bowler of the Cape of Good Hope, p. 199.

¹²⁹ Photographs of South Africa, p. 65.

recognizable and, in place of the flag in Bowler's image, a legible sign hangs above the entrance way. The style of the architecture, with the heavily rusticated ground floor, two upper storeys and large, heavy cornice resembles a Renaissance palazzo-like design, again emphasizing the permanence and stability of the structure and the service it provided. The deployment of European culture recurs again and again, and can be seen in the fifth plate which shows "Adderley Street and the Dutch Reformed Church" in Cape Town (Plate 87). The bustling traffic of the busy colonial entrepôt and the Christian values at the heart of society are augmented by the little detail of the man with the sandwich-board in the foreground. He is placed in a prominent position and advertises an upcoming concert. The image not only conveys the commercial and entrepreneurial activity of the colonists but also adverts to their cultural sophistication.

This ideology retained its currency and was still employed at the end of the century in the construction of an image of urban settlements and potential emigrant towns. In Scenes and Life in the Transvaal, the photographic illustrations of this newly rich region help to convey the image of a progressive and attractive location. Plate 29A, "Johannesburg in the Early Days" (Plate 88) is a photograph taken in the 1880s (Map 1; Feature v). The commentator is particularly scathing in his opinion of the town as it then was:

How utterly desolate and horrible it all looks! Those of us who were here then can only wonder how we managed to endure it at all. As to comforts or luxuries, those were the dark ages.¹³⁰

The scanty landscape of a few renegade tents and some leans-to seems to confirm this view. However, the contrast is enforced by the realization that this photograph was only about ten years old. By comparing with Plate 89, one can get the full impact of the European influence on the landscape of Southern Africa. Here, the photograph illustrates a street in contemporary, post-gold rush Johannesburg. The author of the letterpress happily draws attention to many of the visual clues which mark this as a progressive, advanced and civilized city, even having the temerity to associate it with the imperial capital:

¹³⁰ Scenes and Life in the Transvaal, p. 29.

The tram-cars, the telephone wires overhead (over two hundred in this single street), the electric light, and the crowded busy life to be seen there, have doubtless done much to earn for Johannesburg, the title of the 'London of South Africa.'¹³¹

The visual argument of the book inscribes a chronological and teleological progression to the landscape of South Africa, and more specifically, European manipulation of that landscape. European involvement is seen as something beneficial, to be lauded and striven for, whereas the indigenous, uncultivated landscape is presented as an obstacle to civilization and colonization. By displaying the rapid transformation of Johannesburg, the album of photographs reassures the domestic audience about the civility and suitability of the Transvaal as a place for emigration.

The British influence in siting and developing towns marks them out as the forerunners in colonial improvement. In contrast to the British towns discussed above, the Portuguese town of Quillimane is decidedly unkempt, rundown and has its origins in the base and demeaning propagation of the slave trade (Map 3; No. 18). Livingstone castigated its site and situation and implicitly questions the ability and foresightedness of those who planned the town:

Quillimane must have been built solely for the sake of carrying on the slave trade, for no man in his senses would ever have dreamed of placing a village on such a low, muddy, fever-haunted, and mosquito-swarmed site, had it not been for the facilities it afforded for slaving. The bar may at springs and floods be easily-crossed by sailing vessels, but, being far from the land it is always dangerous for boats.¹³²

Portuguese negligence and lack of imagination make colonial advancement, together with its civilizing mission unlikely in these circumstances. Conversely, British involvement with the landscape of Southern Africa is shown to be progressive and aiding the establishment of a settler population. The British experience of developing urban settlements is one where the comfort of the people and their economic prosperity are

¹³¹ Ibid., p. 3.

¹³² Livingstone, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambezi*, p. 446.

given equal weight in the consideration of the authorities. The visual images that are used to convey the British patterns of settlements unfailingly present a view of the towns in South Africa as useful and beautiful. They achieve this by conforming standards of European aesthetic taste and by employing compositional devices that aid this reading.

These strategies of visualization are used to encourage the idea of Southern Africa as a propitious place for settlers to come to. The need for emigrants to come to the region required careful manipulation. Nicholas Thomas has suggested that artists played a prominent role in creating an attractive image of a colony.¹³³ The inherently malleable media of text and visual image could be co-opted in order to buttress the idea that Southern Africa was just such a region. The metaphors and tropes encountered in this discussion of the Southern Africa landscape provide a contradictory *mélange* of images. The idea of the landscape as empty wasteland unpeopled by native inhabitants and waiting to be subdued by an influx of immigrants is presented with the same force as the image of the landscape as one that is overflowing with bountiful and untapped natural resources. Taken together these cannot all be true. However, in the carefully orchestrated manipulation of ideas and images of the Southern African landscape, these tropes recur over and over again. They are deployed according to specific ideological strategies associated with emigration in order to posit the landscape as a valuable natural region as well as one that is open and waiting for colonization.

¹³³ Thomas, *Possessions*, p. 80.

Chapter 7: "The Land in Amber"

"Indeed, often and often have I wished to go back there again, out on the veld, far away from the London streets and fog. I am young and strong and want to see things – not those made by man, you know – the things I remember as a child. One can always go back to London."

H. Rider Haggard, 1906.

In 1883, eight years after the death of Thomas Baines, Robert White sent a tablet to commemorate his friend, with instructions for it to be set in the local Anglican church in Durban, the city in which Baines had died and was buried.¹ It recalled the exploits of this artist and explorer of the wilderness of the colonial periphery:

To the memory of
Thomas Baines FRGS.
The artist and traveller
who explored a great part of the
South African interior and Western Australia,
portraying the scenery and the native life of those countries
with rare fidelity and graphic power.²

The addendum to this neat summary of Baines' achievement is in the enigmatic epigraph that follows: "He was a man to whom the wilderness brought gladness, and the mountains peace."³ J.P.R. Wallis was convinced that this sampler was a combination of a passage from the Book of Isaiah and Psalm 35.⁴ Nevertheless, even later commentators have failed to find a direct source for this quotation.⁵ However, its obscure origins, eluding all textual referents, should not blind us as to what it says about Baines and his art. Having clearly posited Baines' artistic gifts of visual directness and observational accuracy as working to help to record and immortalize scenes of colonial space, the inscription qualifies this by giving an insight into the

¹ Wallis, *Thomas Baines*, p. 337.

² James Ewing Ritchie, *Brighter South Africa or Life at the Cape and Natal* [London, 1892], pp. 151-2.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

⁴ Wallis, *Thomas Baines*, p. 337, n. 1.

⁵ For example, see Bradlow, "Robert White, Thomas Baines and *TGRSEA*", p. 145.

character and motivations of the man. Despite its literary obscurity, this quotation draws on a rich heritage of thinking about and imagining unexplored landscapes.

Baines' memorial is a useful link between later nineteenth-century theorizing about the colonial landscape space and the representation of Southern Africa during the so-called pre-colonial period. It sets the tone for much of the engagement with Africa and the portrayal of her landscape later in the century. However, it also encapsulates an approach to the representation of the colonial landscape that played an important part in creating a view of imperial peripheral space in the domestic British consciousness in the earlier part of the century. This construction became pervasive in the literature and images of the Southern African landscape. At the time of Baines' death, the landscape space of the region that he and others had explored so assiduously acquired a freight of meanings, implications and associations that connected it with contemporary debates in the United Kingdom regarding the imperial project, the state of domestic society and changing masculinities within that late Victorian milieu. While many analyses of the imperial project concentrate on its economic and strategic bases, Niall Ferguson quashes this narrow approach:

Imperialism did not have to pay to be popular. For many it was sufficient that it was exciting.⁶

It seems that just as British (and, indeed other European) interest in the region increased, so too the nostalgia for its landscape spaces as some sort of untouched arena for pure, instinctive and chivalrous gentlemanly activities grew concomitantly. This complex phenomenon defies easy explanation or description. Nevertheless, Hammond and Jablow have referred to the longing for an Africa where men could escape the diurnal banalities of Victorian society and return to doing "manly" things as a striving for, and a representation of Africa as the "Land in Amber."⁷ It becomes an unsullied field for the exercise of chivalrous English activities where the idea of the aristocratic ownership of the land through hunting could still be asserted and where the cloying values of a mercenary society in Britain could be ignored or even reversed. Ferguson is again useful in assessing the place of the imperial frontier and its representation to a metropolitan audience:

⁶ Ferguson, *Empire*, p. 255.

⁷ Hammond and Jablow, *The Africa That Never Was*, p. 157.

As a source of entertainment – sheer psychological gratification – the Empire’s importance can never be exaggerated.⁸

For those who wanted to escape from the “trammels that bound [them] to the artificial world” of European domestic affairs, the Empire came to be seen as a suitable crucible for future generations of leaders to prove their inherent European superiority and retain it in the face of the cloying banality of Europe.⁹ As early as the fourteenth century, William Langland identified the aristocratic associations of hunting. And so in Piers Plowman, he asserts that it is proper “for lewede men to labory, lordes to honte.”¹⁰ In 1614, Francis Bacon could connect the activity of hunting with social status and the aggrandizement that this implied: “Forests, parks, chases, they are a noble portion of the King’s prerogative, they are the verdure of the King, they are the first marks of honour and nobility and the ornament of a flourishing Kingdom.”¹¹ In The Complete Gentleman (1622), Henry Peacham remarked that “hawking and hunting are recreations very commendable and befitting a noble or gentleman to exercise.”¹² The link between military prowess and hunting had classical roots. Peacham reiterated the words of Eusebius in claiming that “the wild beasts were of purpose created buy God that men by chasing and encountering them might be fitted and enabled for warlike exercises.”¹³ John Dryden’s couplet “Better to hunt in fields for health unbought/Than fee the doctor for a nauseous draught” neatly encapsulates the physical benefits ascribed to hunting from earliest times, and gave an alternative to the increasingly restrained mores of Victorian society that was seen as both physically and morally corrupt.¹⁴ It is no surprise to find Harris writing for “brother officers equally passionate for the chase”¹⁵ and “English gentlemen equally enthusiastic with myself in the love of the chase.”¹⁶ This is part of the audience to which Butler was also hoping to appeal. Butler wrote for him “to whose ears the rushing of a herd is music, and for whom the wilderness of a nomad life has

⁸ Ferguson, Empire, p. 256.

⁹ Angas, The Kafirs Illustrated, p. v.

¹⁰ Quoted in Richard Almond, Medieval Hunting [Stroud, 2003], p. 10.

¹¹ Quoted in Vandervell and Coles, Game and the English Landscape, p. 15.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 59.

¹³ Quoted in Arts Council of Great Britain, British Sporting Painting [London, 1974], p. 1.

¹⁴ Quoted in Stella Walker, Sporting Art : England 1700-1900 [London, 1972], p. 53.

¹⁵ Harris, Wild Sports, p. 94.

¹⁶ Anon., “The Desert Sports of South Africa” in The New Sporting Review, Dec. 1841, pp. 417-25, p. 418.

charms.”¹⁷ The excitement and moral invigoration of the chase and capture was a foil used by authors to combat the cloying values of Victorian society that they saw as weakening the Empire. For soldiers and civil servants sent out to police and manage the Empire, the ability to demonstrate and exercise one’s manliness had a peculiarly reassuring value. In the face of sometimes-hostile natives and inhospitable climates far away from home, the ability to display one’s self-sufficiency, technical superiority and prowess in the field was an attractive distraction. This fed into the love of hunting and the desire to see the agents of Empire as pure, simple English gentlemen, unchanging in their military prowess and chivalric leanings since the earliest times.¹⁸

The construction of the Southern African landscape in particular as an arena for the regeneration of an emasculated manhood is one that gained increasing currency as the nineteenth century wound towards its decadent denouement. As such, many of the greatest expressions of the imperial space of Southern Africa as an area for the testing and confirmation of identity and for the fleeing from domestic society came through the medium of fiction. Adventure novels especially promoted an Empire of wide, open and unpopulated spaces, waiting to be conquered by the intrepid European pioneer. For Martin Green, “to celebrate adventure was to celebrate empire, and vice versa.”¹⁹ They elevated explorers to the status of heroes setting them up as avatars of masculinity – “proper” role models for young boys to emulate in a world of seemingly deleterious values and notions. It is no surprise that this should be so since adventure fiction was the natural heir to exploration narratives as a prime means by which the population of the imperial metropolis was informed of the colonial fringes. These novels have had an enduring appeal beyond the nineteenth-century hey-day of the exploration narrative. Fashionable recreations of colonial adventures, the most famous being perhaps the “Indiana Jones” films, are still hugely successful at the box office. All of these phenomena are, it seems to me, inspired to a large degree by the representations and received ideas of the Southern African landscape as they had been promulgated by the travel narrative and visual image of the pre-colonial period as

¹⁷ Butler, *South African Sketches*, p. 3.

¹⁸ Further discussion of this cultural phenomenon may be found in Ian Anstruther, *The Knight and the Umbrella : An Account of the Eglinton Tournament, 1839* [London, 1963] and Mark Girouard, *The Return to Camelot : Chivalry and the English Gentleman* [London, 1991].

¹⁹ Martin Green, *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire* [London, 1980], p. 37.

analyzed in this study.²⁰ Hunters, missionaries and others writing about the morally and physically therapeutic effects of South Africa produced the non-fiction equivalents of quest romances where the hero-authors struggled through enchanted, bedevilled or benighted lands towards goals of discovery such as the Victoria Falls or the source of the Nile.²¹ Visual imagery also played a major role in the celebration of this freedom. Indeed, Tony Bonyhady has argued that the greatest expression of the romantic aspects of the wilderness in unsettled parts of Australia occurred in art which depicted localities which still had “the freshness of the Dawn of Creation.”²² Imagery was an important part in this process in Southern Africa too, adopting to the particular registers in which escapism, adventure and moral improvement operated in this region of the world. In effect, later nineteenth-century emphasis on heroics grew out of both earlier traditions of action and behaviour and an antagonism towards the perceived injurious nature of modern civilization. Wendy Katz suggests that events such as Thomas Carlyle’s London lectures in the 1840s, where his veneration of heroic actions coalesced with a severe critique of mid-nineteenth-century industrialism and democracy, are the inaugurators of a phenomenon that would become apparent later in the century.²³

Baines’ memorial acts as a convenient starting-point for a consideration of the dual facet of this representation of Southern Africa as a “Land in Amber.” It was both a haven of escape and an arena to rejuvenate and reassert ancient codes of masculinity lost by the society from which these men were coming. This phenomenon is an ever-present part of the representation of the colonial space of Southern Africa throughout the period of British occupation in the nineteenth century. It co-existed with the other ideologies of representation considered in this study such as the religious and missionary impulses as well as the promotion of emigration. Indeed, while these ideas lose some of their force and relevance at the end of the nineteenth century, the ideas of escapism and rejuvenated masculinity associated with Africa came even more to the fore.

²⁰ For specific precedents for some of Haggard’s most famous South African novels see Norman Etherington, “South African Origins of Rider Haggard’s Early African Romances” in *Notes and Queries*, N.S. Vol. 24, No. 5 (Oct. 1977), pp. 436-8.

²¹ See Michael Chapman, *Southern African Literatures* [London, 1996], p. 100.

²² Bonyhady, *Images in Opposition*, p. 60.

²³ Wendy R. Katz, *Rider Haggard and the Fiction of Empire : A Critical Study of British Imperial Fiction* [Cambridge, 1987], p. 59.

Somerset Maugham's The Explorer provides a very good guide to this phenomenon. The entire novel is structured around the testing of the hero's true mettle against adverse physical and emotional circumstances. MacKenzie is compared to a classical Greek hero of legend.²⁴ The trip to Africa provides him with an escape from city life and strife while simultaneously asserting that he was "the picture of honest English manhood."²⁵ However, the preponderance of novels of adventure and escape should not distract from the fact this was a pan-cultural phenomenon. The image of the European hero of exploration, conquering both the hostile environment and native inhabitants of uncultivated parts while simultaneously reasserting his courageous masculinity was one which appealed not only to writers of fiction. J.P.R. Wallis' hagiographic biography of Baines lauds the East Anglian's ability to operate under the most trying situations. Wallis even cites a case of Baines continuing his work completely oblivious to the bullets whizzing past his ears during a military fracas.²⁶ And this persistent desire to see men working in such conditions, courageously and uncomplainingly, has continued. Ian McLean writes of Baines' art:

His is the art of adventure not of settlement. He pictures, in an exemplary fashion, the symbolic purpose of empire art [sic] during the latter half of the nineteenth century, when the picturesque had lost its credibility as a redemptive vision.²⁷

And, for the white minority of Southern Rhodesia the image of an all-conquering European adhered to the best examples of Muscular Christianity that was a central part of every white child's schooling until the end of the 1970s.²⁸

This chapter does not seek to diminish the importance of these phenomena or to explain them away. However, I will argue that that the notions embodied in these examples had been in circulation considerably before the end of the nineteenth century. In effect, I want to trace the origin of this notion of escapism and imperial identity with reference to the colonial landscape space of Southern Africa from the beginning of the century. It had the same importance as other trends examined above

²⁴ Maugham, The Explorer, p. 51.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

²⁶ Wallis, Thomas Baines, p. 62.

²⁷ Ian McLean, White Aborigines : Identity Politics in Australian Art [Cambridge, 1998], p. 46.

²⁸ Godwin and Hancock, "Rhodesians Never Die", p. 32.

in the creation, maintenance and manipulation of the landscape imagery of Southern Africa. For Catherine Hall, the empire was “constituent of English masculinities in the mid-nineteenth century.”²⁹ And for Cain and Hopkin the vision of the gentlemanly order was an invisible export from imperial centres of power, deeply illustrative of domestic concerns and preoccupations.³⁰

As the nineteenth century progressed, two parallel processes developed in British society. Her territorial possessions, economic development and imperial dominance increased throughout the period, reaching a jingoistic climax at the celebration of the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria. However, this rise in economic pre-eminence and political power was accompanied by an increasing awareness and self-consciousness about the moral dangers that went hand in hand with this phenomenon. By the end of the century, the achievements and developments that characterized Victoria’s reign, in terms of accumulated wealth, enhanced scientific knowledge and geographical expansion, came to be seen in ambivalent terms – blessings fraught with peril and danger. It was questioned as to whether they were beneficial to the spiritual and intellectual well-being of the nation or whether these were, in fact, contributing to the creeping moral decrepitude and social decadence seen as endemic in late Victorian society. Thus, in finalizing the kind of society that his fictional hero Sir Henry Curtis was to preside over in the heart of Africa, Haggard muses:

I cannot see that gunpowder, telegraphs, steam, daily newspapers, universal suffrage, etc., etc., have made mankind one whit happier than they used to be, and I am certain that they have brought many evils in their train.³¹

As the century neared its conclusion the attitude that expressed doubts as to whether the inherent value of progress steadily gained currency amongst cultural commentators, seeping into the cultural consciousness. Richard Altick concludes that at the height of her imperial meridian, “most moral diagnosticians agreed that it was the fatty degeneration of the soul which had put English society on what they were convinced was to prove its deathbed unless stringent remedies were applied.”³²

²⁹ Hall, “Going a-Trolloping”, p. 180.

³⁰ Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism*, p. 34.

³¹ Haggard, *Allan Quartermain*, pp. 218-9

³² Altick, *Victorian People and Ideas*, p. 3.

Colonial landscape, and colonial space in general, was posited throughout the nineteenth century, but increasingly so in the latter part of the period, as an antidote to the soporific Victorian values that were regarded as stifling the soul of British society. Unlike other ideologies of representation examined in this study, which were intimately connected with the assessment, analysis and imagining of colonial space according to an imperial project of acculturation and assimilation, this trend of escapism is almost entirely centred around domestic debates. In other words, the landscape of colonial South Africa is merely a template on to which may be projected the pressing concerns of the domestic intelligentsia and opinion-formers. Indeed, the increasing interdependence and interconnectedness between colonial landscape space and British domestic concerns evidences the progressive assimilation of the colonies into the mainstream of British social and political consciousness, tying them inextricably to the fate of the Mother Country. By 1907 that imperial impresario Lord Curzon could comment:

I am one of those who hold that in this larger atmosphere, on the outskirts of Empire, where the machine is relatively impotent and the individual is strong, is to be found an ennobling and invigorating stimulus for our youth, saving them alike from the corroding ease and the morbid excitements of Western civilisation.³³

The connection between the political imperatives of the age and the cultural production of texts and images relative to the colonial environment is suggested by the then Hon. George Curzon's stout defence of Haggard's fictional works in a letter to the Pall Mall Gazette of 1887.³⁴

It will be necessary to examine the terms in which cultural commentators criticized domestic society and the motives for which they advocated escape from this milieu. I will suggest how travel and the representation of foreign landscape spaces was seen as an historically justified way of seeking escape from diurnal realities. Finally, this information will be related to the textual and visual rendition of the Southern African landscape and space as it occurred in the nineteenth century. A discursive space existed between the drive for escape from the restraining influences in Britain, and the

³³ Quoted in Robert Dixon, Writing the Colonial Adventures : Race, Gender and Nation in Anglo-Australian Popular Fiction, 1875-1914 [Cambridge, 1995], p 3.

³⁴ D.S. Higgins, Rider Haggard : The Great Storyteller [London, 1981], p. 114

representation of various forms of liberating behaviour in the colonial landscape. Through diverse tactics such as presenting the wide, empty spaces of the Southern African veldt, the construction of the landscape as ahistorical and untainted by any human intervention, as well as hunting scenes, the artist and writers involved in this process presented Africa as a place diametrically opposed to the European reality experienced by the domestic audience – one where freedom and liberation from the shackles of cloying Victorian mores was available to the white European male.

The idea that the urban metropolis was an inhospitable place, an inhumane and unnatural habitation for human existence and uncondusive to the development and sustenance of one's spiritual well-being is one that stretches back to Early Christian thinking and has a basis in Classical philosophy. The moral turpitude associated with urban life and its distraction is contrasted by St Jerome with the simplicity and inherently innocent joyfulness of a life spent away from the city, its vicissitudes and temptations: "The city is a prison, the desert loneliness is a paradise."³⁵ Michael Rosenthal traces this type of response to the landscape to Horace's idea of the *beatus ille* – the happy man living on an ancestral country estate, materially self-sufficient and philosophically at ease. This retreat to a haven of rural bliss contrasts favourably with the "morally destructive whirl of towns."³⁶ The nineteenth-century Moravian preacher, Johannes van der Kamp, one of the first missionaries in Southern African, reiterated this idea in the colonial context, by reassuring his far-flung flock at the first conference held by African missionaries at Graaf Reinet in 1814 that "all civilisation is from the devil."³⁷ This strain of thinking was one that became more important and influential in British cultural consciousness. Life in the city was equated with economic progressiveness and societal advances, but also with sickening monotony and spiritual vacuousness. Civilization and its concomitant social conventions are "the deadliest gag and wet blanket that can be laid on men" according to Frederick Selous, a hunter in the expanses of the colonial periphery.³⁸ In contrast to this, the rural life in the countryside or desert wilderness becomes a symbol of all that is pure, simple and most morally valuable in the human psyche and character. James Bryce describes the

³⁵ Samuels, "The Biography of Landscape", p. 64.

³⁶ Rosenthal, *British Landscape Painting*, p. 14.

³⁷ Quoted in Ross, *Status and Respectability in the Cape Colony*, p. 112

³⁸ Quoted in Taylor, *The Mighty Nimrod*, p. 274.

“charm” of South Africa as being related to its unique qualities of solitude and silence:

There is something specially [sic] solemn and impressive in the untouched and primitive simplicity of a country which stands now just as it came from the hands of the Creator. The self-sufficingness of nature, the insignificance of man, the mystery of a universe which does not exist, as our ancestors fondly thought, for the sake of man, but for other purposes hidden from us and for ever undiscoverable – these things are more fully realized and more deeply felt when one traverses a boundless wilderness which seems to have known no change since the remote ages when hill and plain and valley were moulded into the forms we see today.³⁹

And these features of the landscape are responsible, according to Bryce, for influencing “the mind and temper of the European settler.”⁴⁰ Describing a lonely cottage in the interior of Southern Africa at the end of the nineteenth century, Edward Mohr further reinforced this image of the unsullied landscape of the African veldt:

To the jaded man, weary of the contentions and jealousies of our modern civilization, no retreat could be more appropriate, more absolutely secluded and peaceful than such a homestead.⁴¹

The landscape of Southern Africa and the human involvement in that landscape is seen to be cathartic and remedial in its effect on the European man. Why this might be so is explained by an examination of the perceived state of contemporary British society.

In the nineteenth century, as Great Britain advanced to lead the world in economic and imperial terms, the simplicity of a traditional way of life became subsumed beneath the welter of technological and social advances made during the period of Victoria’s reign. The sacrifices that these advances demanded of the population seemed too great for some. The obvious benefits and advantages derived to the nation were counterbalanced by the strains wrought on the intellectual and moral fibres of the people, caught up in what Matthew Arnold called “the sick hurry...of modern

³⁹ James Bryce, *Impressions of South Africa* [London, 1897], pp. 64-5.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

⁴¹ Mohr, *To the Victoria Falls of the Zambesi*, p. 90.

life.”⁴² This refrain became more virulent throughout the Victorian period, culminating in the drive to highlight the decrepit, morally moribund state of contemporary British society. Its ultimate aim was to identify a set of possible solutions or an alternative code of behaviour which could work to exculpate this threat and where modern man could be redeemed and saved from this fate of a decadent decline. John Ruskin’s article, “The Storm Cloud of the Nineteenth Century” codifies and draws together many of the cultural assumptions that were identified and discussed by cultural commentators throughout the Victorian period, but which were coming to a critical crescendo as the Imperial Age reached its apogee.⁴³ In this lecture, the most important “cultural diagnostician” of the age links the rise of industrialism, the growth of cities and the transformation of British society with dire meteorological effects. The principal interest in this phenomenon for Ruskin is not, as one might imagine, in the successful forecasting of inclement weather conditions, but rather in the symbolic associations he attaches to it. By describing this form of pollution, a by-product of industrial advancement, he immediately lays it open to a symbolic interpretation and draws it into a network of cultural signposts commenting on the moral and spiritual state of Britain in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The condition of Britain in 1884 is one of “Blanched Sun, - blighted grass, - blinded man.”⁴⁴ The physical and environmental symptoms of industrial development and economic expansion are, for Ruskin, indicative of a spiritual malaise at the heart of British society:

Of states in such moral gloom every seer of old predicted the physical gloom, saying, ‘The light shall be darkened in the heavens thereof, and the stars shall withdraw their shine.’”⁴⁵

The whole social and intellectual system of British life was being literally and symbolically poisoned by the industrial advances made by Britain in the nineteenth century.⁴⁶

How would writers and artists respond to this malignant threat to Britain’s spiritual health? How would Britain be revived, her sons revitalized and rejuvenated? If the

⁴² Quoted in Altick, *Victorian People and Ideas*, p. 97.

⁴³ Ruskin’s article was derived from a lecture he delivered at the London Club on 4th February 1884.

⁴⁴ “The Storm Cloud of the Nineteenth Century” in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, edited by M.H. Abrams, 7th edition, 2 vols. [New York : W.W. Norton, 2000], Vol. 2, pp. 1443-51; p. 1450.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1450.

⁴⁶ Altick, *Victorian People and Ideas*, pp. 38-40.

problem was prevalent in the homeland itself, perhaps in the vast and immense tracts of her newly-acquired and burgeoning empire Britain had the capacity to tap into those kinds of resources that facilitated the innocent exhilaration and enjoyment in the beauty of the land that was perceived as being coeval with moral blessedness and healthy spirituality. This was the remedy proposed by the Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, Charles Kingsley, who railed against the effete frivolity of life in contemporary Britain and advocated the morally improving course of mass emigration as an expedient counterbalance to the noxiousness of home.⁴⁷ H. Rider Haggard's wildly successful novels at the end of the century, many of them based on and feeding off travel narratives and published hunting exploits of the previous half-century, are part of that cultural phenomenon in Britain that used the Empire as an escape valve and counterweight to the circumstances of metropolitan existence. They helped what one commentator called "the victims of modern civilisation."⁴⁸ In Allan Quartermain, the eponymous hero contrasts what one is likely to find in the African wilderness, with what his readers are accustomed to in Great Britain:

Not the Nature which you know, that waves in well-kept woods and smiles out in the corn-fields, but Nature as she was when creation was complete, still undefiled by any sinks of struggling, sweltering humanity. I would go again where the wild game was, back to the land whereof none know the history, back to the savages whom I love.⁴⁹

Haggard draws the distinction between cultivated European landscape, brought under the control of industrial and technological forces, and the landscape of Britain's Southern African empire. The contrast is instructive for the moral import assigned by Haggard to each variety of landscape. He sees the imperial terrain in grossly value-laden terms as complete, still undefiled and thus a suitably healthy outlet to be used to counterbalance soporific European values encountered at home. In the passage on which this fictional account is based, Haggard goes further by according a specific religious status to the landscape:

Not Nature as we civilized people know her, smiling in corn-fields, waving in well-ordered woods, but Nature as she was on the morrow of Creation.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ See White, Joseph Conrad and the Adventure Tradition, p. 43.

⁴⁸ Quoted in Katz, Rider Haggard and the Fiction of Empire, p. 30.

⁴⁹ Haggard, Allan Quartermain, p. 12-13.

⁵⁰ H. Rider Haggard, "A Zulu War Dance" in Gentleman's Magazine, Vol. 241, No. 1759 (Jul-Dec. 1877), pp. 94-107; p. 99.

Nature in South Africa is implicitly absolved of the Original Sin that followed too soon after the world was created and that was bedeviling and steadily wilting domestic society in Britain. Haggard's treatment of the landscape of Southern Africa is a direct descendant of the textual representations of the landscape that occurred in narratives of travel and exploration throughout the nineteenth century. William Winwood Reade contended:

Africa, the cradle of civilization is now the last refuge of romance. The eyes of the world are turned upon its central regions; a white blot upon the pages of science; the 'terra incognita' of this age of steam.⁵¹

Similarly, J.P.R. Wallis describes the effect that Francis Galton's book Tropical South Africa might have had on those who read it:

Many who are sick and tired of our present-day mechanized substitute-interests and amusements will be glad to turn to this book and read of real adventures and real wild life at first hand.⁵²

And Andrew Lang, the folklorist, thought that the gentleman and person of distinguished bearing, the so-called *Ultimus hominum venustiorum*, would be found on the imperial frontier.⁵³ Therefore, Haggard's employment of the landscape of Southern Africa as a sanctuary to which the frustrated Englishman could escape is perhaps the most famous manifestation of this phenomenon. Nevertheless, it is just a part of the cultural climate in which such notions were fostered. Throughout the nineteenth century, a dichotomy developed, indeed was actively promulgated, which saw British territorial space according to two registers of meaning. One was at the heart of the domestic metropolis – cramped, diseased, decadent and in danger of contaminating those caught in its thrall. The other was at the liminal outskirts of that expanding imperial domain, where nature and the natural environment were as yet untarnished, unsullied and uncorrupted by the work of human hands.

Baines' paradisiacal "A Lake in Zululand" (1874) (Plate 61), discussed above in relation to religious epiphany, includes imagery that is heavily laden with overtones of escapism. The painting conforms to the status of the visual image as a protean

⁵¹ William Winwood Reade, Savage Africa : Being the Narrative of Tour in Equatorial, South-West and North-West Africa [London, 1863], p. 488

⁵² Wallis, Fortune My Foe : The Story of Charles John Andersson, p. 9.

⁵³ Paul Rich, "Romance and the Development of the South African Novel" in Landeg White and Tim Couzens (eds.), Literature and Society in South Africa [Harlow, 1984], pp. 120-37; p. 123.

signifier. The beauty and vivacity of the picture conjures up those kinds of notions in the domestic British imagination about the landscape of Natal that were the cohorts of Haggard's contemporaneous comments about the colony:

The country impressed me enormously. Indeed, on the whole I think it is the most beautiful of any that I have seen in the world, parts of Mexico alone excepted. The great plains rising by steps to the Quathlamba or Drakensberg Mountains, the sparkling torrential rivers, the sweeping thunderstorms, the grass fires creeping over the veld at night like snakes of living flame, the glorious aspect of the heavens, now of a spotless blue, now charged with the splendid and many-coloured lights of sunset, and now sparkling with a myriad stars; the wine-like taste of air upon the plains, the beautiful flowers in the bush-clad kloofs or on the back veld in spring – all these things impressed me, so much that were I to live a thousand years I never should forget them.⁵⁴

Gail Ching-Liang Low observes how this passage obfuscates any reference to native existence or dwelling in Natal, presenting the colony as a panorama unfolding for the traveller. It is a veritable Eden, “the fruits of a paradisiacal inheritance.”⁵⁵ Baines' picture operates in the same continuum of meaning. His image and Haggard's words are cultural accomplices in the construction of an escapist yearning at home, situating it in the midst of the landscape, flora and fauna of Southern Africa.

For Simon Gikandi, the trope of travel, inherent in the representation and recounting of distant, foreign lands, “generates narratives that are acutely concerned with self-realization in the spaces of the Other.”⁵⁶ In other words, the European engagement with colonial spaces works more to create a distinctively British identity, or rather to develop a relational paradigm between Britain and the Other, than it does to define and elucidate that other land. As Nicholas Thomas opines, travel and cultural colonialism are fundamentally reflexive. He continues by asserting, “it may be society at home that is discovered or newly explicated, as travellers purport to discover or remake a colonized space.”⁵⁷ In the case of escapist narratives, the ideas and images associated with imperial spaces are constructed as being diametrically opposed to, and

⁵⁴ H. Rider Haggard, *The Days of my Life: An Autobiography*, edited by C.J. Longman, 2 vols. [London, 1926], Vol. 1, pp. 51-2.

⁵⁵ Ching-Liang Low, *White Skin/Black Masks*, p. 40.

⁵⁶ Gikandi, *Maps of Englishness*, p. 8.

⁵⁷ Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture*, p. 25.

polar opposites of, a British domestic landscape space that is both claustrophobic and contaminated by the detritus of human economic and industrial aggrandizement. Gikandi's theoretical model can be applied to ask the question, germane to this debate, as to whether travel (and the various representational and re-iterative media used to convey its findings and discoveries to the metropolitan audience, like text and image) can be used to suggest that the Empire and its imperial space became a convenient counter-focus for that domestic space that was seen to be under threat from the forces of historical change.⁵⁸ The edges of Empire, its space and its landscape act as a foil against which to set a concept of Britain as a physical space that is overweeningly refined and morally depraved. The European domestic environment becomes identified with "this sad and trodden world" while the imperial dominions are open and undefiled.⁵⁹ They simultaneously represent a return to innocence and moral rectitude as well as providing a liberating physical freedom that has become unavailable at home. The actual physical landscape of the Empire, in these circumstances becomes a stage on which to enact various fantasies of renewal and reinvigoration that are simply unavailable to those enmired in the domestic environment. Imperial space becomes the locus in which to rediscover all that is morally correct and admirable in contemporary Britain, shorn of her decadent excesses.

Robert Stafford suggests that in the nineteenth century the imperial drive and colonialism are determined by, and dependent upon, an "intoxication for space" which was to find expression in a plethora of phenomena and cultural products that satisfied the desire to know, understand and intellectually appropriate the spaces of the Empire. This, he suggests, was a major determining factor in the persistent contrasting of the claustrophobic restrictiveness, in both physical and moral terms, of the home islands with the freedom to act in an unregulated colonial landscape.⁶⁰ For an increasingly constrained metropolitan audience, colonial landscapes, and that of Southern Africa in particular, came to be perceived as repositories of romantic subject

⁵⁸ See Gikandi, *Maps of Englishness*, pp. 88-9.

⁵⁹ Haggard, *The People of the Mist*, Preface.

⁶⁰ Stafford, "Scientific Expansion and Empire", p. 314.

matter.⁶¹ This chapter analyzes the types of escapism offered by the landscape of Southern Africa and how this was evidenced in the imagery of the nineteenth century.

⁶¹ See Bunn, "Our Wattled Cot", p. 128.

Joseph Conrad begins his novella, Heart of Darkness, with the image of a child gazing at a map and dreaming of adventure. Marlow recounts his childhood fantasies:

Now when I was a little chap I had a passion for maps. I would look for hours at South America, or Africa, or Australia, and lose myself in all the glories of exploration. At that time there were many blank spaces on the earth, and when I saw one that looked particularly inviting on a map (but they all look like that) I would put my finger on it and say, When [sic] I grow up I will go there.⁶²

The subsequent tale would go some way to unravelling these comforting associations.⁶³ However, the initial equation of exploration and the child's eager anticipation at the prospect of so doing bespeaks a desire to imagine the landscape in terms of a return to this state of innocence and purity. The urge to see the landscape as being as unsullied and untainted as the childhood longing to explore it works to create an ideology of the landscape whereby its space in the imperial continuum is one of innocent existence, directly opposed to the implicitly soiled and corrupt spaces that had developed in Britain during the nineteenth century.

The ideological inflection of the innocence and purity of the landscape was particularly suitable for South Africa. Lady Sarah Duff Gordon presents us with a factual rendition of Conrad's account:

It is very coarse and unintellectual of me; but I would rather see this *now*, at my age, than Italy; the fresh, new, beautiful nature is a second youth – or *childhood, si vous voulez*.⁶⁴

Indeed, Lieutenant Paterson, writing before British institutional involvement with the sub-continent, suggested that the Cape was unsuitable for anything except escape from the trammels of civilization:

The admirer of Nature has, in this country, a wide field for investigation: here he will discover objects amply sufficient to satisfy the most inquisitive taste: here he will find every object, simple and unadorned; and will behold, in the

⁶² Conrad, "Heart of Darkness", p. 5.

⁶³ See Phillips, Mapping Men and the Empire, p. 3.

⁶⁴ Duff Gordon, Letters from the Cape, 22nd February 1862; p. 123.

uncivilized Hottentot, those virtues, which he, perhaps, sought for in civilized society in vain.⁶⁵

This perception persists right through the nineteenth century, so that Captain Drayson can happily confirm that “the wild life led in Africa causes even one lately removed from civilisation to feel his instincts become rapidly keener.”⁶⁶ R.M. Ballantyne, in the field of literature, picked up on this trend in his novel Six Months at the Cape (1879);

A glorious sensation of freedom came over me as I felt my horse’s springy step, - a sensation which brought powerfully back the memory of those days when I first galloped over the American prairies.⁶⁷

Freedom from moral decadence and liberty to act according to one’s instincts may have influenced the overwhelming concern with the Cape in the latter part of the nineteenth century, but the health benefits of the Cape Colony, in contradistinction to the rest of the Empire, had long been recognized. Invalids from the British garrisons in India cited the clement climatic conditions as a persuasive inducement to their residing there. Captain F.B. Doveton is one such case, making his way to Southern Africa in order to “renovate my frame.”⁶⁸ Rider Haggard’s wife wrote to her mother-in-law from their farm at Hilldrop, near Newcastle in Natal, in 1881 to inform her that the climate and hardy outdoor life of being a colonial farmer seemed to aid the delicate health of her son:

He looks all the better for it [getting up early and working on the farm], in fact I think we are both in better health than when we left England.⁶⁹

The novelist John Buchan thought that “South Africa was one of the healthiest places in the world.”⁷⁰ Similarly, after the fictional adventures, trials and tribulations endured by Captain Henry Hughes and his Portuguese bride, Isabel, they retire to the

⁶⁵ Lt. William Paterson, A Narrative of Four Journeys into the Country of the Hottentots, and Caffraria [London, 1789], p. 3.

⁶⁶ Drayson, Sporting Scenes among the Kaffirs of South Africa, p. 37.

⁶⁷ R.M. Ballantyne, Six Months at the Cape, or Letters to Periwinkle from South Africa [London, 1879], pp. 21-2.

⁶⁸ Doveton, “A Visit to the Cape of Good Hope”, p. 1.

⁶⁹ Higgins, Rider Haggard : The Great Storyteller, p. 49.

⁷⁰ Quoted in Ian Van der Waag, “Hugh Wyndham, Transvaal Politics and the Attempt to Create an English Country Seat in South Africa, 1901-14” in JICH, Vol. 31, No. 2 (May 2003), pp. 136-57; p. 138.

reassuring “European taste” and comfort of Mr. Chichester’s cottage on the “Wyneberg” [sic] road out of Cape Town.⁷¹

Myriad texts attempt to define and classify the region as a kind of paradisiacal arena, precisely because of its supposedly liberating effect on the traveller. As one of the remaining *terrae incognitae*, it seems to have a claim on the freedom of expression and action unavailable in those lands which had already been extensively explored and laboriously recorded by Europeans. Andrew Anderson is insistent that even at the end of the century his travels are important for their contribution to the geographical knowledge of the region. He prefaces his published book of travels by remarking that “region selected for my exploration has hitherto been a *terra incognita* in all maps relating to this dark continent.”⁷² The natural state of the Cape of Good Hope, untouched by human intervention, was a recurrent motif employed by writers to promote the idea of a cathartic disengagement with the cloying values of civilization and contemporary society. For example, the eminent bishop, the Right Rev. Richard Hurd wrote in the mid-eighteenth century that:

To study Human Nature to purpose, a Traveller must enlarge his circle beyond Europe. He must go, and catch Her undressed, nay quite naked in North America, and at the Cape of Good Hope. He may examine how she appears cramped [sic], contracted and buttoned up close in the straight tunic of Laws and Customs.⁷³

Hurd attributes qualities to those regions that are diametrically opposed to those that one finds in Europe. William Burchell followed in the intellectual path of the bishop by seeing cerebral stimulation and spiritual tranquillity as innate characteristics of this landscape. He echoes his clerical predecessor by maintaining that “man needs periodically to turn towards that part of animated nature where peaceful scenes present themselves.”⁷⁴ He will, it is implied, find such tranquillity at the Cape, “a country still in a state of nature, and where art has done so little.”⁷⁵ Captain Drayson concurs with this opinion:

⁷¹ Hugh Mulleneux Walmsley, *The Ruined Cities of Zulu Land*, 2 vols. [London, 1869], Vol. 2, p. 210.

⁷² Andrew A. Anderson, *Twenty-Five Years in a Waggon in the Gold Regions of Africa*, 2 vols. [London, 1887], Vol. 1, p. v.

⁷³ Rt. Rev. Richard Hurd, *Dialogues on the Uses of Foreign Travel; Considered as Part of an English Gentleman’s Education* [Dublin, 1764], pp. 97-8.

⁷⁴ Burchell, *Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa*, Vol. 2, p. 328.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. vii.

In a country of this description [Kaffirland] one has the pleasure of great freedom. It is certainly pleasant for once in a life to feel like a wild man, to throw off all the restraints imposed by the rules of society, and to wander, unwatched, uncriticised, amongst the wonders and beauties of nature...

Novelty has certainly a wonderful charm and perhaps it may for this reason that a man fresh from civilisation feels so much pleasure in showing the pastimes and excitements of the savage.⁷⁶

This formula for discussing the African environment and landscape became a useful template to be employed by authors whilst recounting or justifying their experiences in the sub-continent. For Anderson it seems to be an almost foregone conclusion that he will proceed to represent, in the pages of his account, his experiences of the landscape as liberating, tranquil and far-removed from the noxious effects of civilization:

It is a pleasure to be able to ramble unfettered by worldly ambition over a wild and new country, far from civilisation, where the postman's knock is never heard, or shrieking railway whistles, startling the seven senses out of your poor bewildered brain, and other so-called civilizing influences, keeping up a perpetual nervous excitement not conducive to health.⁷⁷

The wilderness of Southern Africa is constructed, by Anderson and others, as a counterbalance to the baneful circumstances of modern existence. So-called avatars of progress and development become pejorative and deleterious to the simplicity of Southern African space and landscape. In every regard it is healthier, more pleasurable and more conducive to the improvement and edification of the human spirit:

A life in the desert is certainly most charming with all its drawbacks, where the mind can have unlimited action. To travel when you please, eat and drink when so inclined, hunt, fish, sketch, explore, read or sleep, as the case may be, without interruption; no laws to curb your actions, or conventional habits to be studied. This is freedom, liberty, independence, in the full sense of the word.⁷⁸

The hunter and prospector Frederick Barber who, like Anderson, was travelling in the last quarter of the nineteenth century concurred with the latter's view:

⁷⁶ Drayson, *Sporting Scenes among the Kaffirs of South Africa*, p. 53.

⁷⁷ Anderson, *Twenty-Five Years in a Waggon*, Vol. 1, pp. 3-4.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

I have always loved a free and roaming life, and am happier and more at home in the solitudes of the great plains, in the shadowy depths of the forest, or climbing the breezy slopes of mountain ranges, than in society or in the 'madding crowd.'⁷⁹

And Haggard, while on official duty in the Transvaal, wrote to his mother in October 1877 telling her of his liking for the lifestyle pursued by the European on the colonial frontier:

Do you know one quite gets to like this sort of life. It is a savage kind of existence but it certainly has attractions, shooting your own dinner and cooking it – I can hardly sleep in a home now, it seems to stifle one.⁸⁰

This triumvirate cite those activities and states of mind that were being identified, in the nineteenth century, both as specifically necessary to the maintenance of the British ethos and way of life, and also as becoming increasingly unavailable in the Victorian social milieu. As the domestic scene became ever-more stringent, as the easy-going romantic sensibilities of the early part of the century faded further from consciousness to be replaced by a climate of moral rectitude and seriousness, so the outlet provided by the Empire was increasingly and more frequently exploited by artists and authors.⁸¹

Unlike other relational ideologies explored in this study, where landscape has been actively contrived to conform to European standards and ideals, or moulded to fit into a European epistemological evaluation of the environment, this discourse of escapism worked to encourage the appreciation of *difference* between Southern Africa and the European imperial metropole. Haggard's fictional heroes as well as many of the travellers, soldiers and artists that we have met in this study, repeatedly assert their dissatisfaction with and indeed opposition to the drabness and inadequacies of modern life. The refinement of British manners is presented, in the light of this ideological evaluation, as a constraining and restrictive force which works to prevent the kind of spiritual and more fully rounded engagement with the landscape and the environment that is available at the periphery of the Empire. Ostensibly appearing to celebrate the expansion and exploration of Empire, this way of looking at the landscape

⁷⁹ Tabler (ed.), *Zambezia and Matabeleland in the Seventies*, p. 11.

⁸⁰ Higgins, *Rider Haggard: The Great Storyteller*, p. 31.

⁸¹ Altick, *Victorian People and Ideas*, p. 3.

simultaneously worked to undermine the security of the Victorian view of the superiority and progressiveness of their society. It questioned imperial and domestic political and social circumstances as well as sowing the seeds of *fin-de-siècle* anxieties.⁸²

In this regard, the landscape of Africa is presented as uncorrupted by the taint of human involvement. The land and the environment are delightful to those who are able to be in communion with Nature, and have preserved some semblance of appreciation in their critical sensibilities. Burchell regards the natural haven of Southern Africa as beautiful and the works of creation which “present themselves the most frequently to notice” are seen as “ever delightful except to those of a corrupt and depraved mind.”⁸³ He implies that it is only the most moribund and morally bankrupt who cannot appreciate the landscape and scenery of the Cape. Thus, a register of meaning is established whereby those who fully appreciate, understand and derive enjoyment from this landscape, must perforce be more in tune with their natural instincts, be purer and less tainted by the decadence of civilization. Drayson sets up a dichotomy, tinged with a moral inflection, in stating his reasons for preferring the scenery and environment of South Africa to that of Britain:

Really one never tires of the forest-life, there is pleasure in even walking through its paths, made as they are by the African elephantine M'Adam, and merely looking at the trees and the shrubs, each and every one of which would be gem in England. It is a conservatory on a Brobdignagian scale. Then, to a sportsman there is the excitement... There is always something here to be seen that is interesting from viewing it in its natural state... There may be no accounting for taste, but I would rather walk through an African forest than either up Cheapside, or even Regent Street: the one is all real and true, the other artificial and in a great part false, if we are to believe the chemical tests by which most of our groceries have so lately been exposed.⁸⁴

Drayson's assessment is deeply value-laden and variously attributes ideas of falsity and truth, reality and appearance to constructions of landscape space, setting up an

⁸² See White, *Joseph Conrad and the Adventure Tradition*, p. 24.

⁸³ Burchell, *Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa*, p. viii.

⁸⁴ Drayson, *Sporting Scenes amongst the Kaffirs of South Africa*, p. 168.

oppositional and relational axis in which African space is placed at the opposite end of the spectrum from domestic European space.

This idea is taken a step further by those who wish to remove these landscapes from the interfering and ever-encroaching hand of history. Joseph Conrad's Marlow expresses something of this European habitual concern with the situating of the landscape within a temporal framework:

Going up that river was like travelling back to the earliest beginnings of the world.⁸⁵

Conrad's words are very much associated with the interest in "deep science" and prehistory that flowered in the wake of Darwin's earth-shattering revelations about the evolutionary process. However, in this instance, it also bespeaks the removal of sub-Saharan African imperial terrain from the contemporary linear construction of history. Africa is primordial, connected to a register of meaning far removed from the petty and trivial vagaries of European historical and political machinations. Captain Henry Butler performs a similar act in differentiating between the scenes of merriment at Dublin and the wild aspect of the environment that he found upon his arrival at the Eastern Cape:

The scene was one of utter barbarism. It seemed a dream, the creation of a nightmare. The last sounds of revelry 'by night' which I had heard, had been in Dublin Castle. From St Patrick's ball I found myself transported into the midst of a war dance of savages – a sea voyage, a few day's march across a thirsty desert were all that intervened. The transition was startling – it seemed to have been one step from the alpha to the omega of creation.⁸⁶

Both authors, although working within different contexts and with different concerns, succeed in suggesting the yawning gulf that was perceived to exist between African landscape and its European historical and geographical polar opposite. Lieutenant Cowper Rose elucidates the perhaps subconscious reason for the desire to see nature stripped of its historical associations. Whilst acknowledging the delightfulness of travelling through England, Rose posits the essential attractive feature to one seeking release from British manners and affectations:

⁸⁵ Conrad, "Heart of Darkness", p. 182.

⁸⁶ Capt. Henry Butler, "A Glimpse of the Frontier, and a Gallop through the Cape Colony" in *New Monthly Magazine*, Vol. 77 (May – Aug. 1846), pp. 312-20; 457-74; p. 313.

In those vast boundless tracts there are no associations connected with the past: mankind is in its infancy.⁸⁷

Implicit in this statement is the idea that the less human involvement there is in the situation, the more morally pure will be the experience of the landscape. The South African landscape allows one to “look upon nature, forgetting that man exists.”⁸⁸

The requirement of absenting oneself from the constraints of European civilization in order to achieve a more full communion with the landscape was early fulfilled by the desolate wastelands which the first settlers found in Southern Africa. Thomas Pringle’s poem, “Afar in the Desert”, posits the link between such desert haunts and a more direct engagement with God:

As I sit apart by the desert stone,
Like Elijah at Horeb’s cave alone,
A still small voice comes through the wild
(Like a father consoling his fretful child),
Which banishes bitterness, wrath and fear, -
Saying - MAN IS DISTANT, BUT GOD IS NEAR!⁸⁹

The poetry and literature of the period presents sweeping vistas and expansive prospects in order to buttress this impulse to find relief and escape in the landscape of the colonial frontier. The taste for this kind of escapism is perhaps indicated by Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s approval of Pringle’s poem. He praised it, according to William Hay’s introduction to the 1912 edition of Pringle’s works, as “among the two or three most perfect lyric Poems in our Language.”⁹⁰ This finds a visual equivalent in the horizontal views that accompanied many texts and were accorded a meaning which links them to the escapist notions of the day. The land is laid out in front of the viewing eye and can be unveiled by the eye which scans across the painted surface at will, without any impediment.

This is the evidence from the sketchbooks of Sir Charles D’Oyly. Of the one hundred and eighteen drawings in the two sketchbooks in the Government Archives in Cape Town seventeen could be described as having that horizontal impulse to survey and

⁸⁷ Rose, *Four Years in Southern Africa*, p. 207.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 207.

⁸⁹ Thomas Pringle, “Afar in the Desert”, lines 90-5.

⁹⁰ Chapman, *Southern African Literatures*, p. 98.

record the landscape, as well as the peculiar quality of suggesting recession over vast plains and unlimited opportunities for lateral expansion. The percentage of landscape representations in the sketchbooks is quite high and obviously occupied an important place in the artistic and visual imaging of South Africa for D'Oyly. Quite symbolically, and not altogether unexpectedly given what we know about the political implications of lateral visioning, the albums begin with such a "wide-screen" panorama view of the ubiquitous "Table Bay and Table Mountain." In "View from the Summit of Protea Hill looking North" (Plate 6), one can appreciate the impulse for command and control that goes along with the horizontal view. D'Oyly's view has an insistent horizontality that impinges on the character of the scene presented. Here he uses the wide expansive viewpoint to encompass the entire landscape, suggesting control, dominance and easeful engagement. Not only can the artist see a complete view, but also there are no impediments to his gaze, nothing to restrict his viewing of the colonial potential. This compositional technique allows the artist to symbolically suggest to the viewer his complete command of the landscape on all sides of the position from which he is sketching. This has the concomitant effect of removing any anxieties of control and reassuring the viewer as to the complete ease and dominance of the colonial interloper. The vastness of space and its covert invitation to explore and commandeer it is a subtext to many of the wide, panoramic views depicting and describing the landscape. For example, David Livingstone includes a plate of "Lake Ngami" from a drawing by Alfred Ryder in his book of travels (Plate 90).⁹¹ The very visual inconsequence and lack of incident in the depiction perfectly accords with, and is the visual translation of, the explorer's remark that "[w]e could detect no horizon where we stood looking South-South-East; nor could we form any idea of the extent of the lake except from the reports of the inhabitants."⁹² An unbounded prospect, the countryside presents a limitless arena in which to operate. These impulses may be rather infrequent at the beginning of the colonial encounter when, as we have seen, the concern is with presenting the control and mastery of the prospects of the landscape, leading to the overwhelming use of the vertical bird's-eye viewpoint. But as the need for escapism grew, we can see an increasing use of the horizontal view and vistas, together with descriptions of unbounded plains where English chivalric

⁹¹ Alfred Ryder was a young artist whose drawings Livingstone encountered while on expedition near Lake Ngami. The artist had died shortly before Livingstone's party reached them.

⁹² Livingstone, *Missionary Travels and Researches*, p. 66.

codes and masculine values could be asserted. For Captain Hughes, of Walmsley's Ruined Cities of Zulu Land, the view from the summit of a Southern African hill presents the prospect of "the country [lying] spread like a map before him."⁹³ And elsewhere, the effect of this is described:

A sense of wildness and of vastness creeps over those who look upon these wide plains in their native grandeur and stillness – a feeling of freedom, and of liberty, and at the same time of adoration and respect for the great Creator of all.⁹⁴

I will now explore how such feelings of domination and control could be further reinforced through a judicious and characteristic expression of landscape usage in the colonial context of mid-nineteenth century Southern Africa. I will argue that the representation of hunting and related activities allowed for an expression of this escapist tendency in the European engagement with this landscape space.

⁹³ Walmsley, The Ruined Cities of Zulu Land, Vol. 1, pp. 146-7.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

Hunting was the typical retreat for the man who was “tired of the tameness of things” in Britain.⁹⁵ It provided a whole raft of activities with attendant ideologies that were conducive to the Victorian gentleman and his code of behaviour. Some of these included the attempt to resurrect the medieval codes of chivalric leisure, the notion of command over both animal life and the natural world in general, as well as the sheer physical exhilaration and life of easeful simplicity that was associated with hunting in the colonial landscape. Hunting became part of the romance of Empire that satisfied and made possible a vicarious experience of power. In many ways it allowed the enterprising imperial hero to supplant the Christian knight.⁹⁶ All of these ideas contributed to making the representation of hunting scenes, in both text and image, tremendously popular and some of the most widely sought after forms of colonial landscape representation. In relation to Southern Africa, this was especially the case where the landscape space of the region was frequently alluded to in terms of its hunting and sporting potential. For many, “the broad plains and well-stocked prairies of that Shikaree’s heaven, the hunting-fields of South Africa” were the most alluring attraction of the region and its landscape.⁹⁷ Most travellers kept a sketch book where they could record their exploits with the intention of publishing it in the future.⁹⁸ This is evidenced by the proliferation of hunting books which, with their frequent cross-referencing and intertextual commentary, witness the deep cultural penetration of these texts and the ideas and fashions that they convey. In effect, hunting permitted the presentation of the true imperial hero. Here was a man who wanted to escape contemporary British society and all its harmful associations. However, he was not fundamentally opposed to that society or in ideological dispute with it. His quarrel was with the cloying domesticity that had overtaken British manhood and through the escape valve of colonial hunting, the imperial hero could present the best of British masculinity, acting in colonial spaces of the imperial periphery, while at the same time implicitly critiquing domestic society for its inability to provide such release.⁹⁹ The hero who hunts acts as a universal signifier for a manly, frequently aristocratic adventurer who brought the best of British character with him from home and exercised it to the full in at the periphery of empire.

⁹⁵ Haggard, *Allan Quartermain*, p. 94.

⁹⁶ Katz, *Rider Haggard and the Fiction of Empire*, p. 41.

⁹⁷ Walmsley, *The Ruined Cities of Zulu Land*, Vol. 1, p. 16.

⁹⁸ According to Dr Emil Holub, Barber kept a sketch book but this has disappeared. See Tabler (ed.), *Zambezia and Matabeleland in the Seventies*, p. 7.

⁹⁹ See Katz, *Rider Haggard and the Fiction of Empire*, p. 61.

Charles Coxe, one of the subscribers to Butler's book of hunting scenes, wrote to him, expressing his view of the use-value of Butler's work:

Allow me before concluding this to express my admiration of the work which is well worthy a place on every Drawing-room Table.¹⁰⁰

The display factor that Coxe alludes to in this letter gives an indication of the reasons for purchasing the book in the first place. Evidently, the various scenes of hunting and depictions of native animals were not primarily envisaged as scientific records destined to be shelved away in a gentlemanly library but rather were meant to be seen and enjoyed as exciting incidents about hunting in the colonies which could be appreciated by all who perused the text. One such person was Lord Farnham, who is described in an unsigned letter to Butler as "a confident stalker" suggesting that Farnham partook in the mid-nineteenth-century fashion for hunting that riveted the upper echelons of society and became a pervasive counterweight to the cloying restrictiveness of domestic society. The author of the letter confidently asserted that "[y]ou may add the name of Farnham to your [subscription] list."¹⁰¹ In relation to the attraction of the sporting potential of the region, D.S. Higgins comments that H. Rider Haggard saw much of the area surrounding Pietermaritzburg because when he was stationed in South Africa with Sir Henry Bulwer;

He participated in the country sports that the expatriate country squires adapted to the even greater opportunities provided in the African bush. Riding, hunting and shooting were considered to be as much the worthy occupation of a gentleman in Africa as in the rural counties of Britain.¹⁰²

The ideologies that contributed to such a cultural phenomenon coalesced around the ideas and notions of escapism that have been identified as peculiar to the Victorian imperial situation.

The model for Butler's book was the successful publishing ventures of Captain William Cornwallis Harris. The demand for Harris' book led to it going through five editions in just thirteen years, and becoming a standard reference work for all subsequent authors. Even a modest production like Captain Henry Butler's book,

¹⁰⁰ Coxe to Butler, 25th July 1841; TCD, No. 31.

¹⁰¹ Unsigned letter to Butler, ca. 1840; TCD, No. 24.

¹⁰² Higgins, *Rider Haggard: The Great Storyteller*, p. 20.

South African Sketches, sold at a proportionally the same rate as a Trollope novel.¹⁰³

The literary and visual records of hunting were prized as authentic souvenirs and accurate records of the hunting trips so beloved of the army personnel on leave at the Cape. But, more than this, they encoded an ideology that conformed to the escapist tendencies of the age. In the wide, expansive and untrammelled plains of the colonial periphery one could, according to these texts and images, exercise, hone and improve those faculties that were no longer available at home. Captain Drayson is again instructive in this regard when he suggests:

The sports of Africa are excellent as remedies against attacks of ennui. Should any gentleman feel that he has finished everything in Europe, and is disposed for sport and excitement, let him at once give up white kids and patents, and take to skin shoes and leather breeches.¹⁰⁴

The relationship between artifice and living a natural life according to one's basic instincts is established in this passage as being based on the hunter and his closer communion with nature in the Southern African landscape as presented to the imperial interloper during the nineteenth century.

The English love of such scenes was long-standing and was recorded as early as the seventeenth century by Francois de la Rochefoucauld in A Frenchman's England: "One of the Englishmen's greatest joys is in field sports – they are all quite mad about them."¹⁰⁵ The interest in sporting narratives never really subsided, with the market for visual depictions keeping pace with published textual accounts throughout the nineteenth century, because of the kinds of ideas and associations that were grafted onto the hunting image and narrative. So sought after were these images of sporting life, expressing healthy freedom, exhilaration and unconcerned relief from the pressures of contemporary life, that Rudolf Ackermann Junior set up at 191 Regent St. in August 1825, only to change the name of his establishment soon after to "The Eclipse Sporting Gallery." Henry Alken was gainfully employed at this gallery establishing his reputation in making the drawings of hunting scenes for translation

¹⁰³ It appears that Butler's book sold quite well. By August 1842 only 62 of the original 350 copies were left with Ackermann. In comparison, even a successful work like Anthony Trollope's The Three Clerks (1857) had 123 copies remaining after one year of publication out of an original stock of 750 released onto the market. See John Sutherland, Victorian Novelists and Publishers [London, 1988], p. 14.

¹⁰⁴ Drayson, Sporting Scenes amongst the Kaffirs of South Africa, p. 321

¹⁰⁵ Anthony Vandervell and Charles Coles, Game and the English Landscape [London, 1980], p. 59.

into the dazzling aquatints that adorned many of Ackermann's publications.¹⁰⁶ In the Sporting Review of 1841, "C.K." observed that:

No branch of literature has so rapidly advanced in popularity, as that relating to sporting practice and incident. A dozen years ago there was but a solitary periodical (and sad and solitary enough it was God knows) that appeared as the chronicle of rural sports while the daily and weekly journals appropriated about as much of their space to such matters as they gave to the publisher's imprint.¹⁰⁷

Of course, the foreign hunting book lent itself, almost by definition, to more exotic and exciting scenes than one was liable to experience at a hunt in the United Kingdom. It could cater to those people already in thrall to the exhilaration of hunting in the British Isles. Speaking at Birmingham in 1858, John Bright articulated the notion that the Empire was "a gigantic system of out-of-door relief for the aristocracy of Great Britain."¹⁰⁸ Rouleyn Gordon Cumming, the best-selling author of South African hunting adventures expressed his preference for the foreign climes of Africa. His opinions perhaps go some way toward explaining why foreign sporting books and accounts were so successful. Looking down on the vast grazing herds on the veldt he muses:

I felt that it was all my own, and that I at length possessed the undisputed sway over a forest, in comparison with which the tame and herded narrow bounds of the wealthiest European sportsmen sink into utter insignificance.¹⁰⁹

Frederick Barber writes about his life as a hunter and adds veracity to his tale, making the claim for the physical, spiritual and moral virtues of a hunting life in the following terms:

Nobody except those who have experienced it can form any idea of the joy and happiness and independence of a hunter's life in the wilds of Africa. The health and vigour from the daily exercise and pure air, the absence of all

¹⁰⁶ John Ford, Ackermann 1783-1983 : The Business of Art [London, 1983], p. 161.

¹⁰⁷ The Sporting Review, December 1841, p. 57.

¹⁰⁸ Quoted in A.G. Hopkins, "Back to the Future : From Natural History to Imperial History" in Past and Present, No. 164 (Aug. 1999), pp. 198-243; p. 210.

¹⁰⁹ Rouleyn Gordon Cumming, Five Years of a Hunter's Life in the Far Interior of South Africa with Notices of the Native Tribes and Anecdotes of the Chase of the Lion, Elephant, Hippopotamus, Giraffe, Rhinoceros, etc., 2 vols. [London, 1850], Vol. 1, p. 260.

worry, post or bills, and all the useless conventionalities of life and fashion. To sleep like a child and awake to the song of birds.¹¹⁰

The image of the hunter ranging over the landscape was not just an offshoot of colonial mental appropriation of land, although this was a subsidiary benefit for the colonial project. It also allowed writers to evolve the kind of “Muscular Christianity” being posited in the United Kingdom as an antidote to the soporific mid-Victorian values of routine and stolid domesticity.¹¹¹ It involved a combination of the best aspects of militant Christianity and its moral code with the physicality of instinctive existence in a state of nature, what Philip Mason called “the strenuous Puritan Romanticism of the Victorians, of Charles Kingsley and Arnold of Rugby.”¹¹² The new incumbent of the See of Cape Town was described in such laudatory terms by Haggard in 1875, as a “specimen of Muscular Christianity.”¹¹³ General Viscount Wolseley saw “strength and fearlessness [as] natural characteristics of our race” and he yoked hunting and the physical invigoration together in order to explain the superiority of the British race:

It is the nature of the Anglo-Saxon race to love those manly sports which entail violent exercise, with more or less danger to limb if not life... This craving for the constant practice and employment of our muscles is in our blood, and the result is a development of bodily strength unknown and unsurpassed by any other breed of men.¹¹⁴

Selous tells the story of George Wood, a native of West Yorkshire who fulfilled the ideal of the Muscular Christian. A cultivated and educated man, he found the restraints of civilization intolerable. Even leaving so rustic a place as Gubulawayo in Rhodesia, no more than a cluster of huts, “his gait got noticeably lighter.” And this relief was accentuated by the pleasure to be derived from hunting. Selous himself recounts his experience in pursuing the elephant:

I found it [elephant hunting] so absorbingly interesting and exciting that I never had a moment’s mental weariness and was always perfectly happy.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁰ Tabler (ed.), *Zambezia and Matabeleland in the Seventies*, p. 21.

¹¹¹ See Joseph Bristow, *Empire Boys : Adventures in a Man’s World* [London : Unwin Hyman, 1991].

¹¹² Taylor, *The Mighty Nimrod*, p. 180.

¹¹³ Haggard, *The Days of my Life*, Vol. 1, p. 22.

¹¹⁴ General Viscount Garnett Wolseley, “The Negro as Soldier” in *The Fortnightly Review*, Vol. XLIV, No. CCLXIV (1st Dec., 1888), pp. 689-703; p. 692.

¹¹⁵ Taylor, *The Mighty Nimrod*, p. 63.

Cultural products such as travelogues, novels and images were placed within this ideology of escapism and active heroism being promoted as attainable at the imperial periphery and desirable for the Englishman. The public longed for books, texts and images that would herald the moral rectitude and might of the British Empire.

Haggard's King Solomon's Mines was a success because it "clearly expressed the spirit and the interests of the age." As D.S. Higgins goes on to point out:

Quartermain's cult of manliness, the virtues of which were so closely linked to the muscular Christianity [sic] then the vogue, had immense appeal both for the bourgeoisie, softened by affluence, and for the proletariat, emasculated by monotonous labour.¹¹⁶

And so Haggard's contention asserted at the beginning of Allan Quartermain, that the reading of such texts could be actively involved in creating "the highest rank whereto we can attain – the state and dignity of English Gentlemen."¹¹⁷ Indeed, E.F.

Sandeman confirms the impact of travellers' tales on the young colonial immigrant:

During our voyage out we had passed away many an hour listening to narratives and anecdotes of sport, travel and life in the interior, from the old hunters and traders on board who were returning to the colony. At first I used to listen with feelings of intense interest and wonder; but gradually these feelings gave way to envy, and a wish to see for myself some of the strange sights, to lead the same free, wild, half-civilized life, and experience the excitements and vicissitudes of fortune which they spoke of with such enthusiasm, evidently themselves considering it to be the only life worth living.¹¹⁸

The refinement and concomitant decadence of the domestic scene was eschewed in favour of an allegedly purer, more honest style of behaviour available to the hunter. This even filtered down to the style of writing used to convey these ideologies. In his dedication to the Duke of Argyll, R.G. Cumming pleaded:

My volumes lay claim to no other merit than that of a faithful narration of facts as they occurred: and having been written far away from literary

¹¹⁶ Higgins, Rider Haggard : The Great Storyteller, p. 84.

¹¹⁷ Haggard, Allan Quartermain, dedication.

¹¹⁸ E.F. Sandeman, Eight Months in an Ox-Wagon : Reminiscences of Boer Life [London, 1880], p. 18.

appliances, and often on occasions when the cravings of hunger were a more pressing consideration than the graces of composition, I trust to your indulgence to overlook in the success of my rifle the failure of my pen.¹¹⁹

Paradoxically, failing to live up to the standard of polished literary art was considered an authorial virtue and something to be actively striven after. *The Spectator*'s review of the book commented that "the very faults of Mr. Cumming tend to bring out the qualities of his subjects."¹²⁰ This profession of simplicity became a recurring mantra, repeated by Leyland, another author-hunter, in 1866:

In the following pages I do not for a moment pretend to classical or literary style. The facts and incidents related are truthful narratives noted down at the times of their occurrence, in simple language.¹²¹

These professions of, and intimate concern with, realism were used as a foil to reinforce the notion of authorial presence and give the weight of veracity to an account. They also set hunting within a context of instinctual behaviour whereby more erudite pursuits had an almost pejorative association – one connected to the decadence and decay of European civilization which was expunged on the hunting grounds of Africa. So pervasive and influential did this trend become that the artist, Thomas Baines, felt the need to defend his interest in zoology at the expense of the improvement of his hunting trophy cabinet. In *Explorations in South West Africa* (1864), he apologetically excused his interest in the ecology of this unexplored environment through which he is passing:

Indeed at the risk of incurring the reader's contempt, I confess that I can never quite get over the feeling that the wonderful products of nature are objects to be admired rather than destroyed; and this, I am afraid, sometimes keeps me looking at a buck when I ought to be minding my hindsights.¹²²

The physical exertion and moral catharsis that the wilderness embodied for Europeans, expressed in the texts quoted above, is a direct carry-over, I would argue, from the works of people like Harris and Butler. In Harris' "Driving in an Eland" (Plate 91), we see the European astride his horse with his rifle and a native hunter together with his assegei and shield, both training their respective sights on the rather

¹¹⁹ Cumming, *Five Years of a Hunter's Life* (1850), dedication.

¹²⁰ R.G. Cumming, *Five Years' Adventures in the Far Interior of South Africa* [London, 1856], p. 374.

¹²¹ J. Leyland, *Adventures in the Far Interior of South Africa* [London, 1866], p. vi.

¹²² Baines, *Explorations in South West Africa*, p. 34.

flaccid and helpless-looking eland situated between them. This is the visual playing out of Harris' opinion of the object of the hunt which was "to sweep rapidly over a great extent of countryside... This method of proceeding not only greatly increased the probability of romantic peril, adventure, and discovery, but also enhanced our prospect of sport."¹²³ The visual correlation between the European and native huntsmen adds a primitive quality to the activity, as if this is the eternal role of mankind to hunt and capture the game of the field. The inclusion of the pair seems to suggest that despite his obvious social, cultural and technical sophistication, the European can also return to and rediscover the primordial and common roots of his ancestors in the activity of hunting. John MacKenzie cites the opinion of Theodore Roosevelt who, with his son Kermit, was a frequent visitor to Africa hunting trips. For Roosevelt, Africa formed a link with man's distant past, with "matters primitive and elemental." Thus, to travel in Africa was to journey in time as well as in space.¹²⁴ However, the image simultaneously works on another level of meaning, whereby the European is invested with a certain superiority by virtue of his technical and equine prowess. The small figure of the native is rather dwarfed by the eland. The suitably attired gentlemen, in full command of their steeds and with guns at the ready could plunder an enormous amount of game in a good day's hunting, simply by virtue of their mobility and mastery of weaponry. The explicit inclusion and prominence of the rifle is illustrative of the power balance in the image. Martin Green suggests that "guns [have] a world character of being especially European and modern system products."¹²⁵ The technological superiority and personal security provided by wielding firearms is a recurring motif in many cultural products of the period. They are also mixed up with "the phallogocentric beliefs about the therapeutic effects of shooting" that were prevalent throughout the nineteenth century.¹²⁶ These images are of a piece with scenes in Walmsley's novel where Captain Hughes' rifle saves first the helpless native Masheesh and then is used to prevent a charging animal from killing the unconscious Isabel.¹²⁷ Thus, the ideas of modernity, progress and European

¹²³ Harris, *Wild Sports*, p. 22.

¹²⁴ John M. MacKenzie, "Heroic Myths of Empire" in John M. MacKenzie (ed.), *Popular Imperialism and the Military, 1850-1950* [Manchester, 1992], pp. 109-38; p. 114.

¹²⁵ Green, *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire*, p. 13.

¹²⁶ David Bunn, "Relocations : Landscape theory, South African landscape practice, and the transmission of political value" in *Pretexts*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Summer 1993), pp. 44-67; p. 56.

¹²⁷ Walmsley, *The Ruined Cities of Zulu Land*, Vol. 1, p. 73; Vol. 2, p. 15.

technological superiority are intimately yoked together in this image just as they became part of the imperial ideology of superiority and domination.

The motif of horsemanship and riders being in control of their mounts has a classical basis that has persisted throughout the history of art.¹²⁸ The “natural” ruler of the land was seen to manifest his qualities of leadership and steady control in the form of equestrian prowess – “husbanding the strength of his stead [sic].”¹²⁹ The motif of horsemanship, whilst on the one hand confirming the status of the protagonists as hunters, also has overtones of control, mastery and dominance. Velázquez’ painting of “Don Baltasar Carlos at the Riding School” is a particularly interesting example (Plate 92). This depiction of the son and heir to Philip IV metaphorically links schooling in horsemanship with learning about leadership. And the ability to control one’s horse is a long-standing symbol of one’s control over the landscape, the countryside and the people. Van Dyck’s “Equestrian Portrait of Charles I,” corresponds to contemporary texts that imparted advice to the ruler of the nation through equestrian metaphors (Plate 93). Thus, the author of the seventeenth-century Spanish text, the Idea of a Christian Prince recommends the “taming of the colt of power” by means of the “bit of will, the bridle of reason, the reins of policy, the switch of justice, and the spur of courage” but, above all, “the stirrups of prudence.”¹³⁰

The same exhilaration is evident in Butler’s plate of “The Eland Blown and Tsitse River” (Plate 94). It depicts the freedom and wild excitement of the European who chases the game beyond the restraining frame of the image. As he trains his rifle on the animal, the hunter is symbolically exercising his mastery over the South African environment. Butler’s text also alludes to the cathartic nature of the sport:

The Bontebok Flats, although anything but flat in many places, form altogether perhaps the finest galloping ground in the world. As far as ever the eye can reach, and in many cases two horizons in span, is a succession of hill, valley, and plain, traversed occasionally by rocky ridges; the ant hills three or

¹²⁸ Sir Roy Strong, Van Dyck : Charles I on Horseback [London, 1972], p. 49.

¹²⁹ Butler, South African Sketches, p. 7.

¹³⁰ Quoted in Burke, Eyewitnessing, p. 61.

four feet high, and hog holes of greater depth, with which the surface of South Africa is in general disfigured and riding impeded, here nowhere exists.¹³¹

The hunter could range unmolested over the countryside and exercise the kind of manly simplicity that was unavailable in Victorian Britain. The ability of the European to capture and conquer the game, and by extension the landscape, is implicit in these depictions.

“Life on the Veldt” (Plate 95) is a photographic scene taken from Photographs of South Africa, which sought to provide “the most perfect picture of the country ever published.”¹³² This image shows the durability of those scenes of hunting and the persistence of meaning that was being ascribed to them from the outset. The presence of the image in a book that purported to present an image of a progressive and forward-thinking South Africa to the domestic, metropolitan audience is an interesting example of the place of this type of scene in the contemporary world. By the latter part of the nineteenth century, those urban conglomerations and the perils and annoyances that accompany them have encroached on this once-wild sub-continent. Hunting texts themselves frequently tell the tale of doomed species and the decline in game population. The book is replete with the myriad depictions of towns, urban settlements and examples of Western technological development, many of which have been analyzed in this study. Therefore, this photograph is uncharacteristic of the book and is implicitly contrasted with the material that constitutes the bulk of the images. The letterpress is quite explicit in how this image is to be read:

Here is a picture aptly illustrating the fresh free life of the ‘Veld’ far from the trammels of civilisation.¹³³

The visual imagery incorporates all that could be ascribed to the escapist ideology of the landscape. The “fine old buck” illustrates the activities engaged in by those pictured in the photograph. And this image is itself based, it seems to me, on earlier renditions of hunting at the colonial periphery. Butler’s “Off-saddled near Death Valley” (Plate 96) also shows a group of European hunters relaxing after a day’s chase. The little details in this image reinforce the ideology of hunting as outlined above. As Butler and his white companions sit on the veldt one of them raises his

¹³¹ Butler, South African Sketches, p. 5.

¹³² Photographs of South Africa, p. iii.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

glass, as if toasting the day's sport and alluding to the pleasure derived from this activity. The black servant sits with his back turned towards his European masters in a gesture deeply illustrative of the balance (or rather, imbalance) of power between native and European at the colonial periphery. Set to tend to the preparation of food, his deferential pose symbolizes much of the social and racial issues that would beset the future South Africa in the twentieth century.

The presence of the wagon in the photographic image is also indicative of the escapist tendencies being promoted in the image, and a throwback to those illustrated texts that proliferated at the outset of the European engagement with the landscape where the wagon was a very prominent feature.¹³⁴ Haggard's *Quartermain* pronounces that "his wagon is the hunter's home, as much as his house is that of the civilized person."¹³⁵ And the overarching ideological message, here contained in the visual and epigraphic qualities of the texts, could easily have been translated from Haggard's account of a similar phenomenon in his first published work:

There is pleasure in the canvas-sheltered meal, in the after-pipe and evening talk of the things of the day that has been and those of the day to come, here, amid these wild surroundings, which is unfelt and unknown in scenes of greater comfort and higher civilisation. There is a sense of freshness and freedom in the wind-swept waggon-bed that is not to be exchanged for the softest couch in the most luxurious chamber. And when at length the morning comes, sweet in the scent of flowers, and glad in the voice of birds, it finds us ready to greet it, not hiding it from us with canopy and blind, as is the way of cities.¹³⁶

In addition to the escape valve that was provided by the hunting scene one can appreciate how this escapist tendency also aided the development and maintenance of a colonial hegemony. It helped to cement notions of British imperial power which may have been felt to have been under assault at home through the "softening" of the population. The depiction of hunting scenes was a prime vehicle for conveying,

¹³⁴ For example, Andrew A. Anderson, *Twenty-Five Years in a Waggon in the Gold Regions of Africa*, 2 vols. [London, 1887].

¹³⁵ H. Rider Haggard, "Hunter Quartermain's Story" in H. Rider Haggard, *The Best Short Stories of H. Rider Haggard*, edited by Peter Haining [London, 1981], pp. 26-41; p. 30.

¹³⁶ Haggard, "A Zulu War Dance", pp. 100-101.

articulating and solidifying colonial hegemony and pretensions to expansion in the period. The quintessentially British pursuit of hunting game often elided and camouflaged the fact that these scenes were occurring in distant lands not yet brought under the civilizing influence and political domination of the Empire. British cultural norms and forms of activity were projected onto these areas before the politicians had sanctioned or proclaimed their absorption into the Empire. In the words of John MacKenzie, “hunting afforded the elite...a symbolic dominance of the environment, a means of asserting boundaries of territory, action and behaviour.”¹³⁷ The hunting scene allowed Europeans to evince a control and mastery over this alien landscape in a way that was a precursor of the kind of political treaties that formally recognized the advance of Empire. In one of his articles, “Nimrod” speaks of “the romance of hunting – the remote scenes we should perhaps never visit for their own sake, the broken sunlight glinting through the copse and gleaming fen.”¹³⁸ This description reminds us that any portrayal or description of the hunting scene involved a considerable investment in landscape imagery with all the ideological baggage that implies. Camped at Reit River, the author of “Desert Sports” pronounces that “the country around still presents the same features of sterility and utter desolation, yet nevertheless, there is a certain indescribable wilderness about an ‘African’ landscape, that rarely fails to leave a pleasing impression on the mind of the beholder.”¹³⁹ I would contend that it was precisely this desolation and apparent lack of habitation that appealed so much to the colonial traveller. The classic colonialist description of landscape is one of emptiness and solitude. Hunting scenes and their accompanying texts often reiterate the barrenness of the South African soil and posit it as completely devoid of inhabitants. Harris epitomizes this strategy of justification in his recalling of the sight from the boundary of the Cape Colony, looking across the Orange River to Kuruman:

Extensive – to the eye boundless – plains of arid land, with neither eminence nor hollow, were on all sides expanded to the view...Over the wide desolation of the stony waste not a tree could be discerned, and the only impression on the mind was – that of utter and hopeless sterility.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ John M. MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature* [Manchester, 1988], p. 80.

¹³⁸ Quoted in Arts Council, *British Sporting Painting*, p. 37.

¹³⁹ Anon., “The Desert Sports of South Africa”, p. 421.

¹⁴⁰ Harris, *Wild Sports*, p. 38.

The imperialist's concern to portray his catchment area as empty, unpopulated and in need of settlement is further reinforced by Harris' statement that "our caravan was the only object in the landscape upon which the eye could repose."¹⁴¹ By manipulating his language and the description of the scene, Harris can implicitly sanction European presence in this sub-tropical alien environment. He continues, with authoritarian certitude;

For hundreds of miles, therefore, the eye is not greeted by the smallest trace of human industry, or by any vestige of human habitation – the wild and interminable expanse ever presenting the same appearance – that of one vast uninhabited solitude.¹⁴²

These scenes of unspoilt and undefiled nature, implicitly ripe for European colonization, are best conveyed in visual terms in Harris' follow-up to the Wild Sports, Portraits of the Game and Wild Animals of Southern Africa (1840). In this work all of the specimens are "delineated from the Life in their Native Haunts."¹⁴³ For example, "The Quagga" (Plate 57) stands in the midst of "hundreds of miles...[of] level and treeless expanse of serene and sunny plains."¹⁴⁴ The ideological role of these scenes can be discerned when Harris announces that "the eye wanders on, without the smallest check,"¹⁴⁵ embodying the idea of the "colonial gaze" formulated by Mary Louise Pratt.¹⁴⁶ By virtue of its unmolested and limitless powers of seeing, this "imperial eye" appropriates the foreign landscape into the European epistemological and visual archive. In Butler's "Chase of the Hartebeest" (Plate 97), the role of the eye is physically transferred to the hunter's exploits as he ranges unchecked and unimpeded over the solitary landscape of South Africa. Butler ascribes the "magic of the scene" to "the number, the size and beauty of the game, the prospect ever varying with each fitful change of the atmosphere, the purity of the air, the vastness of the plains over which he ranges [which] all conspire to produce and sustain the tumult of excitement."¹⁴⁷ This combination of solitary exhilaration and the hunter's freedom to

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 38.

¹⁴² Ibid., p. 307.

¹⁴³ Harris, Portraits of the Game and Wild Animals, title page.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁴⁶ See Mary Louise Pratt, Imperial Eyes : Travel Writing and Transculturation [London, 1992].

¹⁴⁷ Butler, South African Sketches, p. 7.

encroach upon this wilderness is evident in "The Game Fleeing" (Plate 98). It seems as if, in the words of Katz, the "physical immensity of Africa enlarges the man."¹⁴⁸

The idea of the European imposing his culture, habits and way of life on the virgin soil of Africa is symbolically conveyed in Plate III where the "Quagga are chased into the Hills" (Plate 99). As well as giving the viewer a privileged viewing position from where he can see the animals but cannot himself be seen, Butler has added a further ideological buttress to support his cultural appropriation of the South African landscape. In the foreground a rock – a symbol of the plain, resonant with permanence and equated with the possession and longevity of occupation is inscribed "H.B. del. 1838." Butler has, quite literally, written European culture onto the landscape. By inscribing his name on the rock, the original geological occupant of the plain, Butler affirms his right to be there and also advertises his European mastery and superiority as having the means to effect a change in that landscape, whether that be by carving one's name on rocks, shooting game or settling the region.

As the nineteenth century progressed an increasingly widely held perception developed which saw industrial capitalism as the root cause of a crisis of value in society. David Bunn has argued that the recognition of this state of affairs can explain the emergence of notions of an enclosed, hermetically-sealed, primitive space in which existed an imaginary repository of value forms lost in the process of industrialism, urbanization and development.¹⁴⁹ Many of these forms were encoded in the literature and images that explained and promoted the African landscape to a domestic audience throughout the nineteenth century. Indeed so popular did tales of daring-do become that for the author trying to work in a realist vein, presenting African life as it appeared to them in reality, the task was a thankless one requiring apology and explanation - "those brilliant phrases and shapes which the imagination sees in far-off lands are not for him to portray."¹⁵⁰ Here Olive Schreiner contrasts those works of fantasy, imaginative fancy and adventure that are invariably written in Piccadilly or the Strand, with the materials at her disposal. Her integrity disallows her

¹⁴⁸ Katz, *Rider Haggard and the Fiction of Empire*, p. 67.

¹⁴⁹ David Bunn, "Comparative Barbarism: Game Reserves, Sugar-Plantations, and the Modernization of South African landscape" in Kate Darian-Smith, Liz Gunner and Sarah Nuttall (eds.), *Text, Theory, Space: Land, Literature and History in South Africa and Australia* [London, 1996], pp. 37-52; p. 38.

¹⁵⁰ Schreiner, *The Story of an African Farm*, p. xiv.

to conform to the craze for escapism and wonderment that often clung around, and was demanded of, the portrayal of the colonial space:

Sadly he must squeeze the colour from his brush, and dip it into the grey pigments around him. He must paint what lies before him.¹⁵¹

Schreiner acknowledges the unpalatability of her own style for the domestic audience. The colonial landscape became a space where dreams could be fulfilled and the life of the chivalrous Christian gentleman, master of all he surveys could be lived out. The representation of open space and the various ideologies attendant on hunting were used in order to add this particular inflection to the representation of the colonial landscape.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p. xiv.

CONCLUSION

"But that way of looking [at the landscape] came to me later, has come to me with greater force now, with the writing."

V.S. Naipaul, 1987.

In Douglas Blackburn's novel, Richard Hartley, Prospector (1905), the landscape of Southern Africa in which the action is set seems redolent with the imaginings and imagings of that space discussed in this study. The narrator of the tale, positioned on a lofty kop, observes the flat map of the veldt "seen through that crystalline South African haze that seems to make the atmosphere even clearer, and adds a beauty that no words have adequately described or painter caught on canvas."¹ This study has explored how and why various representations of Southern African space entered the cultural bloodstream as Britain's involvement with the region, both politically and socially, increased. The notion that there was a landscape space that could be assessed, assimilated and represented according to British mores, values and criteria is central to this argument.

The existence of such an "idea" of landscape is corroborated, perhaps slightly ironically, by texts written in the nineteenth century that advert to its very absence. The prospect of seeing a "typical" landscape and the diverse expectations attendant on that visualization were highly affected by the representation of that space found in books or seen in illustrations and which moulded travellers' understanding of the African landscape. For example, describing the view from the top of Elliot's Hill, Captain Alexander relies on his readership sharing a standard cultural vocabulary when he says: "From its summit a common African prospect was obtained."² Marianne North, writing of her trip to South Africa in 1892, was disappointed with the scenery. Her disenchantment is explained by the lack of conjunction between her received view of Africa and the reality. She remarks that, although the views were

¹ Douglas Blackburn, Richard Hartley, Prospector [Edinburgh, 1905], p. 1.

² Alexander, An Expedition of Discovery into the Interior of Africa, Vol. 1, p. 178.

“certainly fine”, there was “nothing characteristic of Africa” in them. In fact, according to North, Cumberland was “nearer and prettier.”³ The deliberations of Thomas Baines are also instructive in this regard. As an artist, he noted how he kept a diary specifically for the purpose of subsequently making visual images. For him the textual was only a means through which visual impressions were recorded for future translation into images. However, even he is influenced by cultural conditioning and he comes to Africa with preconceived notions constructed by literary and artistic sources. In his journal, when he remarks that “the country began to look more like Africa,” Baines is scanning the surrounding countryside for those characteristics which conform to the prefabricated cultural template of that landscape.⁴ All of these observations suggest specific ideas about how Africa should appear which are based on culturally-indoctrinated ideas and not connected to the reality of the space. As well as illustrating the problematic nature of travelogues and images of foreign countries *vis-à-vis* realistic and value-neutral representation, it also emphasizes just how dependent travellers were on the knowledge absorbed in a European reading-room about a foreign space. The knowledge imbibed by these writers and travellers was based on that archive of knowledge that has been posited as a major receptacle of British ideas about landscape space and their interaction with it. In this self-referential nexus of ideas textual accounts and images are as much reliant on their cultural forbearers as on the reality they purport to represent.

The analysis forwarded in this study has been concerned with the reconstruction of the circumstances related to the creation of the visual ideas about Southern African landscape space that circulated in the nineteenth century and that have had such an enduring and influential impact on the perceptions of that region. The visual techniques used by British travellers, scientists and artists, as well as those who worked within the imperial, scientific and aesthetic aegis of the British Empire, in order to explore, record and visualize the landscape is central to an understanding of how such images and attendant texts played a role in the construction and naturalization of a British metaphysical control over the environment. My purpose here has been to examine a broad range of material representative of the British interaction with the Southern African landscape and environment. The pertinence of

³ Marianne North, *A Vision of Eden* [1893; reprint Exeter, 1980], p. 212.

⁴ Baines, *Journal of Residence*, Vol. 2, p. 51.

the visual products and the textual references that I have chosen was assessed on the basis of their projected impact on metropolitan audiences viewing and reading this material in Britain, as well as on the variety of professional and personal concerns that the material conveyed. Much of the visual material discussed here was incorporated into the travel books that formed such a crucial part of British knowledge about the spaces of the burgeoning empire. Paintings and photographs were used to educate and entertain metropolitan audiences through lectures, exhibitions and public displays. And, some of this relatively high-brow material eventually found its way back into printed circulation in the form of engravings and woodcuts in popular illustrated newspapers. The cyclical nature of this information flow helped to create an environment in the British metropolis whereby knowledge, information and visual stimuli were constantly circulating.

The lure of Africa for the European artist has a long and rather vague history. David Bindman has highlighted Tiepolo's frescoed staircase of the Residenz in Würzburg as an early example of the European artist's visual dialogue with his own culture's perceptions about Africa.⁵ Consisting of complex allegories, this visual dialogue reflects the changing aesthetic tastes and preoccupations within Europe itself as well as the changing relationship between the European and African continents. As exploration and the attendant increase in knowledge advanced, the concrete physical reality of Africa loomed large in the sight of those artists charged with presenting it to European eyes. While there may be a yawning gulf between the physical appearance and the perceived aesthetic value of Tiepolo's frescoes and a hydrographical drawing made for a European expedition to the River Congo, a botanical sketch of a new plant species or a picturesque reverie on a colonial settlement, the ultimate aims are in fact not too dissimilar. Each artist strives to record and present, within the aesthetic registers pertaining to his own cultural milieu, images that convey a particular view of Africa to European eyes. The differing registers which landscape imagery serves, conditioned by the facts, opinions and beliefs in cultural circulation at the time, illustrate its polysemic quality. Rather than a fixed artefact, it becomes, for British travellers in the nineteenth century, a site of negotiation and visual exploration where the motives behind imperial expansion and colonization are open to question and are

⁵ David Bindman, *Ape to Apollo: Aesthetics and the Idea of Race in the 18th Century* [London, 2002], pp. 27-8.

continually being restructured by the modifying European cultural and political relationship with the landscape. While this study has not attempted a chronological reconstruction of the British engagement with the landscape space of Southern Africa, its broad approach serves as a template for understanding European involvement with Southern Africa and perhaps the wider context of the non-European world in the nineteenth century. The primary process of familiarization and codification of the landscape according to dominant aesthetic tropes and domestic artistic concerns provides the basis for an initial incorporation of the landscape space within European registers of meaning – creating the foundation for an imperial archive that, as I have argued, played a crucial role in the epistemological management of the landscape space. This is followed by a diversification of European reactions to the landscape that allowed for the central domestic concerns such as the encouragement of colonization and the spreading of the Christian faith to be projected onto the landscape. By 1890, the “Stanley and Africa Exhibition” could claim that the popular imagination of the British nation had been touched by “the varied story of the Dark Continent.”⁶ The scientists, explorers, travellers, missionaries and hunters who used the Southern African landscape to create a space in which their own particular concerns would be reflected and mobilized partook in this process. David Bunn has pointed out that “a work of landscape is able to articulate and naturalise many forms of spatial experience.”⁷ In Southern Africa competing ideologies of significance sit side by side as explorers and artists present the varied terrain of this region in terms that conform to particular professional and personal concerns. The role of visual images and the visual imagination in these processes is vital in view of the fact that the act of seeing was a major ingredient in the Victorian pursuit of knowledge.⁸ Fuelling the initial aesthetic engagement with the landscape a survey of how this space was codified and presented to European audiences forms the core of this study.

⁶ Quoted in Driver, *Geographies Militant*, p. 151.

⁷ David Bunn, “Relocations : Landscape theory, South African landscape practice, and the transmission of political value” in *Pretexts*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Summer 1993), pp. 44-67; p. 54.

⁸ Tony Hughes-d’Aeth, “History by Installment : The Australian Centenary and the *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia*, 1886-1888” in Julie F Codell (ed.), *Imperial Co-Histories : National Identities and the British and Colonial Press* [London, 2003], pp. 219-41; p. 229. Hughes attributes the “explosion” of illustrated publications in the nineteenth century to this phenomenon.

The scenes of landscape space examined in this study have always held a precarious place in “the land of their birth.”⁹ Their position, as works made outside traditionally defined aesthetic parameters, is negligible in the canonical history of art. The Randlords, those self-made men who earned millions of pounds on the goldfields of South Africa in the late-nineteenth century delivered a damning, if not unexpected judgement on works of art produced in, and inspired by, the country where they made their fortunes. As the most prolific collectors of art in their day, they concentrated almost exclusively on paintings in the mainstream of art history. The few who deigned to collect and display so-called “Africana” were adamant that this ought to be kept separate from the pictures painted by acknowledged European masters of the High Art tradition.¹⁰ Even Alfred Gordon-Brown, whose work gave a major boost to the studying of South African-produced art, deemed it necessary to forewarn readers that the artists were included by virtue of their existence and connection to South Africa rather than the quality of their output.¹¹ Many of those who worked, explored and recorded the Southern African landscape acknowledged that they were not artists by profession or even by inclination. Indeed, General Gordon of Khartoum and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh are just some of the more famous historical figures that Gordon-Brown cites as having made sketches and drawings relating to South Africa in the nineteenth century.¹² Many other artists worked in an anonymous capacity. The visual records made by these lack the status of academic approval for reasons of geographical remoteness, naïvety of technique and subject matter. Yet, as Tony Bonyhady points out in relation to Australia, the expedition artists and colonial landscape painters who worked in these extra-European spaces “reconciled two potentially conflicting aims of producing works of art and conveying information by placing informative content within a high art context.”¹³ The engagement effected by the travellers, explorers and interlopers with the Southern African environment analyzed in this was all the more immediate for its intermingling of aesthetic, scientific and topographical impulses. Although it may have been less modified by academic concerns, it still preserves, perhaps even to a heightened degree, the intense

⁹ Major Selwyn to Butler, 12th August 1841; TCD, No. 36.

¹⁰ Michael Stevenson, Art and Aspirations: The Randlords of South Africa and Their Collections [Vlaeberg, 2002], pp. 74, 90.

¹¹ Gordon-Brown, Pictorial Africana, p. 1.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 154, 166. For a reproduction of the Duke of Edinburgh’s sketch of the Cape may be found in O.W. Brierley and Rev’d J. Miller’s Cruise of the Galatea [London, 1869].

¹³ Bonyhady, Images in Opposition, p. 87.

intellectual engagement of the people who went to South Africa when it was only shrugging off the title of *terra incognita*. The missionaries' work, the colonists' dreams and the hunters' reveries are all the more vitally conveyed by the people themselves or those charged with writing and illustrating for a particular audience.

The theoretical and critical approach adopted in the analysis of these nineteenth-century images is one that has been influenced by the propitious academic circumstances of recent years. The objectives of this study of British imagining and imaging of the landscape of Southern Africa have been greatly advanced by a new academic acceptance of the validity of the visual products described and contextualized above. There has been an almost continual overhauling and reappraisal of the significance of landscape and the spaces it creates within the British cultural context.¹⁴ To this may be added a renewed and overdue interest in the work of certain travelling artists.¹⁵ Finally, a general growth in the analysis of the symbiotic, intertwined consequences of travel, exploration and the discourse of imperial ideology within the British tradition has been abetted by a proportionally heightened concern for the visual representation of this travel and the visual material products engendered by these relationships.

This study has shown the diverse ways in which the idea of the typical landscape scene posited by the texts and images in the nineteenth century, and to which the examples above refer, was constructed from within an European and British vantage-point. Simon Schama argues that "landscapes are culture before they are nature; constructs of the imagination projected onto word and water and rock."¹⁶ Landscape was transformed into a digestible commodity by its fixing and translation into typically English terms. J.M. Coetzee notes that "the landscape remains impenetrable until a language is found in which to win it, speak it, represent it."¹⁷ This study traces the various dialects and idioms assumed by this "language" in the course of the

¹⁴ For example, see David Peters Corbett, Ysanne Holt and Fiona Russell (eds.), *The Geographies of Englishness: Landscape and the National Past, 1880-1940* [London, 2002].

¹⁵ Two recent exhibitions that come to mind are those about Thomas Jones and William Hodges, held in Cardiff and Greenwich respectively. See the catalogues for further details: Ann Sumner and Greg Smith (eds.), *Thomas Jones (1742-1803): An Artist Rediscovered* [London, 2003] and Geoff Quilley and John Bonehill (eds.), *William Hodges 1744-1797: The Art of Exploration* [London, 2004].

¹⁶ Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* [Fontana Press, 1996], p. 61.

¹⁷ Quoted in Van der Watt, "Thomas Baines and the Colonization of Space", p. 28.

European evaluation of Southern Africa. The reportage of travellers is notoriously protean and is related as much to domestic and aesthetic attitudes and issues of scientific realism as to the actual reporting of facts. Richard Hakluyt, an important figure in the production of travel texts for a general readership, contended that the narrative records of voyages were merely “the desires of divers men.”¹⁸ Specifically in relation to Southern Africa, one of the first explorers of the sub-continent prophesized that the image of Africa would be contingent on preconceived notions:

Almost every traveller takes a different view of things according to the colouring they receive from his particular turn of thinking, or from the particular circumstances under which they were seen by him.¹⁹

This study has exfoliated the seemingly homogenous character of the perception of Africa and analyzed that “turn of thinking” and those “particular circumstances” which influence the depiction of the landscape. If, as Jonathan Crary convincingly argues, there is a constant mutation of visual perception throughout history, then it is the course taken by the idea of landscape as it pertains to Africa in nineteenth-century British eyes that has been charted in this study.²⁰

This study concludes just as Africa ceases to be a blank in the British imagination. Throughout the 1870s, it becomes more and more difficult to see Africa as *terra nullius*. Through knowledge and discovery, as Charles Darwin commented, “the map of the world...becomes a picture full of the most varied and animated figures.”²¹ In the fiction and literature of the late-nineteenth century, even the route of escapism fails to live up to its promise. The traditional view of Southern Africa that Richard Hartley, Prospector seemed to preserve for a twentieth-century readership disappears as “the surface of the gold mine [displays] the most unpicturesque and prosaic of the evidences of human history.”²² Africa becomes a site of loss and depravity, sickness and death strewn with wasted bodies and wasted lands in a succession of texts and

¹⁸ Quoted in Peter Knox-Shaw, “The Explorer and the Views of Creation” in *English Studies in Africa*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (1984), pp. 1-26, p. 2.

¹⁹ Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa*, Vol. 1, p. v.

²⁰ Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* [London, 1990], p. 34.

²¹ Charles Darwin and Robert Fitz-Roy, *Narrative of the Surveying Voyages of His Majesty's Ships Adventure and Beagle, between the Years 1826 and 1836, describing their examination of the Southern Shores of South America, and the Beagle's Circumnavigation of the Globe*, 3 vols. [London, 1839], Vol. 3, p. 607.

²² Blackburn, *Richard Hartley, Prospector*, p. 1.

images that have Conrad's Heart of Darkness as their metaphorical and chronological core.²³ Even those genres of literature that purport to carry the banner for a discourse of contemporary travel writing evince nostalgia for the exploration narratives of the past. Their whimsicality is in bitter contrast to their literary predecessors that were at the forefront of the emergent discourse of self- and scientific knowledge.²⁴ When nineteenth-century tropes appear they do so as vacant clichés employed to support the ideologies of a different age. So, Stuart Cloete writes of how that “sparsely populated wilderness with vast tracts of completely empty land” was transformed into “a modern industrial giant” by white South Africans and, implicitly, the system of Apartheid.²⁵ It becomes difficult to see Africa with the fresh eyes that the poet Goethe thought so necessary to the traveller's appreciation of his experience.²⁶

Yet, it is only by looking at this subject with fresh eyes and open intellectual approaches that one can efface the old mental habits and see the landscape of Southern Africa as those British travellers, explorers and artists of the nineteenth century saw it as they travelled over it for the first time. Thomas Baines thought of his art and his exploration ventures as mutually financing, intertwined occupations.²⁷ This study has shown how these two impulses, the visual representation of Southern African landscape and the exploration of that space, were inextricably linked and formed such a symbiotic relationship.

²³ See David Spurr, The Rhetoric of Empire : Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing and Imperial Administration [London, 1993], pp. 89-90.

²⁴ Leask, Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing, pp. 10-11. See also Alain De Botton, The Art of Travel [London, 2003].

²⁵ Stuart Cloete, South Africa : the land, its people and achievements [Johannesburg., 1969], p. 72.

²⁶ Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Italian Journey, translated by W.H. Auden and Elizabeth Mayer [London, 1970], p. 38.

²⁷ Wallis, Thomas Baines, p. 84.

