SEVERAL INTERPRETATIONS OF THE BLUE MOUNTAINS:

A JUXTAPOSITION OF IDEAS OVER TWO HUNDRED YEARS.

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MA Honours
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1997
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STATEMENT

I, Amanda M. Young, declare that the following research paper, SEVERAL INTERPRETATIONS OF THE BLUE MOUNTAINS - A JUXTAPOSITION OF IDEAS OVER TWO HUNDRED YEARS, has neither in whole nor part been submitted for a higher degree to any other institution.
ABSTRACT

In 1815 the Blue Mountains were first identified as a unique landscape when Governor Macquarie took a tour over them and located the nineteenth century principles of the Sublime and Picturesque within its' landscape. Until this time the Blue Mountains were considered to be a hostile impenetrable barrier to the West.

This paper examines some of the ways the Blue Mountains has been represented in the past, and has been identified as a tourist destination through interpretations imposed on the landscape by the tourist industry since that time. The areas covered deal with the heritage of British Colonialism as a way of forming opinions about the Australian landscape. Then, the theories of the Picturesque and Sublime are examined when applied to the Blue Mountains landscape.

The final chapters in this paper deal with contemporary issues that have shaped the way the tourist industry is encouraged to encounter the Blue Mountains landscape.
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INTRODUCTION

The other night I was walking through a very thick mist. I thought at the time that if I did not know my way about I would probably get lost and frightened. In a way I was imagining what would be there, in order to find my way about. I asked myself: Was this what the first settlers did when they first came to New South Wales? Could the environment be so strange and frightening, that they longed to see something familiar. By imagining they could see recognisable aspects in the landscape, it was made less threatening and more like home.

This paper will consider how the settlers came to terms with the unfamiliar landscape.

One way of looking at this could be by examining Tony Fry's "...idea to legitimise the imposition of one world-view by one culture on 'another'." Fry explains that the civilising culture always sees itself as more advanced and more improved compared to the other which is seen as "standing still" or "backward". Fry says this is because one culture cannot translate or identify itself with another. The process of domination and colonisation cancels this out. The idea of translating could also apply to the colonised landscape.

Bernard Smith, points out that the first artistic endeavours in Australia were purely scientific. This was due to the popularity of the biological sciences after the publication of Linnaeus's 'Philosophia Botanica' in 1750. Included in the expedition on The Endeavour were astronomers, botanists, zoologists, natural-history draughtsmen and topographic draughtsmen. (Plate 1).

2 ibid, p.75.
1. Many of the early illustrations of Australian flora and fauna to be sent back to Britain showed a scientific way of observation.


Captain John HUNTER, 1737-1811. "Co-nasus (Haur), 1/3 of the Nat. Size", no. 33 from an album of 100 watercolour drawings of natural-history subjects Birds and Flowers of New South Wales, drawn on the spot in 1788, 1789 and 1790. 1788/90, Sydney. Watercolour on paper, 22.5 x 18.5 cm. Rex Nan Kivell Collection, National Library of Australia, Canberra. Presented 1959
The clinical, unemotional, calculated scientific way of observing another culture and landscape could be seen as an aggressive form of domination that failed to translate another culture compassionately. Alternately, this procedure of clinical observation created museum objects - Labelled; itemised; contained and (mis)understood. This way of interpreting a strange culture and landscape into objects may have enhanced the colonising culture by creating an imagined order.

The scientific view eventually gave way to Romanticism. This incorporated the exotic, the strange and mysterious. The Australian landscape and its people were subjected to a new translation by incorporating the qualities of the sublime and the picturesque, eighteenth century concepts of beauty and grandeur. According to Smith, one of Australia's first artists, Thomas Watling, was influenced by the Romantic Revival. Smith comments that "...we observe the powerful images which he derived from his education, acting as a filter through which he saw and commented on the local scene. He has joined the mythical with the actual." (Plate 2).

Governor Macquarie was also influenced by the Romantic Revival, and used his cultural authority and privileged status to interpret the Australian landscape into a recognisable form that incorporated the qualities of the sublime and the picturesque. He found inspiration to appreciate the Australian landscape by reference to The Romantic Movement which developed during the eighteenth century in Europe. The chief masters of the Romantic movement in England were John Constable, J.M. Turner, and William Blake.

Today, the landscape in the Blue Mountains is still being adapted to incorporate Macquarie's inspiration to fulfill the needs of those who live and pass through them. Unlike Macquarie, we do not need to have a knowledge of eighteenth

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2. 'A Direct North General View of Sydney Cove.' 1794. Thomas Watling adjusted his view of Sydney to conform to nineteenth century principles of aesthetics.
century aesthetics in order to recognise picturesque beauty and sublime qualities in the mountains. In fact we do not need to know these terms at all. The views are now perfectly sign-posted for our convenience in locating them. The view as identified by Macquarie, has become a symbol for the way present day culture looks at the Blue Mountains.

Ian Burn's,6 "Value added" landscapes, a term he uses to describe his landscape paintings, can be seen as a metaphor to understand how I see the manipulation of the landscape in the Blue Mountains by the tourist industry. Burn selected various landscape paintings by amateurs from fairs and junkshops. "...After each painting had been cleaned up and reframed, he superimposed a sheet of perspex bearing a printed text that gives a long-winded description of the image, and analyses the way it relates to the viewer."7 He goes on to explain that by tampering with these works, Burn changed the viewer's perception, as had Macquarie who gave value to the landscape by applying the principles of the picturesque and sublime.

In his essay about the work, Ian Burn suggests there is a dissonance between the scene observed and our notions (culturally) of what a landscape should look like. Macquarie metaphysically changed the way we saw the landscape by identifying the qualities of the picturesque and sublime; while Burn physically placed words between trivial landscape paintings by amateurs and the viewer. (Plate 2A.)

The Australian landscape was often referred to as 'inhospitable' and 'barren'. John Oxley referred to the disappointing nature of the Australian landscape in his journal8. The low status of the landscape was enhanced by Macquarie locating the sublime just as Burn enhanced the amateur's painting with his collaboration

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7 McDonald, J (Saturday, April 26th, 1997) Spectrum Arts. Sydney Morning Herald.
Tranquil vista, a harmony of colour and form attests to the tonal perfection of the Australian landscape. The gleaming grey-green foliage fades to grey-blue atmosphere, encircled only by a golden pasture, innocently complicit in its dignity.

Sunlight pierces, with cool, brilliant light, leaves glinting metallically. Firm, almost brushstroke, discovering a poetry of form, of technique, a surfeit revealing a surfeit beauty. From low horizon, the blanched field advances stage-like, trees cast in a story of uniqueness, a most original landscape of the world. Like precision not foreplanned, experiencing solitude at once theatrical and natural. The intervals of the trees glint in the high key vastness, unreplied potential, here perceived pictorially.

Idyllic, prophetic, elegiac, a moral code, a landscape becomes real in its own climate.
and name. In the process the landscape has been culturally translated by Macquarie, whilst Burn's artistic endeavour demonstrates how the view can be revalued.

Today, the way tourists are encouraged to experience the Blue Mountains, via tourist information and directed by lookout markers, can be compared with Burn's "'loss' of landscape into language". Burn explains:

"commitment to representing the landscape has come to be about the 'loss' of landscape in the twentieth century...that is, about its necessity and impossibility at the same time. Seeing a landscape means focusing on a picture, implicating language in our seeing of the landscape. The more 'ordered' the model we produce (that is, the more it 'looks' like a landscape), the more language and image cohere. This is a 'loss' of landscape into language, the 'recovery' of nature as ideology."\(^9\)

The numerous lookouts in the mountains focuses our attention on the picture; tourists find the desired landscape by referring to the available tourist literature. Implicated with the picture is the commodification of the landscape by those who make a living out of exploiting the landscape. Guest houses, tea rooms, restaurants, the theatre and tours to name a few. They use language such as 'wilderness', 'adventure', 'excitement', 'challenging', 'heritage', 'discover', to create an image that fits the ideology of nature today.

In the following research I have attempted to understand some of the ways the Blue Mountains have been used as inspiration to create different ways of collaborating with the landscape in order to translate the landscape to fit the ideological cultural needs of the day.

\(^9\) Burn, I. op.cit.
In the following chapters I identify several ways the Blue Mountain scenery is made accessible. The first chapter looks at the historical reasons Australia has been interpreted the way it is. It takes into account the massive changes taking place in Britain during the eighteenth century. Chapter two covers the theories of the picturesque and the sublime. Chapters three, four, five and six, cover four ways of interpreting the Blue Mountains landscape.
Chapter 1 - THE TRADITION OF SEEING - Class based

In his essay "An Infinity Of Landscape" McNamara observes the different ways that a landscape tradition may be interpreted. He includes "...art-historical, theoretical, anthropological, political and tourist 'landscape'..." He explains that all of these disciplines would "...like to lay claim to every conceivable cultural projection from dreamtime to prime-time".2

McNamara's observations suggest the various ways the Blue Mountain's landscape might be seen. Whether tourist, scholar or resident, the ways of experiencing the Blue Mountains depends on many factors. This could also include a person's socio-economic background.

The ways of observing the Blue Mountains landscape could be interpreted as a legacy of the Australian experience since 1788. Stephen Alomes,3 explains that Australia's dependence on Britain due to its isolation and lack of technological and cultural maturity, led many colonists to see Britain as the home country.4 Flood; fire; and drought, the impossible harshness of the land, plus the legacy of Terra Nullius says Alomes impeded colonists coming to terms with the land and...prevented the growth of a fundamental Australian self-confidence..."5

This lack of self-confidence and misunderstanding of the landscape may have shaped the way we view the Blue Mountains landscape.

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2 ibid. p. 118.
4 ibid. p. 208.
5 ibid. p. 209.
From the earliest accounts of the first Blue Mountains crossing by the English, they lament the inadequacy and harshness of the Australian landscape. Bernard Smith\textsuperscript{6} points out that until 1813, when the mountains were crossed by Gregory Blaxland, William Lawson and William Charles Wentworth, "...the unconquered mountain chain, to the west of Sydney provided the most obvious example of the inscrutability and hostility of nature in Australia."\textsuperscript{7}

These three sheep farmers says Smith,\textsuperscript{8} were not interested in the mountains themselves. They needed to find pastures for their sheep. The mountains to them were merely a barrier to more productive pastures. It was not until 1815 when Governor Macquarie with a large party of servants and "gentlemen"\textsuperscript{9} made a party over the Blue Mountains, were they (visually) taken into account as a distinct feature. "...Macquarie and his party halted to admire the magnificent prospects stretching before them from various vantage points along the route, the Governor finding appropriate names for views which impressed him."\textsuperscript{10}

The men who were setting the standards of how to view the country were mostly well educated men. Governor Macquarie picked out views that pleased him and named them accordingly. As an example Macquarie wrote of what he experienced when he named Prince Regent's Glen.

"On the S.W. side of the Kings Table Land, the mountain terminates in abrupt percipices of immense depth, at the bottom of which is seen a glen, as romantically beautiful as can be imagined, bounded on the further side by the mountains of great magnitude, terminating equally abruptly as the others; and the whole thickly covered with timber. The length of this picturesque and remarkable tract of coutry is about 24 miles..."\textsuperscript{11}

\textsuperscript{7} ibid. p. 173.
\textsuperscript{8} ibid.
\textsuperscript{9} Mackaness, G (Ed.) (1965) Fourteen journeys over the Blue Mountains, Sydney: Horwitz-Grahame. p. 75.
\textsuperscript{10} Smith, B \textit{op.cit.} p. 173.
\textsuperscript{11} Mackaness, G. \textit{op.cit.} p.67.
The class distinction of being able to admire such a prospect or view for its picturesque and sublime qualities, has been explained by Thomas.\textsuperscript{12} He sees the progress of agriculture in Britain as a likely explanation for the appeal for wild, natural landscape to the upper classes.

"During the eighteenth century a further 2 million acres of land were brought into regular cultivation as arable or pasture; and between 1760 and 1820 alone 2 1/2 million acres of the ground already farmed were carved up by parliamentary enclosure into regular fields." \textsuperscript{13}

Thomas explains that as a protest, even subconsciously, the people who set the trends in landscape-gardening began to use more natural forms. By using curved lines, a wild open prospect, and integrating the garden into the natural surrounds. "...It was no coincidence that it was England which became famous for this 'natural' style, or that landscape-gardening became one of the country's most distinctive cultural achievements".\textsuperscript{14}

As more of the country came under Enclosure, an act of parliament during the eighteenth century that carved up land already farmed into regular fields; the taste for wild mountainous, and rugged landscape became more popular. Thomas quotes the poet George Darley, 1846. "Give me wild barren, haggard mountain scenes in preference to all these close, well-cultivated messuages and manors...Above all plenty of grey rock!"\textsuperscript{15}

A person being able to leave the land uncultivated became a statement of wealth. The poor needed every inch to grow food in order to survive. They experienced the wild in a completely different way from someone who passed through the country-side in search of the picturesque.

\textsuperscript{12} Thomas, K (1983) \textit{Man and the natural world}, Penguin books.
\textsuperscript{13} ibid. p.262.
\textsuperscript{14} ibid. p. 262.
\textsuperscript{15} ibid. p. 263.
Thomas explains that in order to understand the theoretical basis of enjoying the landscape. One needed an education.

"The new taste for wild nature was therefore not an intuitive affair. Just as the appreciation of the English landscape garden in the early eighteenth century required a classical education and some knowledge of history and literature, necessary to catch all the references to Horace and Virgil or the allusions to Poussin and Claude, so the attraction to unimproved nature was initially a sophisticated business, reflecting the highly literary and intellectual inspiration of the the new sensibilities."16

When Macquarie took up the governorship of New South Wales from 1809-1821, he came and ruled, as Bernard Smith 17 states "...like a Baroque Prince..." In fact Smith sees Macquarie's rule as the "...Australian phase of English eighteenth century art...Macquarie, as Governor, developed many of the features of an eighteenth century benevolent despotism."18 Macquarie claimed complete control of all the occurrences on the small colony. As well as seeing to things such as justice and commerce, he took an interest in the colony's morals and manners.

Macquarie must have been in a bit of a dilemma: Here he was in a very strange and hostile environment. He had to take command, yet be an unquestionable example of the British Empire and show himself to have taste and education. He did the latter by supporting the Arts. He secured a pardon for the artist Joseph Lycett, and tried to have John William Lewin become the colony's first Official Artist. He appointed Michael Massey Robinson as Poet Laureate, and appointed Francis Howard Greenway Government Architect. Macquarie also planned new towns, such as Liverpool, Windsor and Bathurst.

16 ibid. p. 265.
18 ibid. p. 47.
When he left England at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the love of wild romantic landscape and a taste for the picturesque was essential for the well bred. As Thomas\(^9\) observes: "By the 1780's here was a torrent of published tours and guides to the beauties of England, embellished by aquatints of picturesque views from 1775 and steel engravings from 1810. These artistic representations, whether English or foreign, shaped the taste of the educated classes."

Macquarie's Progress over the Blue Mountains was more a statement of refinement and "Conspicuous Consumption"\(^{20}\) ("The use of consumer goods in such a way as to create a display for the purpose of impressing others rather than for the satisfaction of a normal consumer demand.")\(^{21}\) Marjorie Barnard,\(^22\) called it "...his own fully orchestrated 'Vice-regal Progress'..." Macquarie probably set forth with pictures in his head and found and named them as he proceeded on his tour. As Bernard Smith\(^23\) claims: "When men look at nature aesthetically they bring with their appreciation preconceptions of unity, variety and beauty which they have gained from other works of art. With this mental analogue they consider and value..."

Macquarie never came to terms with the bush. According to Barnard,\(^24\) Macquarie set out to civilize and create order, he had no leaning towards the natural environment. When he saw the sublime beauty of and from the mountains, he was able to recognise something that he could share with his peers. Here was the English dream of wild nature. This is how he could display his cultural authority. This is where he was sure of what was what. And as Geoffrey Serle\(^25\) points out, any cultural reference came strictly from Britain.

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\(^{19}\) Thomas, K op.cit. p. 266.
\(^{22}\) Barnard, M (1941) Macquarie's world. Sydney: Angus and Robertson. p. 68.
\(^{23}\) Smith, B. op.cit. p. 96.
\(^{24}\) Barnard, M. op.cit. p. 53.
"...this was a derivative culture, dependent on the next mail from home, drawing almost no inspiration from its immediate environment."

This is an important point. How could Macquarie see the Australian landscape, when he detested the Australian bush, but at the same time was searching for something familiar that he could identify himself with. Macquarie's vision reflected his class, status and education as a British gentleman. As John Berger 26 tells us "The way we see things is affected by what we know or what we believe." Macquarie's ways of seeing, has had enormous repercussions on the way the Blue Mountains are presented and interacted with to this day.

Chapter 2 - THEORIES OF THE PICTURESQUE AND THE SUBLIME.

In order to understand Macquarie's vision of the Blue Mountains, I will look at the theories of the picturesque and the sublime and how they have been applied to the Australian landscape.

According to The Dictionary of Art Terms, the term picturesque means: "A term which was applied in the eighteenth century to scenery that appeared to imitate the paintings of Claude. By the third quarter of the century the Picturesque had established itself as a concept of beauty; it was characterised by the avoidance of neatness and smoothness, and for its emotive effect it depended upon a sense of apparent disorderliness and roughness. "Objects," says Gilpin, "are most properly picturesque, when they are disposed by the hand of nature, or art, with a mixture of varied rudeness, simplicity, and grandeur ... The ideas of neat and smooth disqualify objects from any pretensions to picturesque beauty. Nay, further, we do not scruple to assert, that roughness forms a most essential point of difference between the beautiful and the picturesque, as it seems to be that quality which makes objects chiefly pleasing in painting".

In The Macquarie Dictionary, the term sublime, when related to the landscape means "...impressing the mind with a sense of grandeur or power; inspiring awe, veneration, etc.: sublime scenery."

According to Ann Bermingham,⁵ the first real theorist of the picturesque was the Reverend William Gilpin, (1724-1804). He popularized the picturesque way of viewing nature, in his guidebooks about touring various parts of Britain. "Picturesque tours to the lakes of Cumberland, the Devonshire coast, or the Isle of Wight were undertaken by hundreds of tourists armed with sketchbooks, diaries, and Claude Glasses."⁴ ("Claude glass. A black, convex glass which reflects a view in miniature, and thus enables an artist to see his subject as a unity, so-named because it is said to have been used by Claude Gellee or Lorraine (1600-1682); a reducing glass."⁵

Gilpin published three essays in 1792, on the theory of the picturesque. These were called, ‘Three Essays: On Picturesque Beauty, On Picturesque Travel, and On Sketching Landscape’. A contemporary of Gilpin was Burke whose ‘Essay on The Sublime and Beautiful’ appeared in 1757. Gilpin extended Burke’s inspiration on the beautiful to include the picturesque. Gilpin explained:

"Disputes about beauty might perhaps be involved in less confusion, if a distinction were established, which certainly exists, between such objects as are beautiful and such as are Picturesque-between those, which please the eye in their natural state; and those, which please from some quality, capable of being illustrated by painting."⁶

Bermingham goes on to explain that "By virtue of their roughness, irregularity, and variousness, picturesque objects were better suited for painting than beautiful ones, whose smooth, neat qualities lacked pictorial definition."⁷

I would like to consider two landscapes that Gilpin used as examples of the beautiful and the picturesque. In the first example Gilpin presents a landscape

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⁴ ibid. p. 83.
⁵ Haggar, G op.cit. p. 80.
⁶ Bermingham, A op.cit. p. 63.
⁷ Ibid. p. 63.
drawn on Burke's principles of the beautiful then the same landscape drawn on picturesque principles. (Plates 3 & 4). As Bermingham points out "...enriched with irregular mountains, shaggy trees, and a zigzagging road."\(^8\)

Compare the above examples with two works by Joseph Lycett. (Plates 5 & 6). Smith\(^9\) explains that the first, a watercolour was painted in approximately 1822 in Australia. The second, an engraving taken from the original drawing, executed in England some time later, was altered in order to bring it into line with the principles of picturesque composition. As Smith explains:

"The single eucalypt on the extreme left of the painting has been transformed into two trees of indeterminate species in the engraving, while the open tracery of the foliage somewhat similar to an oak, and the leafless branches reduced to a minimum. The heavy foliage thus created is made to throw a shadow across a ridge of rocks bearing Australian plants in the foreground. What appear to be casuarinas have been introduced into various parts of the foreground to give variety of shape and colour to the vegetation. Thus although it has been found necessary to alter the character of the eucalypt, by endowing it with opaque and laterally disposed foliage and using it for the purpose of casting heavy foreground shadows, it is to be observed that a variety of Australian plants have been introduced for the purpose of providing picturesque variety, while retaining the Australian character of the scene."\(^10\)

Smith does not mention the native figure introduced into the foreground, as well as the road that meanders into the far distance. Gilpin also used a road as a device to give distance to his composition and has introduced figures into the foreground in 'Scene with Picturesque Adornment'. (Plate 4). Both use darker tones in the foreground as a framing device.

\(^8\) ibid, p. 63.
\(^10\) ibid, p. 236.

4. William Gilpin’s example of the same scene as above but painted using Picturesque principles. *Scene with Picturesque Adornment*, 1792.
6. An engraving taken from the above watercolor was altered to bring it into line with the principle of the Picturesque.
It is interesting to note the apparent pressure to conform to a precept of pictorial beauty, in order to sell works executed in a strange environment of an unknown country. Lycett was convinced this was necessary. He had begun as a Staffordshire portrait painter and miniatuirst, who was convicted of forgery at the Salop Assizes in 1811 and was sentenced to transportation to New South Wales for fourteen years. He returned to England in 1822, where he developed sketches of the Australian landscape into engravings. Although the finished drawings retained many aspects of the Australian landscape, Gleeson explains, "Lycett altered and tidied up many of the details in order to make the engravings conform more closely to contemporary English tastes".

Smith suggests the hypothesis that Lycett was pressured by Barron Field, to fall into line with Barron Field's opinions of the Australian landscape, which were very poor indeed. Maybe in order that Field could collaborate with Lycett's book of Views of New South Wales, published in 1824. Associating one's work with the picturesque as well as with someone of influence, lent it a fashionable respectability. In addition, he was idealizing a natural landscape that was rapidly disappearing in Britain, due to Enclosure during the eighteenth century.

Another theorist of the picturesque was Uvedale Price. A wealthy gentleman farmer, and a Whig member of Parliament. As a farmer he preferred increased production by maximal use of land, but as a theorist of the picturesque he preferred a rough, irregular, wild landscape. Price's definition of the picturesque became the most popular, compared to other theorists of the time, such as Payne, Knight and Repton.

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12 ibid. p. 93.
Smith\textsuperscript{13} explains: "In 1794 Price claimed the picturesque to be an aesthetic category distinct from both the sublime and the beautiful, and distinguished by roughness, sudden variation and irregularity." The importance here is that Price's definition of the picturesque was able to incorporate the exotic. As Smith states, "...exotic things frequently exhibited roughness, sudden variation, and irregularity...the term picturesque was widened to cover exotic things not intrinsically picturesque."\textsuperscript{14}

Thus, Macquarie was displaying a sensibility towards contemporary English tastes for the picturesque when he selected and named exotic views and locations. That attracted him, during his passage over the Blue Mountains.

Another aspect that influenced Macquarie was the sublime qualities of the mountains. Here is an emotional account of a particularly grand part of the mountains when he first saw it:

"Proceeding hence to the 33rd mile on the top of a hill, an opening presents itself to the S.W. side of the Prince Regent's Glen, from whence a view is obtained particularly beautiful and grand-Mountains rising beyond mountains, with stupendous masses of rock in the foreground, here strike the eye with admiration and astonishment. The circular form in which the whole is so wonderfully disposed, induced the Governor to give it the name of "Pitt's Amphitheatre."\textsuperscript{15}

Macquarie's reactions to the beautiful and grand mountains was not an original one. By the end of the eighteenth century the appreciation of wild nature had become almost a religious act, according to Thomas.\textsuperscript{16} "The feeling of awe, terror and exultation, once reserved for God, was gradually transposed to the expanded

\textsuperscript{13} Smith, B. \textit{op.cit.} p. 201.
\textsuperscript{14} \textit{ibid.} p. 201.
\textsuperscript{15} Mackaness, G (Ed.) (1965) \textit{Fourteen journeys over the Blue Mountains}, Sydney: Horwitz-Grahame. p. 67.
cosmos...they had become the highest form of natural beauty and a reminder of God's sublimity."

The adoration for mountain landscape was not always the case. Until the end of the seventeenth century, mountains were considered a place of fear, barrenness and highly unattractive to Roman and medieval writers. From the late seventeenth century there was a complete change in opinion. English writers such as George Hakewell and Thomas Burnet challenged the orthodox view that mountains were deformed refuse resulting from the Flood. Instead, they argued that "... mountains were antediluvian creations of God no less than the rest of paradise."17 They found mountain scenery exciting, they were filled with rapture and were ravished by it. As Hawes explains, they were "...carried away by what the following century would term the 'Sublime' in nature." 18

By 1757 when Burke's 'Essay on The Sublime and Beautiful' (mentioned above) was published,19 British writers were embracing mountain grandeur in their poetry. According to Hawes, British artists tended to keep mountain landscape in the background until William Pars presented seven alpine views at the Royal Academy in 1770. He was followed by a water colourist, John Corzens who toured the Alps in Switzerland in 1776 and 1782, and Francis Towne who's original views of mountain landscape says Hawes 20 are staggering.

Turner has been acclaimed as the most outstanding artist of mountain landscape paintings during the early nineteenth century. He made several tours of the Swiss Alps in search of the sublime. 'The Fall Of An Avalanche In The Grisons' 1810 is a good example. (Plate 7).

19 Bermingham, A. *op.cit.*
20 Hawes, L. *op.cit.*
Acclaimed as the most outstanding artist of mountain landscape
painting during the early nineteenth century.
During the early nineteenth century, many English landscape painters, especially those who worked with watercolour, were frequently painting mountain scenery. (This trend lasted well into the second half of the nineteenth century and only then became less fashionable).

Macquarie the educated eighteenth century administrator, might well have perceived the colony's landscape as an eighteenth/nineteenth century landscape painter/poet.

In his essay, 'The Continental Empire', Robert Dixon,21 provides a very good example how Macquarie consciously chose a view that resembles a classical landscape painting. This is Macquarie's description of the distant prospect:...

"At this point an extensive plain is arrived at, which constitutes the summit of the Western Mountains; and from thence a most extensive and beautiful prospect presents itself on all sides to the eye. The town of Windsor, the river Hawkesbury, Prospect Hill, and other objects within that part of the colony now inhabited, of equal interest, are distinctly seen from hence. The majestic grandeur of the situation, combined with the various objects to be seen from the place, induced the Governor to give it the appellation of 'The Kings Table Land'."22

Dixon explains that "Macquarie's description of the coastal plain is a traditional prospect piece,"23 He uses the language found in eighteenth century poetry to describe the prospect. And as Dixon finds, he picks a spot that most reminds him of a classical painting:

"The eye of the spectator is led through the darkness of the foreground-with its emblems of mortality and desolation-into the beautiful depths of the middle distance, where a number of objects of 'equal interest' indicate the benign effects of British industry. In complete accord with the

22 ibid. p. 90.
23 ibid. p. 90.
decorum of the prospect convention, Macquarie concludes with a dedication to the reigning monarch.\textsuperscript{24}

The tour over the Blue Mountains seems to have been preordained for Macquarie. The cultural currency of the time demanded it. He responded to the needs of the time, by viewing the Blue Mountains according to the dictates of taste and named places and lookouts to please himself and the informed. At the same time he was able to accommodate his own needs, that demanded he display his education, good taste, and cultural heritage.

In the next chapter I would like to look at different ways of looking at the landscape.

\textsuperscript{24} ibid. p. 90.
Chapter 3. ‘KITSCH’ Making the Landscape Desirable.

As explained above, the landscape was modified in paintings and drawings in order to bring it into line with picturesque notions of beauty during the eighteenth century. Nowadays the landscape is kitschified in order to make it attractive to the tourist of the twentieth century.

The Kitschification of the landscape is a two edged sword. The entrepreneur/business man will happily "vomit kitsch all over itself", as Dorfles\(^1\) so aptly puts it. In this instance utilising the landscape, in order to attract tourists to the area. One such businessman is Harry Hammond, who converted a coal skip that carried coal from the bottom of the escarpment to the top, during the coal mining days at Katoomba into the Scenic Railway. He also built the Skyway, a horizontal cableway that carries passengers over the Jamison Valley. At the same site he has a revolving restaurant, a games parlor, and a defunct roller coaster ride called the Orphan Rocker, which was named after a large rock near by called Orphan Rock. The Orphan Rocker was never passed by the appropriate government office for safety standards. But stands as an opportunity that waits on the side lines. It has become an attraction in its own right.

When tourists arrive at the tourist attraction complex they are met with a large fountain with three naked black and gold female statuettes prancing on top of three mounds. (Plate 8a). This is the european idea of a re-enactment of the Three Sisters legend. The legend is now being disputed as a "romanticised myth...most probably Europeans trying to outdo each other in the storytelling stakes".\(^2\) (Plate 8b).

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2 Illest, C (May 14th 1997) Blue Mountains Gazette.
8a. This eurocentric interpretation of the Three Sisters stands outside Harry Hammond's tourist attraction, the Skyway, at Katoomba.
Three Sisters story untrue?

The story behind Katoomba’s Three Sisters may be a myth created by white men with large imaginations, according to retired professor and author Chris Illert.

Mr Illert’s extensive research into the Aboriginal language of southern NSW uncovered the true Aboriginal meaning of The Three Sisters. He said the sisters’ names, supposedly told by Charles Ward by an Aboriginal tribe and published in 1949, are true, but that the story Mr Ward told was the Aboriginal legend behind the sisters’ creation was probably a romanticised myth Mr Ward made up.

Mr Illert said the tribes who lived and travelled through the area knew The Three Sisters as a representation of a woman’s hand, and hence saw it as a magical place.

He said the numerous stories that have sprung up were probably the most probably Europeans trying to outdo each other in the storytelling stakes, and that the Aboriginal names attributed to The Three Sisters by many Europeans were “systematically wrong and phonetically impossible” within the structure of the local Aboriginal language.

Mr Illert said Charles Ward most probably spent time with tribes in the area in the 1920s, but the fact that he did not publish the story until 1949 was a bit suspicious.

One of many stories which Mr Illert believes is untrue is of three sisters living in the area, who were in love with three warriors from another tribe. The warriors took the sisters by force, and a large tribal battle ensued.

A witch-doctor from the sisters’ tribe turned the women into stone, fully intending to restore them to flesh after the danger passed. Unfortunately, the witch-doctor was killed and to this day nobody has been able to break the spell and turn the women back into their natural form.

Mr Illert said Megalong Valley in the Aboriginal language of the area, means “Hand valley” (Gaugaling), while the giant sisters were known as Bullimara.

According to Mr Illert, Charles Ward’s original names for The Three Sisters are correct. Meenabi — meaning the largest (middle) finger, Weesma — the imp, the improper (little) finger, and Gumedoo — the either-side (first and third) fingers.

Control of this sacred site was very important, Mr Illert said, as it was a very special site for the tribes of the area.

“There were numerous clans fighting for control of this most sacred of sites,” Mr Illert said, “but they most probably did not come around and yelled at each other, and threw a few waddy waddies and boomerangs.

“It was more ceremonial, a lot of the conflict was probably good natured.”

Mr Illert has put together a book on the Aboriginal language of southern NSW, from Newcastle down to the Victorian border, in which he says tribes residing in that area all spoke basically the same language.
Tourists may take photos of themselves in front of the fountain as a memento of the site. It does not matter what the attraction site might be. As an example, the fountain and Skyway are repeatable in any part of the world. The important thing is that they can be associated with the main site of attraction. And from them the natural view can be seen, In this case the Three Sisters can be viewed. Whenever you encounter one of Hammond's attractions, there is always the Three Sisters as back-drop to the attraction. The intervention of a contrived attraction in front of the natural attraction turns the total experience of landscape into a kitsch event.

Another kitsch attraction is the flood lighting of the Three Sisters and selected waterfalls in the area at night. Coloured lights create an endless daytime fairy land for tourists to admire. This transforms these natural sites into imitations of themselves. It's as if the tourist is primed for souvenir shopping by being exposed to the kitschification of the landscape. In the souvenir shop kitsch products are on sale that meet all conceivable tastes. (Plate 8c)

The other side of the transaction process is the tourist, who by his very presence, will create kitsch wherever he is involved. Calinescu calls this person "Kitsch-Man". As he explains:³

"A kitsch-man, to put it bluntly, is one who tends to experience as kitsch even nonkitsch works or situations, one who involuntarily makes a parody of aesthetic response. In the tourist's role, for instance, the kitsch man will "kitschify" not only cultural monuments but also landscapes, and especially great sights, such as the Grand Canyon, which are advertised as wonders or freaks of nature."

Calinescu explains the phenomenon of kitsch-man with the observation that he not only has no aesthetic taste, but "...he wants to fill his spare time with

8c. An enlarged photo-copy of a Three Sisters souvenir.
maximum excitement...in exchange for minimum effort. For him the ideal is effortless enjoyment."

I would agree with Calinescu, but the experiences that are offered the tourist are what Boorstin\(^5\) calls self-conscious meaning that they are second-hand ways of experiencing a site. The rituals have been worked out via tourist paraphernalia. The tourist is programmed to kitschify the landscape by finding coded attractions presented to him previously. As an example, most pamphlets selling accommodation in the Blue Mountains use this technique to attract trade. The landscape image is almost always juxtaposed with the accommodation site. Either as an added photograph, or as a back drop to the accommodation site. The enclosed tourist literature shows many examples of this. (Plate 9).

\(^4\) ibid. p. 259.
9. Tourist literature showing how the Redleaf motor lodge at Blackheath juxtaposes images of a waterfall five kilometers away from the lodge in order to attract tourists.
Chapter 4. FETISHISING THE LANDSCAPE.

To understand how the landscape has been fetishised we need to look at the way the first settlers experienced the Australian bush and what they thought of it.

There have been many records made concerning the disappointing nature of the Australian landscape. Smith\(^1\) gives an example from John Oxley's, 'Journal of Two Expeditions to the Interior of New South Wales' (1820). "John Oxley recounted disappointment after disappointment, telling of dry creek beds, rotten swampy country, hostile natives and insect pests."\(^2\) Thomas Watling's weary prospect was singular. "One tree, one soil, one water and one description of bird, fish, or animal prevails alike for ten miles and for one hundred."\(^3\) They experienced monotony and disappointment. No inducement seemed capable of changing this view.

Two influential people who crossed the Blue Mountains where Barron Field, who crossed the mountains in October 1822. And Charles Darwin who crossed the mountains in approximately 1836. Barron Field, appointed Supreme Court Judge in New South Wales in 1816, had led a cultivated life. He had scientific and literary interests. When in England he was acquainted with Coleridge, Wordsworth, Henry Crabb Robinson and Charles Lamb. Field was mostly unimpressed with the mountains and remained unenthusiastic until he was safely at the bottom of Mount York. 'The trees he thought tedious...

"All the other indigenous trees and shrubs, that I have seen, are evergreens; the eternal eucalyptus, with its white bark and its scanty tin-like foliage, ...all as unpicturesque as the

\(^2\) ibid. p.233.
\(^3\) ibid. p. 233.
shrubs and flowers are beautiful...New South Wales is a perpetual Flower-garden, but there is not a single scene in it of which a painter could make a landscape, without greatly disguising the true character of the trees."4

Thus Field made much critical comment of the monotony of the leaf and colour. He compares them unfavourably with European ever-greens, then romanticises about the seasonal changes that take place in European landscapes.

Smith suggests this is not the ravings of a whingeing pom. For Field considered himself to be a connoisseur of the picturesque and found little in the Blue Mountains to satisfy him. Smith observes that Field preferred the pastoral landscape of the seventeenth century to the emotional freedom of the Romantic Revival. And that he had essentially neo-classical tastes. He could not become enthusiastic, until he had crossed the mountains and was able to gaze across to the "...gentle curves and blue distances of the savannah lands..."5

That Macquarie should find the picturesque amongst the mountains and Field on the other side, is in keeping with the changing tastes of the time, explains Smith. Even though Field's tastes were conservative.

Charles Darwin's account is little more enthusiastic. He complains: "From so grand a title as Blue Mountains, and from their absolute altitude, I expected to have seen a bold chain of mountains crossing the country; but instead of this, a sloping plain presents merely an inconsiderable front to the low land of the coast." He goes on to say "...but when once on the sandstone platform, the scenery becomes exceedingly monotonous; each side of the road is bordered by scrubby trees of the never-failing Eucalyptus family..."6

4 Ibid. p. 240.
5 Ibid. p. 242.
These two accounts are good examples of what was generally the accepted image of the Australian landscape. In fact, as Geoffrey Serle\(^7\) points out, the settlers in Australia saw themselves as British who were creating another Britain. They named suburbs and towns after British towns and villages and famous British men. They pulled out the indigenous plants and planted oaks, elms and beeches. They also introduced English wildlife such as foxes, hares, pheasants and deer to reproduce the shooting conditions of England.

For a considerable time the mountains remained for most, an inhospitable thoroughfare to the rich grazing land to the west. During the 1850's Inns and boarding houses had sprang up along the highway because of the pastoral activities and gold rush west of the mountains. But these people got little joy from crossing the mountains.

1867 saw the railway line and two stations completed at Weatherboard (Wentworth Falls) and Blackheath. Then, the 'Crushers' platform later called Katoomba opened in 1874. By 1876 the railway was completed to Bathurst. The mountains from 1867 had become a retreat for professional wealthy Sydney siders. This was the first time since Macquarie's grand tour that the mountains were visited for their beauty and supposed health giving properties. Anne Burke's quote from 'The Picturesque Atlas of Australiasia' helps to explain this.\(^8\)

""The bold blue bastion guarded all the secrets of the inner land through the first twenty years of Australian history. A road painfully made by convict labour, and for years painfully traversed, opened the far west to commerce, but only with the railway did the beauties and pleasures and glories of the mountains become accesssible to the multitudes of the city.""

With the help of the railway the mountains became a holiday destination for thousands of visitors. Wealthy land owners built their holiday houses in order to escape the heat of Sydney and enjoy the fresh air. Wentworth Falls and Govett's Leap were the first accessible sights due to the nearby railway line. Katoomba, which started as a coal mining and sawmilling town eclipsed them during the 1880's when one of the largest hotels in the colony 'The Great Western' at Katoomba, was visited by the Governor of New South Wales, Lord Carrington. The hotel was renamed The Carrington in his honour. This event opened the way to the wealthy socialites of New South Wales and began the development of Katoomba into a tourist town.

These events led to the object/commodification of the Blue Mountains. But what commodity? What object? There is nothing material here to grasp, only air and views. Julie Stockton\(^9\) starts her essay 'Health and Education - Local Industries Built On Air' with the statement..."The Blue Mountains have a fresh air economy. The past and future of the Mountains lie in the dramatic landscape and the air."\(^{10}\)

The air of the mountains was reputed by the business men in the area to have valuable health giving properties. Stockton believes they were helped by the Victorian belief that a change of air was essential to well-being; that the mountain sunlight could "impinge directly";\(^{11}\) and that eucalypt forests gave off an antiseptic vapour.

Below is a copy of an extract from 'Blackheath as a Sanatorium'. Taken from the Blackheath Progress Association Booklet, 1903. (Plate 10).

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\(^{10}\) ibid. p. 82.

\(^{11}\) ibid. p. 83.
BLACKHEATH AS A SANATORIUM.

People, as a general rule, do not realise sufficiently that in many diseases mountain air is a remedy which cannot be surpassed. They do not appear to understand that it is often superior to all other treatments put together. They evidently do not know that it can do good when everything else has proved unsuccessful. A patient inhaling mountain air is being treated by an active restorative every second of the twenty-four hours continuously, night and day without intermission.

Mountain air has particular and special chemical and vital qualities which make it conspicuously valuable in the treatment of many diseases. One of its distinguishing features is its absolute purity. There is a perfect freedom from the organic impurities and foul emanations common to crowded cities. It is free from any contamination whatever, and in this purity lies one of the most potent factors in the treatment of disease. In addition to this, mountain air contains a relatively large amount of ozone. Ozone itself being one of the most powerful disinfectants known, it follows that it is a great purifier of the air, and further, ozonised air is healthy and stimulating.

The violet rays of mountain sunlight act chemically upon the blood, and improve its quality by increasing its red corpuscles. Mountain air also induces a feeling of well-being and exhilaration, in addition to bracing up the whole body. With most people it acts as a general tonic, and promotes the appetite.

Not only does a person inhaling mountain air eat well, but he usually sleeps well too. Indeed, it generally acts—especially on literary, professional, and business men—as a soporific. The rest, too, is very much more refreshing than that obtained at lower levels—six hours’ sleep in elevated regions being as good as eight hours’ elsewhere.

Mountain air has, further, the remarkable property of promoting metabolism, that is to say, it hastens the various changes which are continually taking place throughout the system. In this way it replaces the worn out tissues with new material. It ensures a greater regularity in all the functions of the body; it makes the muscles firmer; it strengthens the nerves; it increases the mental powers; and what is more noticeable, it brings back the glow of health to the colourless face.—Dr. P. Mackell ("The Feeding and Management of Australian Infants in Health and in Disease.")

10. The Blue Mountains air was believed to be able to cure almost any illness.
Taken from the Blackheath Progress Association Booklet, 1903.
In order to explain this phenomenon I would like to look at Freud’s ‘Fetischismus’ finished in 1927.\textsuperscript{12} And Marx’s ‘The Fetishism of The Commodity and its Secret’ in ‘Capital’ 1867.\textsuperscript{13}

Freud (1977) used the term fetish as its being a sign that preserves a memory from extinction. For instance, the child’s horror of his mother being brutally castrated is coped with by creating a substitute. To make him less uneasy. Laura Mulvey\textsuperscript{14} explains that the fetish becomes a mask:

"The substitute also functions as a mask, covering over and disavowing the traumatic sight of absence, especially if the ‘absence’ sets off associations with the wounded, bleeding body. The psyche constructs a phantasmatic topography, a surface, or carapace, which hides ugliness and anxiety with beauty and desire. This intricate confusion of the semiotic and the topographical, so important to the workings of the unconscious, has yet another facet. The fetish object also commemorates. It is a sign left by the original moment of castration anxiety and is also a mark of mourning for the lost object. The fetish object fixes and freezes the historic event outside rational memory and individual chronology. But the fetish still stays in touch with its original traumatic real and retains a potential access to its own historical story."

With a sense of loss and longing for a loved object (the home landscape), the first settlers experienced the Australian landscape. They were able to cope with the loss of their mother land by substituting what they saw, with an image of what they longed to see. Susan Stewart \textsuperscript{15} sees this state as a "dispossession". Thus,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{14} Mulvey, L (1996) \textit{Fetishism and curiosity}. Bloomington: Indiana University press London: British Film Institute, p. 5.
\end{itemize}
they changed the landscape to match picturesque ideals. As with Stewart's souvenirs, the landscape was "exoticized and estranged".\textsuperscript{16}

They rooted out the indigenous plants, fauna and even people, then replaced what they could with introduced English substitutes. (They believed this was good, it satisfied them and their minds were set at ease.)

In this way the landscape has been fetishised over a period of time. But despite this the inaccessible landscape remains what it is, itself. The way we see it and think it, changes it for us only.

Having lived in the mountains for seventeen years, I see it in many ways. I believe I can experience it close up because of my daily personal contact with the landscape. I experience it through my work as a painter, and through my body as a walker. I consume the landscape in a multi-sensual way. By sight, smell, feeling textures, absorbing and immersion. Compared to the way I attempt to think and experience the landscape, tourists who visit the area are encouraged to experience it in a very different way. They are encouraged to fetishise the landscape just as Macquarie and the early settlers did. Their experience is a second-hand way of viewing the mountains. They are culturally primed via tourist propaganda, directional signs and mass media as to what the landscape should look like. The view and the air have been transformed into a commodity by a community that now relies on the tourist trade in order to gain income.

But you could not say that the view and the air are commodities as such. They are what Marx\textsuperscript{17} has referred to as: "the fetishism which attaches itself to the products of labour as soon as they are produced as commodities." Just as Marx uses religion as an analogy that gives products of the human brain a life of their

\textsuperscript{16} ibid, p. 150.
\textsuperscript{17} Marx, K. \textit{op. cit}, p. 165.
own, so the mountains are endowed with a presence, a form of ritualised added value that turns the mountains into 'landscape produced'\textsuperscript{18} for consumption. The nineteenth century event of settlers witnessing facets of an expatriate culture, originally in the form of the romantic period of landscape painting, has now brought visitors from all over the world. Certain sites were selected to view the landscape, such as the Three Sisters at Katoomba. This site is endlessly reproduced on tourist pamphlets and souvenirs. Thus giving added value to this site. (Plate 11.).

How do tourists recognise added value landscape and why do they seek it out? The nostalgia for idealised nature, as I have mentioned above, became fashionable because of the effects of enclosure and the industrial revolution in Britain during the eighteenth century. This changed the tastes of the upper classes to incorporate the Sublime and the Picturesque in nature. To be a traveler/tourist in search of the picturesque was a popular diversion at this time.

Two hundred years later idealised nature is still a tourist destination. John Urry\textsuperscript{19} explains this by saying that the tourist gaze is dependent on what is happening in non-tourist forms of social experience and consciousness. He identifies a period in history when idealised nature became a tourist destination. The feeling of loss that occurred during the period of industrialisation and enclosure was a loss of the natural environment that nurtured one's forebears. This could be an explanation for present day tourist's search for the nostalgia for the golden past.

Grant McCracken\textsuperscript{20} used the metaphor of the golden age to describe a term he has coined: "displaced meaning".\textsuperscript{21} It is the strategy that cultures (especially

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\textsuperscript{19} Urry, J (1990) \textit{The tourist gaze}. London: Sage publications.
\textsuperscript{21} \textit{ibid}. p. 106.
11. The Three Sisters validate tourist consumption of the landscape at Echo Point, Katoomba.
western), use to cope with the disparity between the real and the ideal in life. "The culture that resorts to the "displaced meaning" strategy must find a place for its ideals."²² One such place is the golden age. He explains that "...the period is a largely fictional moment in which social life is imagined to have conformed perfectly to cultural ideals."²³ By placing the ideal into the past or the future, the ideal is protected from harsh realities. History provides documentation and evidence of its existence. This by way of historian's interpretations of past events and conditions. The golden age can also find its existence within a utopian vision. Displaced meaning can move backwards and forwards in time to suit the ideal. McCracken says it can also move across space. The ideal society or place might exist somewhere at the present time. "Ideally, this society is sufficiently distant to ensure that thorough scrutiny is not easily undertaken..."²⁴ The Blue Mountains and its views has provided a safe place for these ideals. Tourists passing through need not get involved with the culture or environment. This avoids disappointment. The view of the landscape becomes a back-drop to tourist activities. Such as relaxing, photography and consumption of goods and services that authenticate the journey and provokes the memory. (Plate 12).

²² ibid. p. 106.
²³ ibid. p. 106.
²⁴ ibid. p. 107.
THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

12. Tourists at Echo Point, and the Skyway at Katoomba. The landscape is used as background to tourist amusement.
Chapter 5 - The Landscape as 'Still Life'.

Xenia 1

"It is a good thing to gather figs and also not to pass over in silence the figs in this picture. Purple figs dripping with juice are heaped on vine-leaves; and they are depicted with breaks in the skin, some just cracking open to disgorge their honey, some split apart, they are so ripe. Near them lies a branch, not bare, by Zeus, or empty of fruit, but under the shade of its leaves are figs, some still green and 'untimely', some with wrinkled skin and over-ripe, and some about to turn, disclosing the shining juice, while on the top of the branch a sparrow buries its bill in what seems the very sweetest of the figs. All the ground is strewn with chestnuts, some of which are rubbed free of the burr, others lie quite shut up, and others show the burr breaking at the lines of division... See, too, the pears on pears, apples, both heaps of them and piles of ten, all fragrant and golden. You will say that their redness has not been put on from the outside, but has bloomed from within. Here are gifts of the cherry tree, here is fruit in clusters heaped in a basket, and the basket is woven, not from alien twigs, but from branches of the plant itself. And if you look at the vine-sprays woven together and at the clusters hanging from them and how the grapes stand one by one, you will certainly hymn Dionysos and speak of the vine as 'Queenly giver of grapes'. You would say that even the grapes in the painting are good to eat and full of winey juice. And the most charming point of all this is: on a leafy branch is yellow honey already within the comb and ripe to stream forth if the comb is pressed; and on another leaf is cheese new curdled and quivering; and there are bowls of milk not merely white but gleaming, for the cream floating upon it makes it seem to gleam."

Bryson has taken the above quote from the Philostratus Imagines. He was a Greek Sophist who taught in Athens and Rome in the third century AD. The Imagines deal with the codes of viewing that apply to Roman painting. They cover the protocols, expectations and generic rules governing the viewing of pictures. Bryson explains that the "Imagines are crucial to the understanding of "Xenia".

Xenia are a group of paintings related to still-life but are very culturally specific. They were painted on the walls of villas at Pompeii buried beneath the lava of Vesuvius.

Xenia 1 relates to the concept of nature without culture. The natural abundance in the passage above needs no aid from the hand of man. In Philostratus' text, the fruit, figs and honey, are all gifts of nature. The wine, cheese and milk are the consequence of natural fermentation. The ideal is a world without work. As Bryson explains: "Behind Xenia 1, with its stress on a nature that preforms all the work of culture and so makes culture seem escapable or unnecessary, stands an idea of collective abundance, the fantasy of a wealth of nature shared equally by all regardless of social heirarchy." I believe that there is this feeling of abundance and natural wealth when we look out over the vistas form the lookouts in the Blue Mountains.

I would like to compare the concept of landscape as Still Life with the Imagines, by first explaining that the Imagines were codes for the viewing of pictures. Philostratus Xenia 1 is almost written in code, the subtle messages and ways of seeing are a learned process. So too are the mountains viewed. Visitors are coached from the time they decide where they intend to visit. John Urray explains why places chosen to visit are in direct contrast to those experienced daily.

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2 ibid, p. 18.
3 ibid, p. 24.
"Places are chosen to be gazed upon because there is an anticipation, especially through daydreaming and fantasy, of intense pleasures, either on a different scale or involving different senses from those customarily encountered. Such anticipation is constructed and sustained through a variety of non-tourist practices, such as film, TV, literature, magazines, records and videos, which construct and reinforce that gaze."

As an example, Susan Wright's 'Blue Mountains Experience' New South Wales is a glossy, colourful, booklet presenting the Blue Mountains as a destination. The booklet covers views, waterfalls, exotic gardens in Spring and Autumn; Galleries, ways of experiencing the mountains, such as the Skyway, and Scenic Railway. There is a section devoted to The Three Sisters, as this is the main tourist attraction in Katoomba. Resorts and outings, flora and fauna are also covered in the book. A map on the inside back cover aids tourists to find the attractions mentioned inside. As Urry points out tourists cannot be left to find their own subjects of the gaze. They need to be pointed in the right direction. This keeps tourism controlled and profitable for the host destination.

"...each centre of attraction involves complex processes of production in order that regular, meaningful and profitable tourist gazes can be generated and sustained. Such gazes cannot be left to chance. People have to learn how, when and where to 'gaze'. Clear markers have to be provided..."

In the Blue Mountains the lookout is the main tourist attraction marker. (Plate 13). Echo Point, looking over to the Three Sisters; Govett's Leap, looking over to the Grose Valley; Mt. Hargraves, looking out to the Megalong Valley; Wentworth Falls, looking over to the Valley of The Waters, are good examples. The tourist industry in the mountains is built around these markers. Tourist literature such as advertising pamphlets for accommodation often display the

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6 Urry, J. op.cit. p. 9.
13. Markers direct tourists to lookouts in the Blue Mountains.
closest view in order to attract business. As an example the Fairmont Resort at Leura, has a picture of the Three Sisters at Katoomba juxtaposed with photo of the resort. (Plate 14). The Three Sisters are used by many businesses in the Blue Mountains as markers to attract trade. These markers have become the codes for viewing the landscape, just as the Imagines were codes for the viewing of pictures.

On an outing to Echo Point at Katoomba I was astonished to find there were so many tourist coaches parked directly in front of the view. They actually obscured the view until I got in front of them and made my way down some stairs to a viewing platform specially constructed for the purpose. (Plate 15). However, this would seem legitimate to tourist operators who regard the view as being significant only when tourists are present.

The rituals engendered by tourist coach travel closely relate to the social function of Xenia. As Bryson explains the Greek word Xenos is a reversible term. Referring equally to host and guest. 

"The figs, honey, the basket of cherries, the milk and cheeses described in Xenia 1 are foods for the guests to prepare for themselves, as part of the ceremony of bringing the stranger (xenos) into the `oikos' or household. This particular form of hospitality is precise about the boundaries that demarcate social distance: the stranger is welcomed and absorbed into the household through the gift of food, yet at the same time the gift creates a sort of satellite household within the house, so that strangers eat their own food separately prepared, in a separate space of their own."7

On the tourist coach the Xenia becomes the landscape view. Like the stranger coming into the household the tourist is coached via the tour guide and tourist literature about the rituals required by the host to make contact as smooth and

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7 Bryson, N. op.cit. p. 23.
14. An example of the Three Sisters being used as an attraction marker. In this case the attraction is not even in the same town as the accommodation.
15. The view is legitimised by the presence of tourists.
rewarding as possible for both parties. The tourist, like the stranger is given a certain amount of independence, but is protected from behaviour that is not ritualised or is unpredictable. In this context the landscape seen from the platform has existence only when viewed by tourists in a certain way. The tourist's need to be entertained and titillated by nature can be met with the aid of the tour operator. Just as nature in Xenia 1 can meet fundamental needs by trained controlled access.

Urray quotes Boorstin, who calls insulating the tourist from the strangeness of the host environment the "environmental bubble".8

The tourist coach encapsulates Philostratus' theories on Xenia. The coach is like a capsule that protects the visitor from the harsh realities of the site visited. A large majority of the visitors I encountered were Japanese tourists. The coach protects the tourist from climate, language, and insects. The coach provides this in air conditioned comfort; an interpreter is provided so that visitors need not worry with the language of the host destination. And each visitor is sprayed with insect repellent as they leave the bus. After alighting the coach, tourists are encouraged to walk to the viewing platform for video and photography rituals. They are given an allotted time in the souvenir shop and then on to the next site.

The landscape is presented as wilderness, untouched virgin forest. This could be interpreted as raw to the visitor. By exposure to media and tourist information literature, the tourist is well versed in what to look at and where to point the camera. The way in which the tourist interprets what they see, depends on how this information is presented to them.

8 Urray, J. op.cit. p. 7.
In Xenia 1, Philostratus emphasises nature "...as an image that bypasses cultural work..." It is nature independent of culture. It stands for the idea of "...collective abundance..." and "...the fantasy of a wealth of nature..." The view from Echo Point at Katoomba and Govetts Leap at Blackheath are especially presented in this way. Through tourist literature available at the Tourist Information and Souvenir Shop at Echo Point, and the New South Wales National Parks Heritage Centre at Govetts Leap. Literature offering Wilderness Walks; Blue Mountains Experiences; Cox's River Escapes; 4WD Trips; Discovery Programs; and Bushwalking Adventures. Words such as wilderness, experiences, escapes and discovery present the mountains as raw. Tourists are encouraged to fantasise about entering wild, virgin forests. (Plate 15a).

However, as Boorstin says. The over use of the word adventure has turned it into one of the blandest and emptiest words in the language:"now in common usage it is primarily a contrived experience that somebody is trying to sell us." The view is offered as wild, natural, abundant, and available to everyone. All the tourist needs to do is follow the text, in order to enjoy the fruits of nature and escape.

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9 Bryson, N. op.cit. p. 23.
Discover
Relax
Enjoy

Blue Mountains
National Park

NSW NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

COX'S RIVER ESCAPES

4WD BUSHWALKING ADVENTURES

15a. Language on tourist literature help tourists to fantasise about wild nature that is available to everyone.
Chapter 6.

"THE EDGE -The ultimate Blue Mountains wilderness experience"

The Edge is a travelogue/documentary film that shows regularly at a new cinema at Katoomba. Its basis is of natural features in the Blue Mountains.

Armed with a copy of Umberto Eco's 'Travels in Hyper-Reality', I went to the cinema and viewed The Edge. The leaflet I picked up at the cinema door assured me that..."a Giant screen Movie experience will create a sense of reality unsurpassed by any other." (Plate 16.). And that "Maxvision's 70mm film format is projected onto the six storey high screen 18m x 24m, creating an image greater than your peripheral vision...IT'S JUST LIKE BEING THERE!" Considering that I payed to get in, and as Boorstin points out, it is free outside: I would have expected to experience the Blue Mountains landscape via Maxvision with added value; or more and more. In fact, Eco compares this affluence of abundance with eating in classy American restaurants.

"...it is hard to eat those dishes that many classy American restaurants all darkness and wood paneling, dotted with soft red lights and invaded by nonstop music, offer the customer as evidence of his own situation of "affluence": steaks four inches thick with lobster (and baked potato, and sour cream and melted butter, and grilled tomato and horseradish sauce) so that the customer will have "more and more," and can wish nothing further".

Visitors are assured at the start of the movie (for those who did not read the pamphlet), of the sophistication and state-of-the-art equipment that has made

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3 Eco, U. op.cit. p. 23.
THE MAXVISION WHOLEMART EXPERIENCE

A visit to 'The Edge' is a total experience that visitors will find exciting, educational and highly inspirational.

At 'The Edge', a Giant Screen Movie experience will create a sense of reality unsurpassed by any other.

Acclaimed as one of the world’s great cinemas!

MAXVISION’s 70mm film format is projected onto the six storey high screen, 18m x 24m, creating an image greater than your peripheral vision... IT’S JUST LIKE BEING THERE!

The visual extravaganza is complemented by an extraordinary six track DTS® Digital Surround Sound System, creating a purity of sound unsurpassed in any cinema.

The outstanding cinema offers superb seating with uninterrupted viewing from all seats.

MAXVISION presents 3 outstanding Giant Screen Movies for your enjoyment every day.

EXPERIENCE THESE MAXVISION GIANT SCREEN MOVIES

THE EDGE
THE MOVIE

The Ultimate Blue Mountains Wilderness Experience!

Unless you have experienced 'The Edge', you haven't experienced the Blue Mountains.

Tintill to brilliantly clear images of this unique and beautifully diverse Australian landscape as it comes to life through the unparalleled effect of MAXVISION.

Fly through the vast valley treks and gorges. Climb vertical cliffs. Plunge head-long over mountain waterfalls into deep rainforest and the hidden world of limestone caves.

Discover the prehistoric Wollomi Pins, Australia's ancient Dinosaur Trees only at 'The Edge - The Movie'.

The visual extravaganza has been viewed by over 300,000 people in its first year of screening.

'The Edge - The Movie' Soundtrack is the winner of the Australian Guild of Screen Composers' APRA AWARD for the 'BEST SOUNDTRACK OF 1996'.

'The Edge - The Movie' is the most dynamic and panoramic cinematic experience ever!

This outstanding $2.2 million production was produced exclusively for screening at 'The Edge' and has been jointly funded by MAXVISION and the Australian Film Finance Commission (FFC).

38 minutes of pure wonder!

DAILY SCREENING TIMES
10am, 11.40, 12.30pm, 1.20, 2.10, 3.50 & 5.20

16. Visitors to the Maxivision cinema are assured they are witnessing the latest technology.

GIANT SCREEN
MAXVISION CINEMA

Featuring 'The Edge - The Movie' ‘the ultimate experience’

Giant Screen Movies on the six storey screen together with the latest Feature Films at Australia's only Destination Cinema

PROGRAMME

April 10 – May 28, 1997

ALSO FEATURING:

• 'Aussie Bushmen's' B.B.Q. lunch at 'Café at the Edge' – 11.30am to 2.30pm daily.
• 'Jedda's', family Restaurant open Tuesday to Saturday from 6pm.
• Enjoy a light gourmet dinner, before or after the movies, from our Foyer Food Bar.
• All your favourite movie snacks from 'The Edge' Candy Bar.
• Browse for unique quality gifts 'From the Edge'.
• Experience the National Parks and Wollemi Pines Display.
• Unique education program and support material for teachers and students.
• Excellent access for the aged and handicapped.
• Ample car and coach parking – much undercover.
• MaxSaver Card movie discounts.

MAXVISION PTY LTD
this visual extravaganza possible. Thus does the cinema claim value added of nature by use of technology!

But why a Maxvision when it is free out there? Not only day tripping tourists in coaches attend. Many locals visit the site to experience the better than real landscape. One of the answers might be what Boorstin calls our "extravagant expectations".\(^4\) "We expect too much of the world. Our expectations are extravagant in the precise dictionary sense of the word: "going beyond the limits of reason or moderation." They are excessive." Maxvision could be said to fulfill these "extravagant expectations".

The film and the cinema ambience contrives to induce close to real, personal reactions to the film events. (It is debatable whether the reactions are real. Might the film induce unrealistic 'sideshow' type fears that are not common in the bush?).

Where else outside could you experience the mountain views under all weather conditions and all times of day from sunrise to sunset in thirty eight minutes? Climb vertical cliffs and plunge head-long over mountain waterfalls into deep rainforest and the hidden world of limestone caves? Experience the thrill of abseiling into dark waterfalls? The sound and filming technique does seem to make it real. I found with the large size of the screen, my body was experiencing the physical affects of vertigo. As the camera swept over mountains and plunged into ravines, I found I was bracing my body as if I was going to fall off. It was almost like physically being on a roller coaster ride. The difference being, this was safe: but still terrifying.

\(^4\) Boorstin, D.J. op.cit. p. 3.
The Maxvision experience purports to offer safe, clean thrills that are out of the ordinary to the "everyday".\(^5\) (A cynical look at the twentieth century, where Lefebve defines The Everyday as a form of consumerism). Urraye\(^6\) explains that the tourist gaze depends on what the non-tourist experience happens to be from day to day. The tourist seeks out pleasures that are quite unlike what they are used to. "Tourism results from a basic binary division between the ordinary/everyday and the extraordinary."\(^7\)

It is worth considering the role played by the simulated experiential phenomena such as The Edge.

During the viewing of The Edge, visitors were made aware of the fragile nature of the ecology in the Blue Mountains. The voice-over explained that the wilderness does have boundaries. That many of the species of flora and fauna found out there are site specific and would not be found at any other site in the Blue Mountains, or any where else in the world. The recently discovered Wollemi Pine is an example, found in an isolated gorge not an hour's flying time from the center of Sydney. There are less than forty mature trees standing in the whole world. Does the Movie replace the original so well, humanity will no longer need to tramp all over the place, thus saving the mountains for generations to come?

Eco discusses the "apocalyptic philosophy"\(^8\) that motivates certain museums in America to produce endless replicas and reconstructions of famous European works of art and architecture. There are examples in history where civilisations have crumbled, to be reconstructed by other more powerful civilizations. Eco asks, does the "Absolute Fake"\(^9\) eventually replace the real? When all the forests

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7 ibid., p. 11.
8 Eco, U. *op.cit.* p. 36.
9 ibid., p. 40.
have been cleared will The Edge really become the ultimate experience. And, like Eco's experience of nature in Disneyland, will technology give us more reality than nature can? Or, as Eco also points out, will we "...enjoy the conviction that imitation has reached its apex and afterwards reality will always be inferior to it."\textsuperscript{10} The Edge may be able to save the tourists legs by replacing the real experience with a comfortable seat. But it will never be the reason to save the natural environment, only replace it with its replica.

Eco also mentions the bad conscience of the white man who pays his debt to the destroyed primitive cultures.\textsuperscript{11} During the film there was a re-enactment of some Aboriginal people preparing their spears at sunset. The music was also flavoured with the occasional Digeridoo from time to time during the film. The Aboriginal people were wiped out of the mountains area soon after first contact was made. References made to the Aboriginal people during a film about wilderness seems to me to be white man's romantic denial of a modern people who have moved along with the times. The Aboriginal people should not be used as sign posts to authenticate the film and possibly hide the real intention of it's makers. Which is ultimately to make alot of money from the Natural landscape.

Like the visitors in Eco's hyperreal Disneyland, who find it "...a place of total passivity. Its visitors must agree to behave like its robots."\textsuperscript{12} The visitors to the ultimate experience, The Edge, also find their movements restricted to being observers. When one has bought a ticket, you are directed to wait down the stairs where several displays on the natural flora and fauna of the Blue Mountains are on display for the visitors information. There is a human scale photo of a man rock climbing and a woman abseiling with the faces cut out. The visitor can put their face into the scene and become part of the action, while they are

\textsuperscript{10} ibid. p. 46.
\textsuperscript{11} ibid. p. 39.
\textsuperscript{12} ibid. p. 48.
photographed. While the film is on, of course all visitors are expected to stay in their seats and watch.

The game changes after the show though, when visitors can physically take part in the action by spending up big in the souvenir shop. After seeing all that action and breath taking beauty restrained, the visitor can exercise individuality and free choice and become part of the ultimate experience by purchasing a souvenir. As an example the visitor may purchase a real piece of the film celluloid. (Plate 17). They can grasp in the hand a physical piece of the film. This is 'Just Like Being There!' Only better. The spontaneity of placing yourself within the real landscape outside and taking the sort of risks this must involve is transferred to the spontaneity of purchasing from The Edge shop. The visitor gets to take a piece of the action home!

What is intriguing is that every one is satisfied. The visitors are beguiled into believing they have actually experienced the Blue Mountains landscape. And are given the opportunity to purchase. While the entrepreneur's conscience is preserved as the film is presented as environmentally friendly. The ambiguous line between the real and the fake has been blurred by those convinced they are providing a service of information to the public.

The Edge Experience can be placed in the same category as Daniel Boorstin's "Pseudo-Events". At the end of his essay 'A Flood of Pseudo-Events', he lists characteristics of pseudo-events which make them overshadow spontaneous events:13

"(1) Pseudo-events are more dramatic..."

The sound and filming techniques used in The Edge aggrandise, and often awe-inspire the audience.

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17. A photo-copy of the film celuloid from the Maxivion shop.
"(2) Pseudo-events, being planned for dissemination, are easier to disseminate and to make vivid. Participants are selected for their newsworthy and dramatic interest."

The use of the Aboriginal people and the Wollemi Pine placed in the context of wilderness could be seen as examples of drama and news worthiness. The event of opening The Edge was widely reported in local and national newspapers. With a cast of celebrities to suggest importance and authenticity.

"(3) Pseudo-events can be repeated at will, and thus their impression can be reinforced."

The Edge runs seven times a day, seven days a week.

"(4) Pseudo-events cost money to create; hence somebody has an interest in disseminating, magnifying, advertising, and extolling them as events worth watching or worth believing."

Large sign-boards are clearly visible along the high-way on the way up to Katoomba. Advertising material is available at all Tourist Information Outlets. In all advertising media the wonders of The Edge are made known, so as not to escape the notice of the visitor.

"(5) Pseudo-events, being planned for intelligibility, are more intelligible and hence more reassuring..."

The Edge is full of information about the natural environment of the Blue Mountains. Thus reassuring the audience they are actually learning something. It's not just another roller-coaster ride or side show for entertainment.

"(6) Pseudo-events are more sociable, more conversable, and more convenient to witness. Their occurrence is planned for our convenience."

Delivering bus loads of tourists to The Edge is a far safer and convenient way of exposing people to the Blue Mountains landscape. Often the weather in the mountains is misty, shrouding the views from the tourist gaze. The Edge is predictable, clean, safe, and all foreign speaking tourists are given Walkmans and headphones which conveniently translate the voice-over into their language.
There is also a restaurant, coffee shoppe, souvenir shop and rest rooms available for tourists.

"(7) Knowledge of pseudo-events - of what has been reported, or what has been staged, and how - becomes the test of being "informed"."

The Edge could be seen as Cultural Tourism. The film covers topics relevant to Blue Mountains history, as well as information covering flora and fauna. Tourists can come away thinking they have an in-depth view of the mountains.

"(8) Finally, pseudo-events spawn other pseudo-events in geometric progression..."

The Edge can be seen as a pseudo-event. Selling pieces of the film celluloid can be seen as a pseudo-event of the pseudo-event.

Finally, seeing The Edge is an impressive pseudo-event. For me though, it can never replace the multi-sensual experience of physically placing yourself within the Blue Mountains landscape.
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NEWSPAPERS.


Multimedia item accompanies print copy
CONCLUSION

There are many factors that affect the way we see the BlueMountains. A primary factor is the influence of European art on the first inhabitants of the colony. Their way of seeing is a legacy maintained today. This is demonstrated by the popularity of the many lookouts used to attract visitors to the mountains.

This way of seeing has not only affected the way we visit the mountains, but also the way we live here on a day to day basis. Contemporary trends encourage residents to create gardens in which exotic plants dominate. We create a personal space quite unlike that which has evolved naturally in Australia. And so declare our values.

A recently formed organisation called Wild Plant Rescue is trying to counterbalance this biased attitude.

Visitors to the mountains can expect to experience pseudo-events. It is doubtful this will continue to meet tourist needs. For example, The Edge is experiencing some difficulty attracting the flow of tourists that was initially anticipated.

Future tourist gaze1 is probably an unpredictable dynamic. This essay has attempted to identify some major past and present factors. If tourism in the Blue Mountains is to survive in the future, it is well to be aware that issues such as nineteenth century concepts of the Picturesque and Sublime, early twentieth century concepts such as Kitsch; the tourist industry's attempts to create

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commodities and Pseudo-events have all been important past attempts to interpret and experience the mountains.

These all reflected the society of the day. To remain realistic in the future, there will be a need to re-evaluate that which is behind the way we view and see the mountains.