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ARTICLES (PEER REVIEWED)

## Seeing Differently: Understanding Pākehā Constructions of Mountain Landscapes in Aotearoa

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### Introduction

Throughout the nineteenth century, colonists made sense of Aotearoa's mountains according to familiar European cultural forms that helped to construct an image of a 'new' and yet somehow familiar country. Embracing the 'mythology of exploration', Pākehā (European New Zealanders) viewed the mountains as untrodden and uninhabited, and therefore ripe for appropriation and exploitation.<sup>1</sup> Through landscape painting, photography and cartography, mountains were rendered known and iconic, and by 'Knowing them, they possessed them'.<sup>2</sup> Mountain imagery was initially used to promote European exploration, science and emigration. By the late nineteenth century, the development of tourism saw a proliferation of images that promoted European ways of seeing mountains, while the introduction of the national park movement further cemented mountains as a 'scenic playground' within the nation-building project. While Māori were closely associated with the development and promotion of tourism in thermal regions in Aotearoa, they were largely absent from iconic mountain images, except where they were included as an exotic element and their relationships to maunga (mountains) framed as quaint or romantic myths and legends.

This article explores Pākehā constructions of mountain landscapes as part of a process of cultural colonisation during the nineteenth century, whereby colonising the land was facilitated by 'controlling its interpretation'.<sup>3</sup> In focussing on how Pākehā appropriated mountains as a cultural landscape, the article does not attempt to explore in depth a Māori perspective on these processes, except to provide some limited context to demonstrate the extent to which Pākehā constructions ignored or misrepresented Māori relationships with whenua (land).<sup>4</sup> It is, however, informed by, and aspires to complement, recent literature from Māori scholars and

others presenting an indigenous perspective on the historical and contemporary management of cultural landscapes.<sup>5</sup>

As the article is concerned with how we see mountains, visual sources are key to my analysis, including sketches, paintings, photographs and maps, as well as tourist promotional material, such as brochures, guides, travel books and illustrated volumes. I begin by exploring the early production and dissemination of mountain imagery in Aotearoa through the intertwined purposes of advancing European exploration, science and emigration. This imagery provided a foundation for mountain tourism publicity, produced from the 1870s to attract travellers to the ‘Switzerland of the South’, and focussed on recreation and scenic appreciation with little or no reference to Māori. I then consider how this construction of mountains helped enable a system of managing them as national parks for recreation and tourism that further denied Māori relationships and rights to their maunga, before exploring how tourism publicity and interpretation represented Māori following the establishment of national parks in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

This is followed by discussion of developments since the 1970s, which have seen iwi (tribes) make some headway in obtaining ‘cultural redress’ and re-establishing control over mountains as ancestral landscapes. There remains, however, ‘ongoing tension’ between Māori and Pākehā in relation to the different ways they identify with and speak about mountains, evident in the evolving ways that legislation and conservation management plans for mountain regions are attempting to balance these differing worldviews.<sup>6</sup> By connecting the past with the present, my intention is to contribute to understanding the historical precedents that make cultural redress and new models of management for mountains imperative.

The genesis of this article was my involvement in a collaborative, large-format illustrated book that celebrated the imagery used to promote mountain tourism in Aotearoa.<sup>7</sup> As a life-long mountain recreationist who had researched and written about both historical and contemporary mountain culture, it was a dream project for me to help celebrate this culture and make some of its history better known to the wider public. However, while researching and writing the text for *Scenic Playground: The Story Behind New Zealand’s Mountain Tourism*, I had to confront the extent to which this celebratory narrative about Aotearoa’s mountain culture is implicated in processes of cultural colonisation, the legacy of which we are still working to resolve today. As ecologist Geoff Park has argued, if you understand a landscape’s history ‘you see it differently’.<sup>8</sup> Working on *Scenic Playground*, I not only began to see mountains differently and to question my own identification with this narrative, but, as a public historian, I also grappled with how I could help others to see differently, too. Without claiming to have found any definitive answers, I see it as the role of public history practice in Aotearoa to draw from the burgeoning critical scholarship by both Māori and Pākehā, and to help introduce into public discourse a more nuanced understanding of our history and relationships with mountains/maunga.

## Mountain Images in the Promotion of Exploration, Science and Emigration

European explorers and surveyors were the first promoters of Aotearoa’s mountain landscapes through the production of images and maps, which were framed by European artistic conventions, scientific paradigms and the ideology of colonialism. Among them were many accomplished artists, and their work was widely exhibited and used to illustrate travel and science books of the day. The topographical style of landscape painting they favoured was considered a means of ‘meticulously’ describing the physical landscape, and they saw themselves as producing ‘visual aids to the geologist, surveyor, explorer, settler’, much like a map or a diagram.<sup>9</sup>

William Hodges, official artist on James Cook’s second voyage (1772-74), made the first topographical studies of the New Zealand landscape in watercolour and pencil.<sup>10</sup> *Dusky Bay, New Zealand*, painted on

26 March 1773, captures the mountains of south-west New Zealand that greeted the explorers after four months at sea.<sup>11</sup> Hodges' work illustrated Cook's *Journal*, the first publication to bring New Zealand to the attention of the outside world, revealing a strong contemporary sense that such images conveyed what words could not express and were, in some respects, more reliable than verbal descriptions.<sup>12</sup>

Decades later, the young draughtsman and trained artist Charles Heaphy arrived in New Zealand, employed by the New Zealand Company to help identify resources and secure land for settlement. Heaphy's topographical watercolour *Mt Egmont from the Southward* (1840), while likely intended as an accurate rendering of the physical landscape, deployed a 'strict and unnatural symmetry' marking it as an icon – something sacred and intended to be contemplated as a symbol of eternity – as was the vogue in European landscape painting of the time.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, John Buchanan, draughtsman with the Otago Geological Survey, did not consider his work as art. His *Milford Sound, Looking North-West from Freshwater Basin* (1863) – retrospectively acknowledged as another icon of New Zealand art – was first publicly exhibited at the New Zealand Exhibition of 1865 in Dunedin under 'Education Works and Appliances' in the subclass of 'Specimens and Illustrations of Natural History and Physical Science'.



Charles Heaphy (1820-1881), *Mt Egmont from the Southward*, [1840]. (C-025-008, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. /records/23173901)

Lithographed prints of *Mt Egmont from the Southward*, along with similar landscapes by Heaphy and others, were used by the New Zealand Company to promote emigration and illustrated contemporary publications, including Heaphy's own *Narrative of a Residence in Various Parts of New Zealand* (1842). Aimed at a European reading public eager to learn about far-flung parts of globe, illustrated travel books were extremely popular in the nineteenth century. Their illustrations assured would-be settlers not only of available and fertile land, but of romantic scenery that would feel familiar and help overcome an 'otherwise threatening otherness'.<sup>14</sup> Far from being 'disinterested records or objects for aesthetic pleasure', writes art historian Priscilla Pitts, such images were 'weapons of cultural conquest, soft missiles in the imposition of a powerful colonizing vision'.<sup>15</sup>

Another popular art genre at the time was the sublime, of which mountains were a favourite subject, along with storms, avalanches, torrents and volcanoes – in fact, any landscape feature that could arouse feelings of terror, darkness and gloom, vastness and awe-inspiring power, and solitude and silence.<sup>16</sup>

Surveyors, scientists and travellers were drawn to New Zealand's mountains in search of the sublime, and cast themselves as heroic explorers of a vast and 'empty' land.<sup>17</sup>

In the preface to his book *Travels in New Zealand: With Contributions to the Geography, Geology, Botany, and Natural History of that Country*, published in London in 1843, the naturalist Ernst Dieffenbach claimed 'I have been over much untrodden ground. I was the first to visit or describe Mount Egmont.' On 25 December 1839, he and his companion James Heberley reached the summit of Taranaki Maunga, or Mount Egmont as they knew it. From the peak they surveyed the landscape with a 'panoptic gaze', commanding the land stretched out beneath them – north along the coastline to Kāwhia and the Waikato, inland to Ruapēhu, and south towards Cook Strait.<sup>18</sup> When this view was obscured by fog, Dieffenbach set about calculating the altitude by measuring the temperature of boiling water. His matter-of-fact account of his climb, along with 'unvarnished descriptions' of geological features, flora and fauna, was intended to indicate its accuracy as a record of exploration.<sup>19</sup> Describing the topography, taking measurements and collecting specimens was a means of establishing symbolic ownership.<sup>20</sup> He also viewed the scene with a Romantic eye and appraised its future value as an aesthetic resource. 'In future times,' he predicted, 'this picturesque valley, as well as Mount Egmont and the smiling open land at its base, will become as celebrated for their beauty as the Bay of Naples, and will attract travellers from all parts of the globe.'<sup>21</sup>

By making the deeply problematic assumption of being first, Dieffenbach and others perpetuated the 'mythology of exploration', largely ignoring or trivialising existing Māori connections with their maunga.<sup>22</sup> Though he had relied heavily on Māori guides to make his ascent, Dieffenbach wrote that they would accompany him only as far as the snowline and refused to go further due to 'lively imaginations' and 'gross superstition'.<sup>23</sup> He apparently failed to appreciate the extent to which mountains were both a 'natural' and spiritual landscape for Māori – part of a 'cosmoscape' that combined biophysical knowledge and a culturally determined worldview, and 'within which the place of humans is defined and their actions governed and regulated'.<sup>24</sup>

For Māori, mountains are sacred tūpuna (ancestors). They possess mauri – a life force that pervades and connects all natural phenomena, including humans – meaning that any use or interaction with it must be respectful and appropriate, enhancing rather than diminishing its mana (prestige). They are in this sense 'ancestral landscapes', in which ancestors are 'the original trustees and the centrality of trusteeship values guid[e] present and future generations'.<sup>25</sup> For example, oral traditions tell of ancestors ascending Taranaki Maunga to lay claim to the surrounding landscape – not so different from what the Europeans did in turn.<sup>26</sup> By not venturing to the summit, Dieffenbach's guides were respecting a tapu (spiritual restriction) on subsequent ascents that protected the mountain's mana and that of the iwi who were connected to it.

While Europeans portrayed mountains as 'untouched', archaeological records suggest that Māori were 'thorough explorers', and that they travelled through mountainous regions and sometimes settled in areas such as the Matukituki Valley in the Tititea/Mount Aspiring region.<sup>27</sup> That Māori were intimately familiar with alpine regions is demonstrated not only by the geographical knowledge, navigational and survival skills that made them indispensable guides for European explorers, but also by the specificity of the language they had to describe different types of snow, ice and glacier features.<sup>28</sup> In fact, Māori had a profound understanding of the geology and geography of the landscape they inhabited, which was conveyed through myths and stories. While many Europeans dismissed these as naïve and quaint, the Austrian geologist Ferdinand von Hochstetter who, along with German geologist and surveyor Julius von Haast, spent 1859–60 carrying out a survey for the New Zealand government 'was amazed at how well the Maori [sic] knew their country. Not only were plants and animals named but all water courses, mountains, hills, rocks, sinkholes and other features also had their specific tags, as well as some legend or other to explain their origins.'<sup>29</sup>

Along with visually capturing the landscape through sketching and painting, the key tasks of the surveyors were naming and mapping. Cartography was another ‘imperial technology’ used to display and celebrate exploration.<sup>30</sup> Renaming was a strategy of cultural construction that involved making the landscape feel more familiar to settlers and, in conjunction with mapping, reinforced the notion of ‘empty space’ available for appropriation.<sup>31</sup>

European naming and mapping overrode Māori conventions which encapsulated and preserved their pre-existing relationships and histories. Māori identity and worldview is ‘inextricably linked to land and place’, and emphasised in whakapapa (genealogy), which encapsulates layers of meaning about the world and their place in it.<sup>32</sup> Place names are:

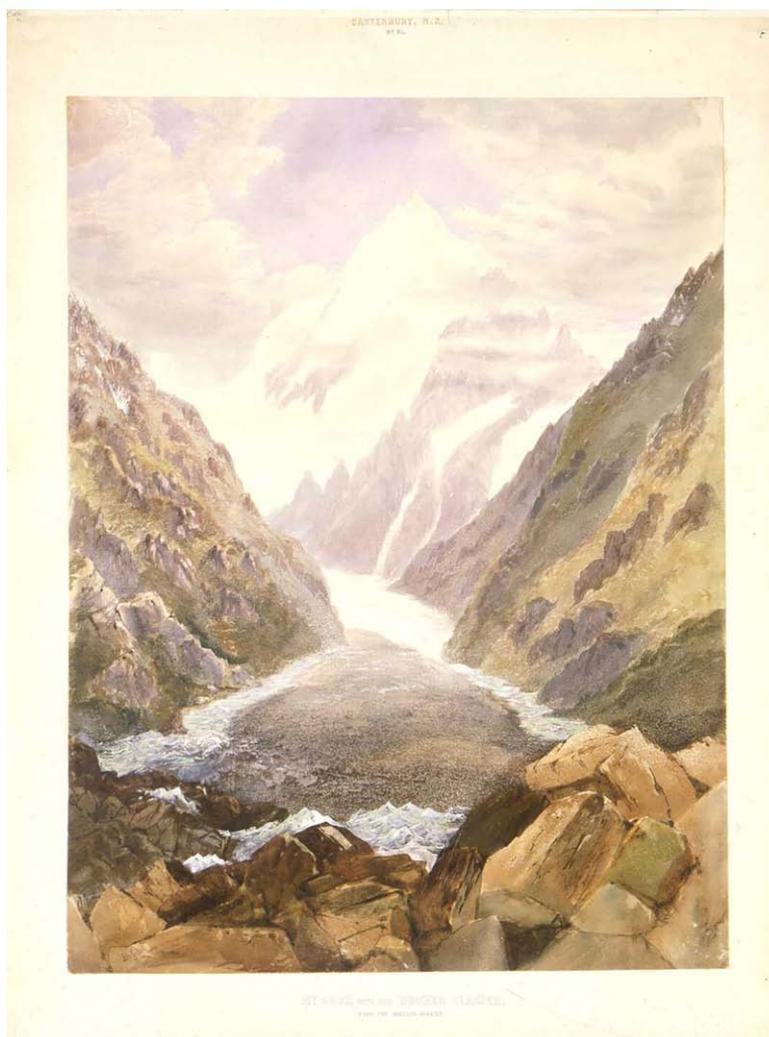
echoed in the tribe’s whakapapa and recounted through ancient and historical stories, waiata (song) and whakapapa recitations... Across New Zealand, each mountain represents a particular tribal group or hapū and the names recalled in stories symbolise the groups’ connections to the landscape.<sup>33</sup>

Naming was critical to Māori ‘mental maps’, through which biophysical knowledge was located in time and place, alongside layers of mythical, spiritual and historical information. This cultural landscape ‘acted as a mnemonic whereby knowledge of past events could be remembered and recalled by walking the land and retelling the narratives pertaining to that place’.<sup>34</sup>

The surveys of Haast, Heaphy and others created publicity for New Zealand’s mountains, both at home and abroad. Reports of their alpine excursions were published in local newspapers. In 1864, Haast and James Hector – then director of the Geological Survey of Otago – presented papers to the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) in London on their recent mountain exploration. Haast enthusiastically informed his ‘wealthy and fashionable’ audience of potential scientist-tourists that ‘a chain of such magnitude as the Southern Alps of New Zealand... is probably without parallel in the known world’ and ripe for geographical exploration and scientific discovery.<sup>35</sup>

Gaining entry to the RGS validated the exploration work of Haast and Hector and offered them opportunities for social mobility, career advancement, public recognition and financial reward. Haast commissioned the Nelson-based artist John Gully to produce twelve watercolours to illustrate his lecture. Working from Haast’s original topographical sketches, Gully appealed to the aesthetic tastes of the audience by poeticising the scenes with picturesque foregrounds, spectator figures and atmospheric effects of clouds, light and mist.<sup>36</sup> Both papers were published in the society’s *Journal*, along with a report of the survey work of James McKerrow in the Lake Districts of Otago and Southland and a map detailing their journeys, thereby further cementing a Western cultural view of the mountains.<sup>37</sup>

Professional artists soon followed explorers and surveyors in creating a visual framing of mountain landscapes in the conventions of the Romantic and sublime. One of the earliest travelling artists was George French Angas, an English settler in South Australia, who made a six-month journey through the North Island in 1844. His main subjects were scenes of Māori life, and mountains often provided the background to his drawings and watercolours. However, there is no evidence that Angas appreciated the cultural significance of mountains to Māori. In his 1847 book *Savage Life and Scenes in Australia and New Zealand*, he described a view of Tongariro in Romantic superlatives and declared he ‘wished there had been other than savages to have gazed with me upon its glories’.<sup>38</sup> In framing Māori culture as ‘savage’, Angas anticipated its demise under the ‘civilising’ influence of European culture, providing further justification for the colonial project.<sup>39</sup> His work was exhibited in London and reproduced as coloured lithographs in *The New Zealanders Illustrated*, published in London in 1847 as a limited edition of 200 copies. Subscribers to this popular ten-part series included Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, along with other aristocrats and political figures.



Royal Geographical Society (Great Britain), John Gully (1819-1888), *Mt Cook with the Hooker Glacier, from the Mueller Glacier* [1862]. [C-096-011, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. /records/22912869]

Later arrivals included Melbourne-based, European-trained artists Nicholas Chevalier and Eugene von Guérard. In 1865, Chevalier was sponsored by the Otago and Canterbury Provincial Councils to create a 'pictorial survey' in the hope of encouraging immigration. His work was widely exhibited in New Zealand and abroad. Chevalier's visit coincided with the New Zealand Wars, fought between some iwi and the Crown and its allies between 1845 and 1872. While several of Chevalier's landscape paintings included Māori figures, his notes suggest he subscribed to derogatory stereotypes of Māori prevalent at the time and supported their suppression by the government forces.<sup>40</sup> Von Guérard, who visited in the late 1870s, produced oil paintings of mountain scenes at Milford Sound and Lake Wakatipu which starred at international exhibitions around the world over the next decade, becoming the 'most widely exhibited New Zealand paintings of the nineteenth century'.<sup>41</sup>

Many local artists were also prolific producers of landscape art. Among them was Charles Decimus Barraud, a Wellington-based pharmacist and amateur artist, whose work was popular and widely exhibited. In addition to his work for Haast, John Gully, one of the most successful New Zealand artists of the period,

produced many watercolours of South Island landscapes, which were exhibited throughout New Zealand, Australia and Europe.<sup>42</sup>

Photography was also beginning to play a role in promoting and publicising the mountains in this period. Displayed in public places and exhibitions and sold commercially, photographs reached a wider audience than landscape paintings and conveyed a greater sense of fidelity in documenting the landscape.<sup>43</sup> Nonetheless, photography was, like art, a means of picturing and appropriating places, as photographers selected and framed their scenes according to the prevailing ‘imaginative geography’.<sup>44</sup> Surveyor and photographer Edward Sealy took some of the earliest photographic images of the Mount Cook region during expeditions in the late 1860s and early 1870s, including an expedition in 1869 with Haast. Sealy’s alpine photographs were exhibited at various venues around Christchurch, including the museum, and at international exhibitions.<sup>45</sup> Commercial photographers also catered to a public appetite for alpine imagery. The Burton Brothers, whose studio opened in Dunedin in 1866, travelled the length of New Zealand to capture images of the landscape in hard-to-reach places, including Fiordland in 1874 and the Mueller and Hooker glaciers in 1875.<sup>46</sup>

Mountains were a key part of the imagery used at international exhibitions of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to construct a visual narrative of how New Zealanders saw themselves and how they wanted the world to see them, beginning with landscape painting, maps and scientific specimens, and later including photography.<sup>47</sup> The catalogue for New Zealand’s displays at the 1880 Melbourne International Exhibition, which attracted 1.3 million visitors, shows that scientific and exploratory work, along with art and photography, profiled the mountains as a key feature of the nation-building project. On display was the work of landscape artists Charles Blomfield, Barraud and Gully, and illustrations by Buchanan. The Survey Department sent 100 photographic views and photo lithographs. Haast’s report on the geology of Canterbury and Westland was there, along with Hector’s geological reports, maps and models that he had created of the ‘Topographical and Geological Volcanic System of Ruapehu and Tongariro’. The Hokitika Local Committee sent photos of Westland scenery, glaciers, and snow-clad hills. Other photographs depicted Ruapehu, Tongariro and panoramic views of the Wakatipu district.

## Promoting Mountain Tourism

Early surveyors and explorers, including Dieffenbach, had predicted the potential for future development of mountain tourism, as did Haast in 1862 when working for the Canterbury Provincial Council. Writing in a lengthy letter to local newspapers, Haast extolled ‘the beauty of the southern Alps’, envisaging the creation of a European-style mountain resort at Mount Cook and predicting that ‘the time will surely come when pilgrims from all parts of the southern hemisphere will hasten to visit these mountains’.<sup>48</sup>

In the 1870s, the opening of the Suez Canal and a royal tour by Prince Alfred helped make tourism from Europe a more desirable and practical option, at least for the wealthy.<sup>49</sup> In the same decade, prominent New Zealanders and overseas boosters began working together to nurture the idea of New Zealand as an attractive place to travel. Mountain scenery was envisaged as a key drawcard for prospective visitors, with promotion material emphasising Romantic and sublime qualities, and the sense of accessible adventure, despite mountain regions remaining difficult to access for all but the most adventurous travellers.

Governor Bowen (1868-1873) was one early influencer. He visited Milford Sound in 1871 and Mount Cook in 1873, after which he reportedly alerted the Royal Geographical Society and the Alpine Club London to the ‘fresh field for exploration afforded by the mountains and glaciers of the Southern Alps’ and assured them of ‘every aid and encouragement from the Colonial Government’.<sup>50</sup> In this, Bowen was astutely aware of the potential publicity that might come from encouraging a relatively recent type of mountain tourist.

From the mid-eighteenth century, the sport of mountaineering had emerged in the European Alps. By the 1850s, English climbers dominated the sport. Although mountaineers were a minority in Victorian society, their sport was well-aligned with the prevailing trends in art and science, as well as widely embraced nineteenth-century values such as the desire to overcome difficulties cheerfully. Mountaineering, they argued, also provided an antidote to the escalating moral decay of urban society.<sup>51</sup> The first alpine club was established in London in 1857. By 1880, the English and their continental guides had climbed all the major peaks in the Alps and began looking for fresh challenges abroad, thereby extending the colonial project as a new breed of explorers seeking out first ascents.<sup>52</sup>

The Reverend William Spotswood Green arrived in New Zealand in 1882, lured by photographs of the Southern Alps and Haast's *Geology of the Provinces of Canterbury and Westland* (1879) which, with its rapturous descriptions of the incomparable sublimity of the mountains, photographs by Burton Brothers and Sealy and 'wonderful map', had created 'considerable interest' in the Southern Alps at home and abroad.<sup>53</sup> Although Green was unsuccessful in achieving his main objective of the first ascent of Mount Cook, his visit helped spark an interest in mountaineering among the colonials during the 1880s. By 1891, the New Zealand Alpine Club (NZAC) was formed. Many early New Zealand climbers were also avid mountain publicists, taking photographs and writing books, newspaper articles, and pamphlets to encourage the wider public to view the mountains as spaces for recreation and scenic appreciation.<sup>54</sup>

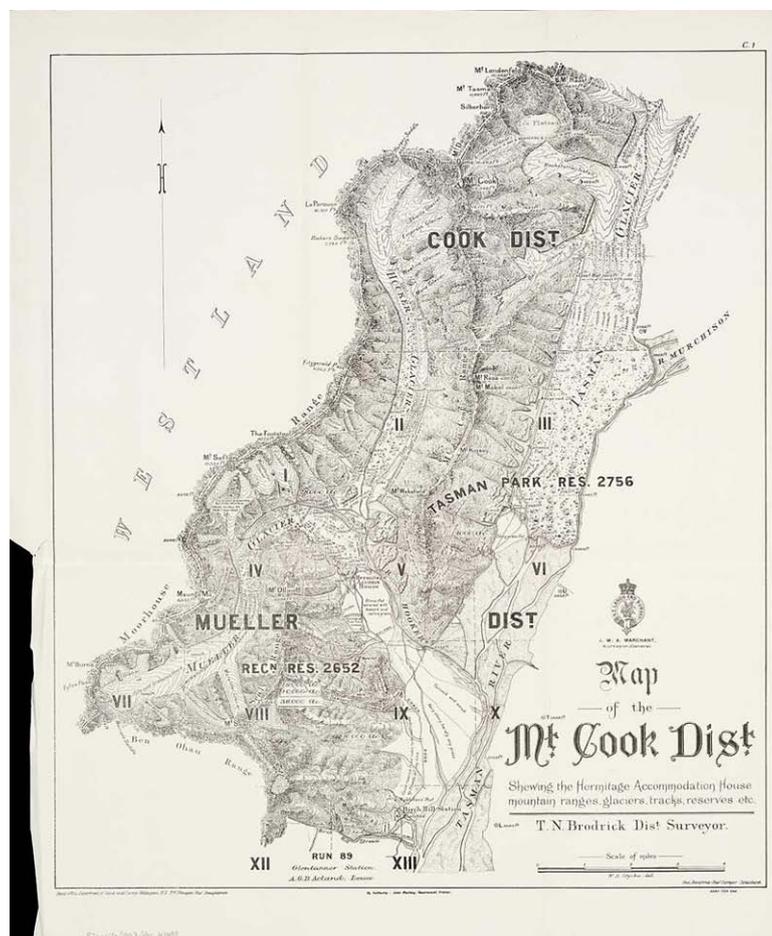
Illustrated publications featuring mountains began to address would-be tourists more explicitly during this period. *New Zealand: Graphic and Descriptive*, published in London in 1877, repeated the by-now familiar comparisons with Switzerland and asserted that 'when the members of the Alpine Club become aware of the wonderful beauty of the New Zealand Alps, their almost virgin summits will be made as famous to us as the grand peaks of their Swiss namesakes'.<sup>55</sup> *New Zealand Scenery*, another collaboration by Haast and Gully, was published the same year. The impressive large-format book featured chromolithographs of Gully's original watercolour drawings of mountain landscapes. In the accompanying text, Haast accentuated both recent discovery and ease of access. Playing the role of explorer, he enticed prospective travellers with engaging first-hand accounts and his trademark Romantic superlatives:

All at once a view of greater magnificence than the most enthusiastic imagination can conceive bursts upon the traveller as he ascends the high moraine that encircles the Mueller glacier... The eye takes in at one glance the deep valley of the Hooker glacier, bounded by the lofty and majestic pyramid of Mount Cook, which rises high into the clear sky, a towering mass of rugged crags of ice and snow... This portion of the Southern Alps, never before trodden by the foot of man, was first explored by the writer in 1862, who discovered a system of glaciers of larger dimensions than any hitherto known in the temperate regions of the world... They have since been repeatedly visited by European travellers, and are so easy of access that even ladies find little trouble in the ascent, as they can be reached without difficulty by riding up to their terminal face on horseback.<sup>56</sup>

Alongside *Mount Egmont, or Taranaki*, Haast depicted Māori relationships with mountains in terms of 'wonderful legends... handed down from remote times', and repeated the impression articulated by Dieffenbach more than thirty years earlier that the 'natives have a superstitious dread of approaching [Mount Egmont], as they look on it as a sacred mountain, and believe it to be the abode of the dreaded Ngarara, a huge reptilian monster, endowed with some extraordinary power over their lives for evil'.<sup>57</sup>

From the 1880s, the government became involved in tourism promotion with the Survey Office producing tourist maps and brochures, which were a particular innovation in advertising material. Their physical structure, often with folded frames combining text and images, was portable, ephemeral and easily disseminated. Focusing on specific regions, they identified tourism sites and created desire using recognisable signs and symbols.<sup>58</sup> The department's series of brochures all included maps, information on transport and accommodation options, advertisements for Thomas Cook, and sketches of scenery. The

Railways Department also began promoting mountain tourism, with posters from around 1890–95 featuring exquisite line drawings of mountain scenes, alongside maps and information about combined rail and coach fares.

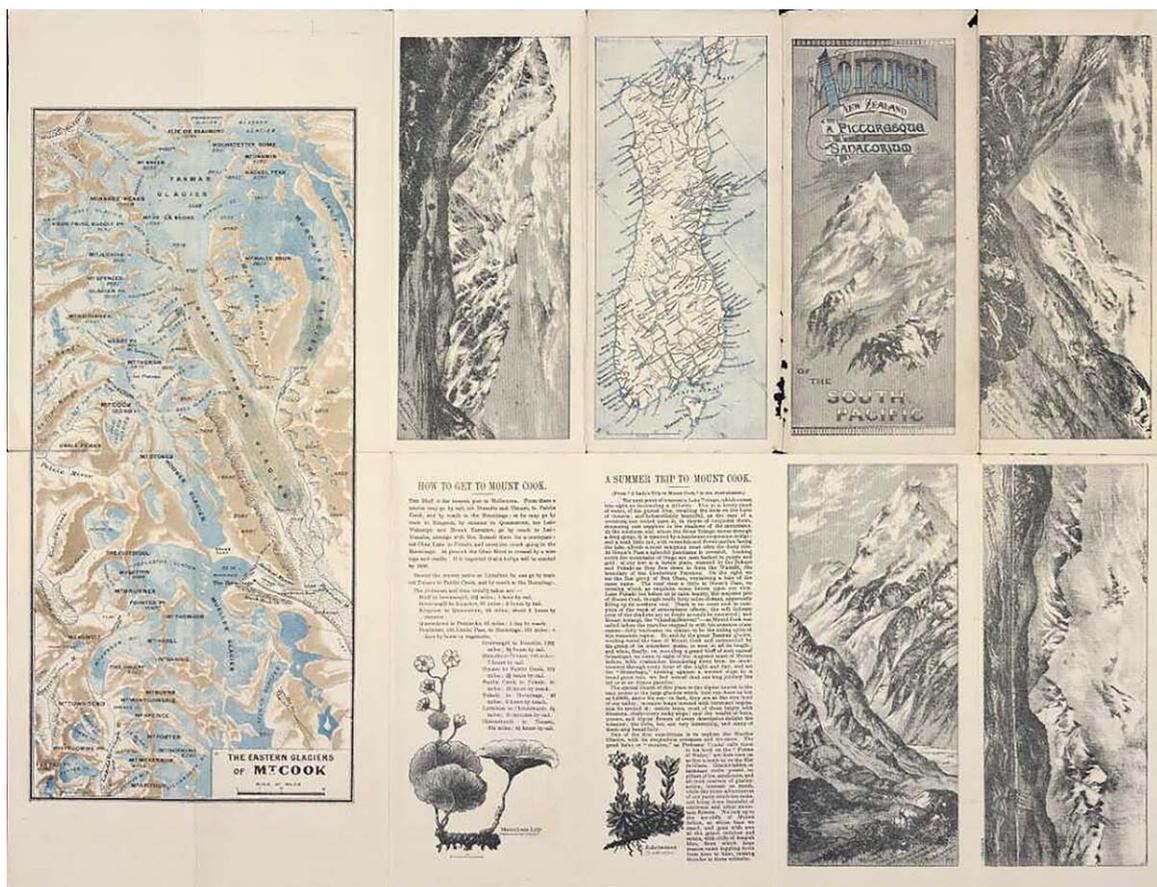


T. Brodrick and W. Styche, NZ Dept of Lands Survey, *Map of the Mt. Cook Dist: Shewing the Hermitage Accommodation House, Mountain Ranges, Glaciers, Tracks, Reserves, etc.*, 1903. (Alexander Turnbull Library, MapColl 834.47a 1903 47488)

At the end of the 1880s, the development of New Zealand's infant tourism industry was put on show at Dunedin's New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition, where 625,000 visitors were exposed to a concentrated effort to promote tourism, including the mountain variety. There were exhibits by the Railways Department, Cook and Sons and the Union Steam Ship Company, all distributing maps and pamphlets for various parts of the country and offering tickets from Dunedin to Queenstown, Lake Wanaka and Mount Cook.

The walls of the railways exhibit were adorned with a map of transport routes, photographs supplied by the Survey Office and 'a trophy of ice axes for alpine climbing'.<sup>59</sup> The Canterbury Land Office produced a map of the Mount Cook region, marking the routes of early surveyors and more recent mountaineering expeditions. The *Press* was confident it would 'attract considerable attention from visitors from Australia and elsewhere'.<sup>60</sup>

The exhibition's Lakes District Sub-Committee commissioned the journalist and mountaineer Malcolm Ross to write *A Complete Guide to the Lakes of Central Otago: The Switzerland of Australasia*. Illustrated with sketches, some worked from photographs by professional photographers, and a Survey Department map,



*Aorangi, New Zealand; A Picturesque Sanatorium of the South Pacific, N.Z. Survey Dept, Wellington, 1888. (Eph-D-TOURISM-1888-02, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand)*

the *Guide* sought to 'to place in the hands of tourists a reliable description of the magnificent scenery of Wakatipu, Wanaka, and Hawea Lakes, combined with all the necessary information regarding routes, accommodation, and expenses'.<sup>61</sup>

A panorama of Mount Cook and Tasman Glacier was displayed in an exhibition reading room. This photograph, which received a special award, was reportedly 'pronounced by experts who have seen it to be one of the finest of the kind in the colony, and it attracts great attention, more particularly from Australian visitors'.<sup>62</sup> The *Press* newspaper described the photographic mission to Mount Cook that produced this panorama as a 'work of colonial importance' for making:

known for the first time, even to residents in the colony, the wonders in the way of peaks and glaciers which we possess almost at our doors, but of whose existence most of us have hitherto been profoundly ignorant. To the world at large they will show that New Zealand possesses alpine scenery of virgin freshness and on a scale of majesty not to be surpassed in any part of the world. No better advertisement to attract tourists to this colony has yet appeared.<sup>63</sup>

Tourism promotion at the Dunedin exhibition was the culmination of a decade of more coordinated effort, alongside a growing perception that making the country's mountains known to the New Zealand public and attracting visitors from abroad was vital to progress and nation-building. While tourism publicity both shaped and reflected New Zealand's growing sense of identity, mountain scenes came to dominate other formats. The first postcard issued by the New Zealand Post Office, in December 1897, featured four

vignettes of scenic landmarks, three of which were alpine scenes (and the fourth a geyser). Over 300,000 were sold within seven months.<sup>64</sup>

Alpine scenes also dominated the first set of thirteen ‘pictorial’ postage stamps, issued in 1898. A call for designs that would be ‘scenic and representative’ prompted a slew of submissions featuring Mount Cook, Milford Sound and Mount Taranaki, despite the significant challenge of representing expansive landscapes on a miniature scale.<sup>65</sup> Only the South Island mountains made the final cut. A rural landscape design was also turned down – pointing to the centrality of ‘wild’ mountains as a symbol of New Zealand’s emerging identity and adding a layer of official legitimacy to this position.<sup>66</sup> The stamps were popular and profitable. In 1899 New Zealanders sent 35 million letters by post, while thousands of stamps were snapped up by collectors. The overseas response was also extremely positive, with one commentator noting that they were evidence that ‘in mountain scenery New Zealand is a serious rival of Norway’.<sup>67</sup>

## The National Park Movement

Thus, by the late nineteenth century, mountains were clearly framed as a tourism landscape in European cultural terms and in the work of promoting them to tourists as vital to progress and nation-building. As alpine regions became increasingly viable as tourism destinations, concerns were raised about protecting their scenic qualities. In the early 1880s, there were calls for the Crown to purchase the three volcanoes of the Central Plateau from Māori to exploit their scenic potential. At the time, Paramount Chief Horonuku Te Heuheu Tukino IV of Ngāti Tuwharetoa declined to sell his tribal land.<sup>68</sup> In 1887, amid growing pressure from neighbouring iwi and concern that Tongariro would be divided and sold ‘piece by piece’, Te Heuheu transferred his interest in the land around the three peaks to the Crown for the establishment of New Zealand’s first national park.<sup>69</sup>

In parliamentary debates on the establishment of the national park, tourism potential was a particularly persuasive argument, as it transformed what was seen as otherwise ‘unproductive scenery’ into an additional resource to add to the wealth of the young colony. Protecting natural scenic areas from ‘inappropriate’ development was also a concern.<sup>70</sup> After a seven-year delay, Tongariro was gazetted as New Zealand’s first national park in 1894.

Te Heuheu’s act, motivated by a desire to protect the sacred nature of Tongariro and the mana of Ngāti Tuwharetoa for whom it was an ancestral landscape, has historically been referred to as a ‘gift’, and remains so in the Department of Conservation’s Tongariro National Park Management Plan.<sup>71</sup> The ‘gift’ has become an enduring foundational myth for the national park movement in Aotearoa, suggesting amicable bicultural origins. However, Boast argues that this ‘benign, comfortable and useful’ story obscures the messy and complex nature by which the Crown acquired the total land area that ultimately became Tongariro National Park.<sup>72</sup> Furthermore, the Waitangi Tribunal found in 2013 that the original intention was one of partnership with – rather than transfer of ownership to – the Crown.<sup>73</sup>

Mount Egmont/Taranaki, which had been confiscated under the New Zealand Settlements Act 1863 in the wake of the Taranaki land wars, was established as New Zealand’s second national park in 1900, following concerns about extensive forest loss caused by European settlement. Ownership of Aoraki/Mount Cook had been assumed by the Crown as part of a major land purchase in the 1840s, although the South Island Ngāi Tahu iwi, for whom the mountain is a tupuna, protested that the sale deed never included the Southern Alps.<sup>74</sup> The mountain first received protected status in 1885, although Mount Cook National Park was not established until 1953.

The national park concept, which had begun with Yellowstone in the United States in 1872, demarcated landscapes as ‘untouched’ natural spaces from which signs of human habitation should be removed. This artificial separation of nature and culture meant that past cultural histories might be acknowledged, but ongoing relationships were downplayed. For example, although Te Heuheu was reportedly motivated by the

desire to protect the sacredness of the mountains to his iwi, in *Lake Taupo and the Volcanoes* (1901), James Cowan claimed that in handing them to the state to become a national park the tapu was removed, and they were no longer as sacred as they once were. What remained was the ‘halo of legendary romance... for they were as [s]acred ground in the eyes of Maori until recently’.<sup>75</sup> Cowan interwove descriptions of the scenery with ‘quaint’ stories from ‘dim long ago’ to provide ‘human interest’, but a quarter century later, when he wrote the first official guidebook for the park, scenery and recreational activities were centre stage, and details about Tongariro as a Māori cultural landscape were confined to the back of the book.<sup>76</sup>

Parliamentary debates at the time of the Tongariro National Park Bill (1922) canvassed ideas on how to better acknowledge Te Heuheu’s original ‘gifting’ of the land. Suggestions ranged from producing an illustrated book of Māori legends, to constructing a monument to the chief or a Māori village, which might also function as a tourist attraction.<sup>77</sup> Thus, by framing mountains as exclusively natural landscapes, the Crown’s appropriation of mountain landscapes for national parks further erased Māori cultural associations at the same time as protecting these spaces from commercial developments that might jeopardise their ‘natural’ qualities.<sup>78</sup>

## Māori in Twentieth Century Mountain Tourism Publicity

While Māori were prominent in general tourism publicity, mostly in the form of a ‘poi-girl haka-warrior’ motif, throughout the early twentieth century, mountain publicity continued to be largely devoid of images or reference to Māori – perpetuating the nineteenth-century blind spot on tangata whenua’s relationships with their maunga.<sup>79</sup> A limited understanding of how Māori voices might be included in a mountain narrative was also evident in the few examples of publicity where Māori and mountains were intertwined.

Reflecting the ‘remarkably limited vocabulary of Māori imagery’, the 1930s poster *Visit New Zealand Wonderland of the Pacific* featured a Māori woman in the foreground, draped in a kahu kiwi (kiwi feather cloak) and with a bared shoulder, a geyser immediately behind her to the left, and the Chateau Tongariro and mountains in the distant background.<sup>80</sup> The image also featured on the cover of the international magazine *Travel* in September 1936 and was included in a set of poster stamps produced by the Tourist Department in 1937. While it was a rare combination of mountains and Māori in tourism publicity, it represented an assemblage of the dominant symbols of New Zealand tourism at the time, rather than an acknowledgement of a special relationship between Māori and mountains.

In a similar way, a set of photographs from the same era to promote the Mount Cook Motor Company positioned a tableau of three Māori with the Southern Alps in the background. Male and female figures are dressed in korowai (tassled cloaks) and another female wears a piupiu (waist garment) and pare (bodice). The women are holding poi. They gaze to the side. Looking directly neither at the mountains nor the camera, they seem strangely disconnected from their setting.

In the 1950s, an historical Māori association with Tongariro was still being used in promotion to add a touch of exotic thrill to a now domesticated scene. ‘The old Maoris,’ informed the narrator of the film *Tongariro National Park* (1951), ‘say that in the long ago this district was inhabited by fairies and goblins and paid great respect to the gods of the mountain’, but now it is a setting ‘for fascinating and delightful’ gentle walks through bush with ‘the soothing distant swell of mountain streams’, and picnic lunches by waterfalls. Glamorous-looking women in skirts, sundresses and low-heeled shoes clamber around Ketetahi Springs, which we are told many Māori insist is peopled by ‘weird supernatural creatures’. On a steamer trip up the Wanganui River, Chateau guests receive a ‘friendly smile’ from local Māori in canoes. The wild landscape and ‘savages’ encountered by nineteenth-century travellers had been tamed.



On the Terrace, Chateau Tongariro. Mt. Ngauruhoe in background. (Photographer Mr Clark, Archives New Zealand, Communicate New Zealand Collection Item code R24459484, Record number A66190)

## Recent Developments in the Management of Mountain Landscapes

The 1970s were a period of cultural and political revitalisation for Māori, when protest movements challenged both popular narratives of New Zealand as a nation and dominant interpretations of New Zealand history.<sup>81</sup> It was in this climate that the Waitangi Tribunal was established in 1975 to hear claims regarding breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi, which was signed by Māori chiefs and the British crown in 1840 and is considered to be the founding document of Aotearoa New Zealand. Since then, treaty settlements negotiated between individual iwi and the Crown have included both commercial and cultural redress. Cultural redress has included various measures to acknowledge iwi relationships with and rights to participate in decision-making regarding their maunga.

Under the Ngāi Tahu Settlement (1998), the Crown vested ownership of Aoraki/Mount Cook in Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, which then gifted the mountain back to the Crown to remain under the management of the Department of Conservation. Renamed Aoraki/Mount Cook, an ‘overlay’ of Ngāi Tahu values was placed over the mountain through the concept of a Tōpuni, with the intention that these values be ‘recognised, acknowledged and provided for’.<sup>82</sup> This included that the department avoid harming or diminishing these values, and encourage ‘respect for’ and an ‘accurate portrayal of’ Ngāi Tahu’s association with Aoraki.<sup>83</sup> Ngāi Tahu’s Cultural Mapping Project, Kā Huru Manu, has subsequently recorded and mapped thousands of traditional place names and associated stories within the Ngāi Tahu rohe (tribal area), including the Southern Alps, in an effort to reassert their historical association and relationship with the whenua, and make it accessible to iwi members and the wider public.<sup>84</sup>

In 1978, Mount Egmont also underwent a process of vesting and gifting back, and in 1986, the mountain’s official name was changed to Mount Taranaki or Mount Egmont after much community debate. The Crown and Ngāi Iwi o Taranaki are currently in the final stages of negotiating a collective cultural

redress package that includes restoring the mana of Taranaki Maunga by returning its original name and recognising it as ‘a living, indivisible whole’.<sup>85</sup> In addition, Egmont National Park, which contains more than 100 sites of cultural significance to Māori, will be renamed Te Papakura o Taranaki, and potentially the mountain will be granted its own legal personality and protections under the law, following the precedent set by Te Urewera (2014).

In 1986, Tongariro National Park was nominated for World Heritage status as both a natural and cultural site. In 1990, UNESCO approved its listing as a natural site, but deferred its decision on the cultural listing because the criteria at the time required tangible evidence of cultural use. In 1992, following representations on the issue from New Zealand, the World Heritage Commission agreed a major revision to their criteria for cultural sites. This accepted cultural landscapes as a new category, including the sub-type of associative cultural landscape, being those where World Heritage status is justifiable ‘by virtue of powerful religious, artistic or cultural associations of the natural element rather than material cultural evidence, which may be insignificant or even absent’.<sup>86</sup>

The Department of Conservation submission to UNESCO in 1993 in support of Tongariro National Park’s listing as a site of universal cultural significance included this quote from an anonymous Tuwharetoa spokesperson:

We look upon [the maunga] with deep respect and reverence and a tinge of many other complimentary emotions, pride certainly being one of them. Proud that they are ours (Te ha o taku maunga ko taku manawa – the breath of my mountain is my heart), and proud that they are bequeathed to the nation who as nature lovers accord them their deep respect. Our reverence for the mountains goes deeper than that in time, with the essence of our genealogies, all life forms originated from the same parents Papatuanuku the Earth Mother and Ranginui the Sky Father so that man and all other life forms are in harmony with one another in the bonds of kinship.<sup>87</sup>

The uniqueness of ‘the gift’ from an indigenous people, thereby establishing ‘a threefold bond amongst the land, Maori and pakeha’, was also part of the justification presented by the Department of Conservation.<sup>88</sup> The submission made note of the centenary celebrations of Horonuku’s gift in 1987, including the opening of the Whakapapa Visitors Centre in Tongariro National Park, the design and content of which, it argued, was ‘strongly evocative of the cultural and spiritual values of the mountains and of their connections to Ngati Tuwharetoa’ and had been developed with iwi involvement.<sup>89</sup> In 1993, Tongariro became the first site inscribed on the World Heritage List under these revised criteria, and one of the first in the world to be given a dual listing.<sup>90</sup>

Despite the progress that has been made, ‘cultural bias continues to be a point of contention’ in New Zealand’s conservation management.<sup>91</sup> Most conservation legislation was enacted prior to the first treaty settlements and still embodies the original national park movement principles of preserving landscapes in their ‘natural’ state, rather than managing them as cultural landscapes.<sup>92</sup> In this context, the legal personality framework has been seen as an opportunity to implement a ‘biocultural’ conservation approach, including recognition of the importance of the ‘connection of people to place, and of operating within a knowledge-practice-belief complex’.<sup>93</sup> While it is still a very recent and evolving approach to managing mountains, and not embraced by all, there is some optimism that it could lead to more effective co-governance and help move conservation management beyond an outdated nature/culture dichotomy.

## Conclusion

Early colonial visions of mountains were part of a process of claiming a land and building a nation by encoding them with the contemporary European conventions of science, exploration, art and tourism. But the construction of the New Zealand landscape as ‘scenic’ and as a valuable tourism resource has obscured

other relationships, identities and ways of seeing mountains.<sup>94</sup> Most significant has been the way in which Māori were alienated from their ancestral landscapes and largely excluded from Aotearoa's mountain stories.

While much has changed since the colonial period, some things have endured. Promotional formats and techniques may have evolved over time, but, as Francis Pound argued in *Frames on the Land*, the concepts embodied in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century landscape painting still shape the way we look at nature today. Tourists come to New Zealand 'looking to see nature as pictures' and many scenic subjects have changed little since the 1800s, illustrating the longevity of the mountain view established by European settlers in that century.<sup>95</sup> Seeing mountains as 'untouched' nature also remains central to conservation management in New Zealand, although this is starting to change through the process of cultural redress and the introduction of legal personality and biocultural approaches.

Geoff Park has argued for a 'future landscape vision', 'in which the relationships between environment, place, nature and culture, territory, land knowledge and rights are discussed'.<sup>96</sup> To achieve this vision, and to develop new models to care for treasured mountain landscapes, we need public history that acknowledges and communicates colonial constructions of mountains and their legacy, thereby evolving a national mountain narrative and ways of seeing mountains that are enriched by dual cultural perspectives.

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