
“To Fill This Void Land”: Acclimatisation as Mnemonic Device in Victorian New Zealand

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Abstract

The New Zealand landscape has been irrevocably changed and shaped through the intervention of British colonisation. The same stubborn refusal of New Zealand’s nineteenth-century British settlers to wear clothes that suited the climate, to have anything other than a northern hemisphere Christmas, or to orient their houses towards the warm north rather than the cold south, produced, for a period in its history, a faux Britain at odds with the reality of Aotearoa and its established Māori occupation and culture. This construction of “home” was a tenuous facsimile, full of dishevelled chrysanthemums struggling to keep their composure in their overheated garden bed, next to the monstrously large lavender and the rampant nasturtiums. This was a consciously invented mimetic landscape, aspiring to Englishness but ultimately failing. In attempting to maintain the myth of the “Britain of the South”, these settlers created a fragile collection of embodied nostalgia in the form of introduced flora, fauna, landscapes, and practices. This article argues that in their attempt to “fill this void land”, the British ancestors of many modern New Zealanders created a landscape disrupted by the plaintive, domestic familiarity of another place, a distant, lost home. It also contends that these intrusions, that were originally wrought in the name of memory, of home, of patriotism, are largely invisible in those terms to their descendents, modern New Zealanders. The traces of memory of another home are still there, but can only be read as originally intended by those familiar with the original referents; recent immigrants from the British Isles, exiles who find the unexpected familiarity of elements this foreign landscape an unsettling and poignant “container of memory”.

Keywords: New Zealand, acclimatisation, memory, landscape, colonisation, migration, nostalgia

On 2 September 1860 an impressive, state-of-the-art, tall ship called the *Matoaka* is being towed carefully from Welsh Back Wharf, out of the City of Bristol, down the New Cut of the River Avon, and toward the mouth of the Severn. It is late summer, and on deck some of the passengers gaze quietly to their left at the small pear orchards, the hunched workers in the market gardens, and the scattering of new houses being built in the nascent suburb of Southville. Beyond these new developments, skirting Coronation Road, the cornfields have just been harvested. The light is soft and golden, and a blackbird makes a sudden bobbing flight across the water, landing on the rim of the ferryboat moored beneath the shadow of the New Gaol.

The land on the side of the river they gaze upon is not yet Bristol; it is the "Hundred of Hareclive and Bedminster", a division of the county of Somerset. The passengers observe it as a changing landscape: farmland is being turned to other uses. The new houses on the Bedminster side are part of a surge of speculative building that is occurring throughout Britain, fuelled by the steadily dropping value of agricultural land since the repeal of the Corn Laws.

However, even though the population of Bedminster is growing fast in this period (swelling from 7,979 in 1822 to 20,684 in 1851), in 1860 it is still a pastoral delight in contrast to Bristol. In the mid to late nineteenth century, the city was struggling to deal with the effect of an increasing population on what was still a largely medieval infrastructure. The inner city had become a stinking, cholera-ridden hellhole, with no clean water supply. In 1850, after a particularly bad outbreak of the disease, there had been a Public Health enquiry into the conditions of the city, and that had begun a process of sanitation reform that was yet to have impact.

Around this time, the Smyth family, Lords of the Manor of Bedminster, had become aware of the shifts in their fortunes and the decreasing value of their agricultural assets. The Bristol local historian, Arthur Bantock, tells us that in 1853 the Smyth's Estate Manager, Arthur Way, being aware that, "this was the last golden age of British agriculture", was "determined to extract the maximum profit from other sources of revenue". This meant, amongst other things, selling farmland off for other purposes.

The land alongside the river where this development is beginning to mark the landscape, now, or will soon, belong to a partnership which includes Jeremiah Osborne. He is one in a long line of Jeremiah Osbornes, a family of Bristol solicitors who have acted for the wealthiest and most influential families and institutions in the region since 1748, including the Smyths of Bedminster and the extremely powerful Society of Merchant Venturers. In the 1830s he had been negotiating between the Smyths and the Great Western Railway Company (an initiative funded by the Society), to procure this land for the proposed London to Bristol railroad. When the route was changed and diverted north, making the negotiated land surplus to requirement, it appears he took advantage of this and bought the land in partnership with Henry Seymour Wright and Margaret Trotman.

This partnership eventually began to build a few streets of terraced “villas” on what had once been market gardens, wheat fields, and orchards.

One of those villas, Number 15 on the eponymous Osborne Road, would come to belong to me in the 1990s. In the turn of the new century, I would leave it and travel along Coronation Road, by the New Cut of the Avon, to the airport to emigrate to New Zealand with my Kiwi partner. I glance back at its gabled roof, its neatly painted sage green exterior, and the small cabbage tree that has been planted in the tiny front garden to remind my partner of home.

Meanwhile, back in 1860, other emigrants watch the fragile landscape glide past them. Some are thinking about what was gone and changing, and what they are leaving behind. Here, and elsewhere in the British Isles, displaced agricultural workers have seen their livelihoods go, as land is sold off, and they are now forced to find other employment. Some are crowding into inadequate cities; some are accepting government aid and boarding boats for the colonies. These people have made the latter choice and are heading for the “Britain of the South” on the *Matoaka*.

The Captain, Alfred Stevens, is a kind-hearted and popular man. He will become so well liked by his passengers that at the end of the journey he will be presented with a testimonial signed by all the cabin class passengers along with a purse of 30 guineas. On this occasion he is taking the vessel to Port Lyttelton, and this is his second journey to New Zealand as master of this ship. As usual, his passenger list is neatly divided according to social class. He has on board about 60 “gentlefolk” in the first, second, and third class cabins, most of whom are paying their own way.

Most of his passengers, however, are assisted “immigrants” quartered in steerage. The New Zealand Province of Canterbury is paying half their fare, or more, and the rest is either being covered by sponsors or by themselves. The exception is for single women who have free passage. In steerage there are 46 families in one set of quarters, 48 single men in one dormitory, and 41 single women in another. These are mostly working class people who are on their way to become servants or labourers.

Although common mythology in New Zealand has us believe that Victorian British settlers were directly escaping the British class system and the factories of the industrialised cities, this does not seem to be the case. The Canterbury Association, in keeping with the approach of the New Zealand Company before it, actively sought application for assisted passage for female domestic servants and male farm workers. At least one of its posters calls for responses from a “Member of the Working Class” in the following terms:

*The Association will grant Assisted Passages to PORT LYTTELTON, in the Canterbury Settlement [to a] Member of the Working Classes, being Gardeners, Farm Servants, Labourers, and Country Merchants. The Emigrants must be of the highest Character in Society, Steadiness, and respectability, as certified by Clergyman of their Parish.*¹

Hence, almost all the men on board have listed agricultural occupations, whilst the single women overwhelmingly describe themselves as domestic servants. It is highly likely, therefore, that these people would have had no first-hand experience of the privations of Britain's industrial cities. They are for the most part respectable, working class, country people with the financial means to contribute to their own passage, or else are in the employ of someone willing to sponsor them.

The ship's doctor, Dr Young, will be responsible for the supervision of steerage passengers on this journey. Unlike the cabin passengers, they will be strictly regulated throughout the voyage, and on arrival the cleanliness of their quarters will be scrutinised by inspectors before they are sent off to stay in barracks. Their journey, and the country they arrive in, has been formed with a strong class structure. In no sense is "Jack as good as his master" in this venture.

The diminishing need for farm workers is widespread across Britain and people are looking for other options. At least three families of farm workers have travelled from as far away as Aberdeenshire to join the ship, but some are more local. It is four days before Philip Marshall's twenty-third birthday, and the young farm worker has travelled a mere six miles from the ancient Somerset parish of Chew Magna. This is the country seat of Lord George Lyttelton who is, perhaps not coincidentally, the eponymous patron of the settlement that this ship is heading to.

The Port of Lyttelton is in the newly established New Zealand Province of Canterbury. Here the fastest growing industry is sheep farming and the port has been exporting wool to Britain for the past four years. Conversely, Chew Magna (the place our youthful farm labourer is leaving) is now in steady decline, having been a major centre for the English wool industry since the medieval period. It is destined to become a dormer suburb for Bristol. It has become static, and streets reflect the past periods of the village's greatest wealth. Some of the grandest houses once belonged to eighteenth-century wool merchants, but now economic power has shifted. The merchants have gone, and the economic dynamic of the nation has moved from the countryside to the city.

At the time that Philip Marshall decides to leave Chew Magna its population is declining, and it is gradually becoming a backwater that will remain so untouched that its quaint streets and buildings would still be recognisable to him were he able to return 150 years later. Marshall is leaving what he knows for what he imagines. He has not chosen to work in one of the new factories springing up around Bristol and Bedminster; he is going to a place where agriculture is still important, that is controlled by the lord of his local manor, and that has been socially ordered according to the old, rural values he understands. It could be argued that he is trying to find a place where the past continues. He has rejected industrialisation; he chooses what he knows, he chooses his past.

A key passenger on this ship is a Mr James Edward Fitzgerald, who is listed in the first cabin and is travelling with his wife and family. He is a founder member of the Canterbury Association and an associate of Lord Lyttelton. Until 1849 he had been an official in the Department of Antiquities in the British Museum,

but in that year he had met Edward Gibbon Wakefield and made the decision to become a colonist himself.² He is well liked in the colony, noted for his energy and enthusiasm, and for flying around the streets in his “wonderful contraption”. This was known by all as “Fitzgerald’s Circulating Median”, which was basically a dog cart with very big wheels. This gentleman is now the Association’s Emigration Agent, and it was he who has assessed young Philip Marshall’s suitability for the Province of Canterbury. Fitzgerald is returning home to Lyttelton after a two-year sojourn in London. He builds a high opinion of Captain Stevens on this trip, and at the end it is he who presents the captain with the signed testimonial from all the cabin passengers and the purse of 30 guineas, along with a fulsome speech.

As they turn the bend of the River Avon, above them to the left are the elegant Georgian rows of Clifton Village, and ahead are the temporarily abandoned piers of Isambard Kingdom Brunel’s Suspension Bridge. Work is about to restart on the bridge, which is to be completed as a memorial to its recently deceased designer. Passengers are milling on the deck, craning their heads up at the massive structure. The three-masted, full-rigged ship they occupy is one of the fastest on this route, but now it is towed sedately past the visitors on their way to take the medicinal waters at the spa of Hotwells to the right, and the half-built pillars of the bridge. The ancient oak forest of Leigh Woods to their left is full of birdsong, rabbits, wildflowers, and ripening blackberries.

They proceed down the Severn, past the Welsh coast, and out to Lundy Island, where the pilot and the towboat leave them. This island is their last sight of Britain, and there is a moment of poetry to be found in this fact. From Haverford West in Pembrokeshire, Lundy is only intermittently visible. Its elusiveness gave rise to an old Welsh story about magical islands called the “Green Isles of the Ocean”. The story goes that you can only find these pastoral and perfect islands if you take a piece of magical graveyard turf with you and stand on it as you navigate your boat. If you step off the grass then these utopian islets disappear. You can only see them again if you stand on the grass of the place from whence you came, the grass that covered the bones of your ancestors. So it was to be with New Zealand. It would turn out that these British settlers could only see their new “Green Isles of the Ocean” when their feet were firmly planted on the turf of home and their ears were filled with the birdsong of their childhood.

When they arrive in Lyttelton, some three months after leaving Welsh Back Wharf in Bristol, they do not, perhaps, find what they are expecting. As James Belich has observed, the New Zealand they found could not have been more different from the Britain they have left. It is far from a rural idyll. A slightly later arrival, Peter Thomson, who had also been a passenger with Captain Stevens on the *Matoaka*, found Lyttelton underwhelming and surprisingly expensive. He records in his diary of 1862:

*Found the town a queer little place, very unfinished looking houses all wood. Things very dear ... was asked seven pounds four shillings (for lodgings) ... Mrs T. very anxious and dismayed.*³

They had indeed arrived in an “unfinished” country”, and Mrs Thomson’s dismay is not an uncommon response. Many British immigrants to New Zealand had expected to find it a familiar and welcoming version of “home”, part of what commentators of the time (such as John Seeley and the popular historian, Arthur Temple, amongst others) had described as “Greater Britain”.^{4,5} As Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson suggest in their introduction to “The Myths we Live By”,⁶ nations live by the myths they create, and one of the founding myths of the European settler in New Zealand was that it was an exact parallel of England found on the other side of the world. Or rather, that it was a parallel of the idealised rural world of old England that existed in their imagination.

Both Michael A. Osborne and Thomas R. Dunlap have discussed, the role of nostalgia in the establishment of the acclimatisation societies that sprung up across the British Empire in the late nineteenth century to import familiar flora and fauna.⁷ Dunlap, in particular, discusses the “Anglo” settler’s need to make his new land familiar: to “fill this void land” with meaning. In order to be at home here they first noted what was “missing”.^{8,9}

Sarah Courage, who arrived in New Zealand in 1863 with her husband, Fred, commented on the lack of wild flowers. She noted that “we missed the birds terribly on coming out first: even the lively chirping of the inquisitive sparrow would have sounded like music to our ears, to say nothing of the robin’s warbling”.¹⁰

This sentiment is affirmed over and over again in immigrant journals and letters of the time. Although J. Drummond, in his 1905 Philosophical Society Paper, “On Introduced Birds”, insists that, although sentiment played a part in the introduction of British birds to New Zealand, it was outweighed by “necessity and utility”. As their letters and journals betray, the settler’s nostalgia, indeed their melancholy, provided an imperative that went beyond agricultural functionality. For many settlers the dearth of familiar plants, flowers, and birds was profoundly affecting. A later immigrant who is known only as ‘Hopeful’ laments that “in vain may you search for a sweet violet, primrose, cowslip, daisy, buttercup, bluebell, harebell [...] the dear companions of childhood are lacking”.¹¹

Without these things she perceives herself to be cut off from her memories and, consequently, her very identity. For her every element of the natural environment of England was a mnemonic, a link to her past and her own history, and without that landscape and all its intricate elements she was bereft, pining for “sweet monotony where *every thing is known*, and loved *because it is known* ... these well-remembered bird-notes; [...] such things are the *mother-tongue* of our imagination, the language that is laden with all the subtle, inextricable associations the fleeting hours of our childhood left behind them”.¹²

Sarah Courage, more active and less given to melancholy than ‘Hopeful’, set about recreating those associations. Like most colonists, she made a garden and grew roses and lavender. Anticipating the musings of Gaston Bachelard on the “domestic and remembrance”, she noted that lavender always brought back memories of home; its “grey spikes were always hoarded carefully in muslin bags

for one’s own drawer. Average humanity has a liking for something familiar, and the sense of smell is the sense of memory”.¹³

Bachelard, writing in France in the mid-twentieth century, proposed that our notion of “home” is conditioned by our experience of the first house that we live in and that we unconsciously, ever after, imbue new spaces with the remembered spaces of this archetypal home.¹⁴ He speaks about the smell of raisins in a drawer as producing in him an intense remembrance of home and of childhood and nostalgia. Home, then, is the place where one spent one’s childhood, and every subsequent home is an attempt to regain a link with long lost familiar and comforting tokens of security. To make a home is to create a simulation of familiarity; and it can only be a place we recognise.

Sarah Courage’s description of the place of lavender as a mnemonic of childhood in the lives of Victorian New Zealand settlers is revealing. Lavender is omnipresent in the remains of colonial gardens, growing up against the veranda, wafting its scent through the open doors. The need to remember and recognise, along with the desire to subdue the land for agriculture, began to produce a radically different New Zealand from the one that Māori had occupied prior to European colonisation. William Pember Reeves, a populist historian of the period, devotes four pages of his New Zealand history, *The Long White Cloud*,¹⁵ to the ways that the British settler “set out to fill this void land with everything British which he could transport or transplant”.

The land was, of course, not void. For the tangata whenua, it was already full. However, for the British incomers it was empty. It was empty of resonance, of agriculture (and therefore of worth), and it was empty of memory (and therefore of meaning). As Chris Tiffin and Alan Lawson noted in *De-scribing Empire: Post-colonialism and Textuality*, it was a characteristic of European episteme that colonial alterity often manifested as a failure “to comprehend the actual self-naming and articulate subject” as such.¹⁶ In the case of Māori, this also applied to the environment that they had shaped. To the British settlers, the land was void of meaning because it was void of memory. It could not be “home” until they filled it, until the environment itself could be a mnemonic for their homeland. In this way they demanded a landscape that contained their memories by allusion.

For these reasons, of longing and nostalgia, as well those other imperatives described by Drummond in 1866, according to Joan Druett,¹⁷ J.R. Hill travelled to England and bought 444 birds by ship to Lyttelton. Mr Hill was Manager of the Bank of New South Wales on Hereford Street in Christchurch, and a very busy person. Not only was he an honorary member of the Canterbury Acclimatisation Society, but he also served on a number of boards and trusts and was an enthusiastic donator of all sorts of flora and fauna to the Canterbury Museum and the Acclimatisation Society Gardens. He famously paid for, and imported, an egg incubator in the hope of raising game birds for hunting.

On 10 January 1867, the *Matoaka* sails into Lyttelton Harbour, and Captain Stevens is feeling quite pleased with himself. He is about to deliver Mr Hills’ surviving birds to the Canterbury Acclimatisation Society. He has looked after them

assiduously through a long cold journey, and although only 166 have survived, it is still no small feat. He brings larks, blackbirds, thrushes, starlings, and the hull of the boat is full of birdsong. There is disappointment, however, that the five robins on board all died. On subsequent trips the captain, with the aid of his ship's carpenter, John Langdown, succeeds in bringing in finches, redpolls, yellowhammers, and hedge sparrows.

The colonists were looking forward to a large consignment of hedge sparrows, and according to Drummond, had commissioned the captain to bring back 13 dozen of them. Being a seafaring man, he was not familiar with the niceties of identifying bird species. Instead of the hedge sparrow, he had mistakenly brought the working class rabble of the avian world, the common house sparrow. Of the 13 dozen he had nurtured across the oceans only five now survived. The officers of the Canterbury Acclimatisation Society refused to accept these cocky "townies"; they had wanted their pastoral cousins (hedge sparrows), in the hope that they would work their fields and rid them of native insect pests. It is an interesting mirroring of their screening of working class human immigrants that they reject these streetwise urban urchins. Drummond sums up the colonists' attitude to these city birds thus:

*It refuses to go out into the woods and get an honest living (...). It clings to civilisation and cultivation ... its cunning is unsurpassed.*¹⁸

Captain Stevens, as we have already ascertained, was a good-hearted man and suffered no class prejudice when it came to birdlife. After a thoughtful pause he declares that "the poor little beggars have had a hard time" and opens the cage. They fly up to the rigging and "remain twittering there for some time", and then they are gone. They stay around Lyttelton for about three weeks and then take off to populate Canterbury.

Drummond observed that *the sight of the introduced birds seem to fall in with the early colonists desire to make Canterbury as like England as possible. Their minds were full of the place they had left. The Old Country was their Holy Land, and anything that reminded them of it was given a hearty welcome.*¹⁹

One hundred and forty-four years later their legacy is astonishing. Most (if not all) of the birds, shrubs and trees, and insects that 'Hopeful' mourned for are to be found in twenty-first-century New Zealand. Flocks of goldfinch perch in the gum trees, starlings forage across Wellington's well-kept lawns, and sparrows and blackbirds fill every silence. In the Wairarapa, across the Rimutaka Ranges, there are oaks, "quivering aspen", and weeping willows. Wild garlic grows down the bank next to my house and the brambles and gorse threaten to choke the native grasses.

When I arrive as a new migrant in Wellington in 2001, everywhere I look I am overwhelmed by images of "home". When I stand in the middle of Wellington in Central Park and look down at my feet, I see familiar meadow, with plantain, creeping buttercup, dandelion, clover, and daisies growing through it. I close my eyes and I hear blackbirds, thrush, and skylark. When you stand on this turf, if you are a British immigrant, you are transported home. Not a native plant is to be

seen in this tightly growing carpet, and the metallic, liquid, sounds of the native birds are subsumed in a cockney racket of sparrows.

The feeling it produces in a Briton far from home is truly (to misuse Sigmund Freud) “unheimlich”, that is, uncanny, or literally “un-homely”. In this case it is, paradoxically, an incongruous and disconcerting *homeliness* that disquiets, as memories of another place are overlaid on a foreign landscape. A place like home that is not home. For the incoming “Pom”, listening to the sounds of lost sparrows, now so rare in British cities, and taken by surprise by the Victorian roses growing as weeds in the ditches next to old colonial houses, New Zealand produces the sensation of living amongst homesick ghosts.

Ironically, this “unheimlich homeliness” is not apparent to the descendents of the ghosts who created it. These unsettling traces are unreadable as anything other than mundane symptoms of the present, and they are absorbed into that synthesis that is this place, *home*, this post-imperial New Zealand. These traces therefore do not speak to New Zealanders in the same disorientating way they speak to me. My “unheimlich” is their normality.

The Victorian settlers in New Zealand were, it could be argued, engaged in a project of mimesis, in which their English “reality” was imitated through the manipulation of the new landscape. Plato, of course, argued that mimesis was untruthful impersonation and could only result in hollow simulacra whereby “truth” was simulated but not present. The result of this intense reconfiguration of an alien environment into a substitute for the familiar, remembered, reality of “home” is a world where things are not, in fact, homely, but are disquietingly “un-homely”. This began to manifest in New Zealand relatively early. Lady Barker, when visiting Wellington in the 1880s, was distressed to discover that the grand edifices of the shops were simply wooden facades. What looked like smart London shops from the front were, once you got beyond the frontage, “mean tin sheds”.

In some cases the nature of the simulacrum carries with it an emotive intensity almost metonymic in its significance. For instance, the oak has a special place in English mythology (as the old song went, “Hearts of oak are our ships, hearts of oak are our men”). The hardness of the tree’s wood had come to symbolise the strength of the English character. The transplanted oak grows everywhere around colonial New Zealand towns. In Nelson, in the South Island, there are specimens planted in the 1840s that are so big they could be twice their age. However, in New Zealand the oak grows so fast that its wood is soft and weak. Here the oak becomes a simulacrum of British identity. The symbolic quality most prized by its colonial planters is absent. It looks like an oak, it grows as big and majestic as any in England, but its “oak-ness”, its hardness and strength, is not there. It is not relevant here; it has lost meaning

In 2001, Pippa Sanderson, a New Zealand artist who I was supervising as a Master of Fine Arts candidate, engaged on a piece of installation art in a colonial house in Island Bay, Wellington. The project was a learning experience for both of us. In her commentary on the project she wrote:

Seeing the space through the eyes of my Master's supervisor, Sally Morgan, a recent arrival from Britain, was to witness someone experiencing the uncanny, 'recognising' simulacral elements of the house and garden, in a way that I, who have never been to Britain cannot.

Pippa's description of my engagement with the house and garden accurately described my engagement with the whole country at that time. My first few weeks in Wellington unleashed a torrent of childhood memories sparked off by the sounds of birds, the sight of plants, and the smell of flowers. Birds that I had not seen since my childhood in Swansea thronged through the trees in an exuberant commotion like kids let loose in the park. Things that were plentiful in my childhood, but were gone now at home (like sparrows and wildflowers) were here, thousands of miles away in a Pacific Island once covered in dense strange foliage and populated with now extinct birds.

The New Zealand landscape has been irrevocably changed through British colonisation. The same stubborn refusal to wear clothes that suited the climate, to have anything other than a northern hemisphere Christmas, or to orient their houses towards the warm north rather than the cold south, produced a faux England. One that was a tenuous facsimile, full of dishevelled chrysanthemums struggling to keep their composure in their overheated garden bed, next to the monstrously large lavender and the rampant nasturtiums.

This was a mimetic landscape, aspiring to Englishness, but falling into parody. In attempting to maintain the myth of the "Britain of the South", the settlers created a mnemonic landscape. However, it becomes clear that mnemonics cannot function without access to the original referent. The poignancy of many delicate intrusions that were wrought in the name of memory, home, and patriotism, are (ironically) invisible to the descendents of their originators. They have become mundane; normalised as they have turned into part of ensuing generations' experience of childhood and of home.

The nostalgia of the early settlers that caused them to plant oaks and import skylarks speaks to my nostalgia, and unsettles me because I don't see, as New Zealanders do, a landscape that is *itself* and signifies this place *here*, this place *now*. I see a simulacrum: a simulation of my home. Where for native-born Kiwis this landscape is a unity, the place they have always known, I see an exotic landscape disrupted by the plaintive, domestic familiarity of emblems of another place. It works on my memory and emotions because it is designed to sustain my longings, to mend my loss under the unreadable southern stars and the upside-down moon. Only a British immigrant knows the gap that these living, growing, mementos of home were meant to fill. Only a Briton sees the paradox of the intensely familiar amongst startlingly foreign: the fish and chip shop under the palm trees, the cicada on the oak, the cabbage white butterfly perched on the giant flax.

Endnotes

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Biographical note

Professor Sally J. Morgan holds the Chair of Fine Arts at Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand. She has had impact in the area of cultural history and theory through her investigation of material artefacts as “historical texts”. This area of research intersects with her performance art and installation works, the most successful of which have arisen from an examination of history and memory as cultural constructs. Recently her article, “The Ghost in the Luggage: Wallace and

Braveheart: Post-colonial 'Pioneer' Identities", was included in Popular Culture (four volume set), Vol. 1, Sage Benchmarks in Culture and Society Series, edited by Michael Pickering. This collection brings together influential "benchmark" pieces of research in this area. Other authors selected include Theodor Adorno, Stuart Hall, Tony Bennett, and Anthony D Smith.

Email: S.J.Morgan@massey.ac.nz