Irish Journal of Sociology, Vol 3, 1993, pp 23-55

# Contested Terrain: Differing Interpretations of Co. Wicklow's Landscape [1]

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*ABSTRACT: This paper looks at how Irish landscape was interpreted in the mid 1800s, when modern tourism in Ireland began. It attempts to discover the ideological structures present in this appreciation of Irish landscape, and it does so in relation with the Hall's description of Co. Wicklow landscape. It argues that there are two 'socially constructed' ways to read Irish landscape, the picturesque and the oral interpretations, which create senses of detachment and attachment respectively to the local terrain. It explores in this context how the picturesque corresponds to the way an outsider wishes to gaze upon a landscape, either as a colonialising landlord or as a tourist. Although the picturesque excludes human work from its vision, it was manufactured in the demesnes of the landlord class according to compositional techniques. But the ideological structure of the beautiful aspect of the picturesque excludes the native people who actually live in the landscape, because they are seen as a source of disharmony. The native gaze, on the contrary, creates a sense of attachment to the local place.*

## INTRODUCTION

Ireland as a destination for tourists is said to hold the promise of escape from the pressures of modern urban life, from the congestion and the pollution of industrial society (O'Connor 1993, p. 4). In this article, I want to argue that these perceptions relate not to the reality of the economic and social conditions of Irish society, but are the product of specific ideological productions. What I will argue is that the type of romantic tourism that has emerged in Ireland since the 1800s is more determined by the perceptions of the visiting tourists than by the reality perceived.

Ideological productions such as tourist promotion, have their own structure and their own history, such discourses cannot escape the imprint of earlier discursive formations. In order to make sense of this *new* romantic tourism, we need to look back at its historical development

1. The author would like to thank Dr David Jacobson for his comments on earlier drafts of this article.

and its subsequent changing patterns over time. In this paper, I will look at an example of an early ideological discourse on Irish tourism, in order to assess its structure. I have chosen the work of the Halls (Mr and Mrs S.C.), specifically their 1853 edition of their 1843 tour of Co. Wicklow. According to Scott, they are the best known travelogue writers of this period (1984, p. 13). This is the great formative period in Irish travel writing, which ran from 1775 to 1850 (Woods 1992, p. 173). Harrington saw this historical period as not only crucial in the initial development of tourist guide-books, but also in structuring the ideological discourses between the colonisers and the colonised (1991, p. 3). Therefore, this article is about an attempt to discover the ideological structures present within the Halls' text and their *description* of Co. Wicklow landscape.

Recently, John Urry has argued that tourism is mainly concerned with *gazing* upon scapes, *i.e.* landscapes and townscapes. For him there are two types of gazing; the *romantic* gaze has its emphasis on 'solitude, privacy and a personal, semi-spiritual relationship with the object of the gaze' and the *collective* gaze, which 'necessitates the presence of a large number of other people, as found for example in English seaside resorts' (1990, p. 31). I agree with Urry that there are two tourist ways to gaze upon the landscape. But from the following analysis, I suggest that in Ireland at least at this historical period, the two major ways of gazing are better conceptualised by reference to a notion of the picturesque, which is itself a variant of the romantic gaze, and a part of the romantic movement in general, and on the other hand, of oral interpretation of (gazing on) the landscape, which is essentially a collective or native gaze.

In understanding this gaze as native, we draw attention to the connection between the two processes of colonialism and tourism. There is a complex *play* between these two processes in the Hall's travelogue. Firstly, the romantic/picturesque framework which the Halls use to interpret the landscape of Co.Wicklow tends to represent this terrority as an *empty space* (O'Connor 1993, p. 71), as the picturesque did in its original medium of landscape painting. Secondly, like the colonial representation of the *empty space* in the earlier plantation maps, the picturesque gaze tended not only to depopulate the territory, but also to leave out any representation of productive work, especially that of the Irish tenantry. Thirdly and crucially, we discover through the Hall's narrative that the physical location of the picturesque scenes are on the landed estates of the landlord class, but also that this landlord class have actually changed the physical landscape to enhance its picturesque qualities. This reconstruction of the landscape was achieved through the medium of landscape gardening. Therefore, through the informal style of the English landscape gardening, the ideological structures of the picturesque become *materialized* in these *gardens* of this coloniser class. Because of these complex processes of ideological construction, the colonised/native become detached from their local sense of place, firstly, ideologically in the discourses of the picturesque, and finally, physically from the *gardens* of the picturesque. The picturesque is then about the way an outsider wishes to gaze upon a landscape, either as a colonialising landlord or as a tourist.



But in Halls' description of another picturesque spot, that of Glendalough, we discover the *voice* of the native Irish and their oral interpretation (gaze) of the landscape. Invisible to the eye, the significant features of the native gaze can only be *seen* through narration. Therefore, unlike the picturesque gaze, the native gaze creates a sense of attachment to the local place. However, in discussing the native interpretation of the Glendalough landscape, the Halls recreate a colonial relationship of domination, in this case of the written text of the Halls over the oral narrative of the guides of Glendalough. This final point of the paper again reiterates the complex nature of attempting to understand how we have come to interpret the landscape of Ireland through its various ideological mediums. My effort here therefore, should be seen as a tentative beginning to understanding this complexity.

Let us begin with looking at the origins of picturesque gaze within the movement of Romanticism.

## A ROMANTIC INTRODUCTION TO THE PICTURESQUE

The picturesque framework was part of the European movement of Romanticism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. According to Tom Dunne, the picturesque was an obvious feature of Irish writing after 1800 (1988, p. 69). The European romantics constituted a dazzling assortment of artistic talents within many fields. Attempting to make sense of this many-faceted movement, David Pepper suggests that we should see Romanticism as an overall intellectual movement against the apparent rationalism of the Enlightenment, he continues:

> The romantics maintained that science was inadequate to explain all the phenomena with which man is confronted. They regarded these phenomena - understandable through intuitional, instinctive and emotionally based knowledge - as the most noble aspects of being human. (1984, p. 77)

And this philosophical rejection of rationalism also manifested itself in a rejection of industrial capitalism, and its *excrescences* of poverty, squalor, pollution and ugliness of the urban world (Pepper 1984, p. 84). Therefore the inherent anti-urbanism of Romanticism determined that the movement was to be spatially located in the rural countryside. This

countryside was perceived by the romantics as the location of Arcadia - a place of simplicity, virtue and man-nature harmony. This was seen as a pastoral idyll (Gibbons 1988, p. 198). The first romantic artists to see this idyllic perspective were the landscape painters.

According to John Barrell, the word *landscape* is originally a painter's word (1972, p. 1). It was introduced into the English language from Dutch in the sixteenth century to describe a pictorial representation of the countryside. Later the word came to include within its meaning both this sense, of countryside represented in a picture, and another, of a piece of countryside considered as a visual phenomenon. In the latter sense, the concept has jumped from its pictorial frame, to mean all that could be seen at one glance from a fixed position, usually from an eminence (1972, p. 1). But not only did it go into commonsense understanding of landscape, it also emerged within the philosophy of aesthetics with the appearance of Edmund Burke's work in 1757, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. Burke was the first to develop philosophical ideas of beauty and sublime in the appreciation of scenery. Beauty was smooth, rounded, and it induced feelings of peace and well-being. Sublime on the other hand was rugged, aweful, and produced feelings of horror and fright (Aldridge 1989, p. 70). Parallel to this intellectual movement was a more mundane movement in landscape gardening in the new English style. This informal type of landscape garden was the concrete manifestation of the beautiful and the sublime and the picturesque framework. But the picturesque framework was very much a dominant feature of the tourist travelogues in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Halls were a part of this type of romantic travel writing.

## THE HALL'S PICTURESQUE TRAVELOGUE OF CO.WICKLOW: THE BEAUTIFUL AND THE SUBLIME

The Halls begin their travelogue of Co.Wicklow by *picturing* the main features of the landscape in the following way:

> Wicklow is the garden of Ireland; its prominent feature is, indeed, sublimity - wild grandeur, healthful and refreshing; but among its high and bleak mountains there are numerous rich and fertile valleys, luxuriantly wooded and with the most romantic rivers running through them-forming in their course, an endless variety of cataracts. Its natural graces are enhanced in value, because they are invariably encountered after the eye and mind have been wearied from gazing upon rude and uncultivated districts, covered with peat, upon the scanty herbage of which the small sheep can scarcely find pasture... Usually, the work of nature has been improved by the skill of Art, and it is impossible to imagine a scene more sublime and beautiful than one of these ravines of which there are so many. (1853, p. 99)



The first thing to notice in the above passage is the syntax construction of the sentences. The Halls' way of proceeding is to contrast their description of the 'high and bleak mountains' with a description of the 'rich and fertile valleys'. This contrast is organised by using a strict pattern of sequence. The pivotal word in the composition of this sequential ordering is the word 'after'. The word *after* separates a process of viewing the 'high and bleak mountains' from the 'rich and fertile valleys' as 'the natural graces' of the valleys are 'encountered after the eye and mind have been wearied from gazing upon' the 'rude and uncultivated' mountains. The syntactical structure of the passage is imitating not only a visual process of gazing upon a landscape but also a specific downward glance. Whether the Halls have placed us, the readers, in the role of spectators, on an opposing height or on the floor of one of these valleys, it is impossible to tell from this quotation. What we can suggest is that the Halls have placed us in a position of having a commanding vantage point from which we can *see* a wide sweep of the landscape. This puts the narrator and the reader in a position of spectator at a fixed location (Brett 1985, p.14).

According to John Barrell the main point of this insistence on a commanding vantage point is that it creates a space between the landscape and the spectator, similar in its effect to the space between a picture and whoever is looking at it (1972, p. 21). From this fixed position the viewing eye can wander over the prospect as if we were looking at a framed painting or a picture, which conveys the original sense of the picturesque, that which is 'capable of being represented in a picture' (Nevius 1976, p. 21). On a closer examination of the Halls' account, we begin to see a more intimate connection between the Halls' descriptive technique and landscape painting in their use of the compositional structures borrowed from the paintings of Roman landscape-painters, Claude Lorrain and Nicolas Poussin (Gombrich 1973, p. 309). Barrell suggested that in the eighteenth century there developed a habit of seeing landscape as arranged into the sort of compositional patterns employed by Claude and Poussin. This composition starts from one basic, and very rigid structure:

> A landscape by Claude employs, in the first place, a fairly high viewpoint - high enough, that is, for a distant horizon to appear above any rising ground between it and the viewpoint: and the first impression which everyone must receive, I imagine, on seeing a Claude landscape, is one of tremendous depth... The eye, attracted

> by an area of light usually set just below the horizon, travels immediately towards it over a long and often steeply contoured stretch of intervening land... The initial movement in all Claude's landscapes is this one, from the foreground straight to the far distance;... The foreground itself is usually in the shade of the *coulisse* - a group of trees, or a building, to the right or left of the picture, and framing the landscape behind. There is, therefore, a band of fairly dark colour at the bottom of the picture; and, dropping below the level of the land in the foreground, and deeper into the picture, is a second plane, of ground more exposed to the sunlight. A third plane beyond this will be darker again, overshadowed by trees or a cloud which is understood to have come between this patch of land and the sun. The next plane will be the one that first attracts the eye, and usually suffused with a clear yellow evening light; and the last will often be blue, and connects the landscape with the colour of the sky. (Barrell 1972, p. 8-9)

The consequence of this technique, of alternating bands of light and darkness, is that the attention we pay to these contrasts is directed vertically, up and into the picture. This Claudian compositional structure is found in the Hall's descriptive technique:

> Descending from any one of the hills, the moment the slope commences, the prospect becomes cheering beyond conception; all that wood, rock, and water - infinitely varied - can do to render a scene grand and beautiful, has been wrought in the valley over which the eye wanders; trees of every form and hue, from the lightest and the brightest green, to the most sombre brown, or - made so by distance - the deepest purple; rivers, of every possible character, from the small thread of white that trickles down the hill-side, to the broad and deep current that rushes along, furiously, a mass of foam and spray... (1853, p. 100)

We can detect the Claudian technique of composition in this passage as the Halls attempt to distinguish between the foreground, the middle-ground and the background by identifying the differing colour tones in the trees and the visual characteristics of the streams, *e.g.* 'the small thread of white' to 'the broad and deep current'. And in typical Claudian style, the eye is immediately lead to the distanced horizon. In the above passage, this horizon is determined by the top of the hills, before the eye *descends*.

However, not only do the Halls use the compositional patterns employed by Claude and Poussin, but they also use some of the categories which have been used to describe their work and the work of



Salvator Rosa (Clark 1949, p. 53). These categories have created a dualism, the dualism of the beautiful and the sublime.[2] Following the publication of Burke's work in 1757, the sublime/beautiful became identified in the public mind as a pair of binary opposites. On one side of this dichotomy, the notion of the beautiful was held to consist of smooth flowing lines, of smoothness of surface and of clear, bright colours. Stuart has even suggested that beneath the veil of Burke's attempt at the analysis of beauty can be seen the gentle form of a woman's body (1979, p. 83). The sublime was altogether an opposing quality, which created an awe-inspiring and fearful feeling (Burke 1990, p. 36).

In our first passage from the Halls, the concept of the sublime was applied to the 'high and bleak mountains'. On the other side of this dichotomy one finds the concept of the beautiful, which is scenery that has gentle outlines and a sense of harmony about it (Burke 1990, p. 37). The beautiful in the Halls' composition is located in 'the rich and fertile valleys'. But the sublime/beautiful dichotomy is not the only dichotomy used in this passage. The art/natural dichotomy distinguishes the natural wilderness from the man-made cultivation. These dichotomies can overlap and even incorporate each other as the Halls have done with regard to the 'uncultivated districts, covered with peat' and the *sublimity* of the 'high and bleak mountains'. These structural trends should be conceptualised within the Halls' account as picturesque because of (1) the distancing of the landscape connoisseur from the actual landscape which we have identified as in the relationship of spectatorship, (2) the use of the compositional structure of Claude and Poussin, and lastly (3) the landscape painting dichotomy of the beautiful/sublime.

The contemplation of the Wicklow landscape was not a passive activity, it involved reconstructing the landscape in the imagination, according to the principles of composition of the picturesque (Barrell 1972, p. 6). As a consequence of this inherent process of composition, objects in the actual landscape were manipulated into new relations with each other within the overall framework of the picturesque. Inevitably they were static compositions. E.H. Gombrich has suggested that this *matching* is determined by the *mental set*, with which the artist views the subject. The artist, according to Gombrich, begins with a familiar schema - what he knows (the framework and concepts of the picturesque in our case) - and modifies it by a process of *matching* with what he sees - or

2. The dualism of the beautiful and the sublime has had a long history of evolution in aesthetics (Le Bris 1981, pp. 28-30). But it was not until the 1760s that the first British (and Irish) pictorial representation of the sublime was painted (Hutchinson 1985, p. 18). This roughly coincided with the publication of Edmund Burke's treatise on the *The Origin of our Ideas about the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757).

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with what he thinks he sees (Gombrich 1960, p. 85-6). In consequence, the objects described in the account are determined by their ability to *fit in* or *match* the picturesque framework. This mediated relationship of the picturesque (Bell 1993, p. 22) and its principles had to be learned, and were indeed learned so thoroughly that in the later eighteenth century it became impossible for anyone with an aesthetic interest in landscape to look at the countryside without applying them, whether s/he knew s/he was doing so or not (Barrell 1972, p.6).

The viewing process of the picturesque had its own criterion of adequacy, which was independent of other forms of mediated perceptions. As a consequence of this independence, the picturesque images function as essential parts of the whole composition. And their perceived adequacy is achieved through their relationship to the whole picturesque composition. The following from the Halls is an illustration of this aesthetic assessment of the image of a 'moss-house' within the overall framework of the picturesque:

> The glen is little more than a mile in length; and midway a small moss-house has been erected; to our minds, the structure - although exceedingly simple - disturbed the perfect solitude of the place; where the work of the artificer ought not to be recognised. (1853, p. 157)

Within this quotation, there is no alternative way of seeing the 'moss-house', *i.e.* with regard to its use-value in production or whatever. Its inadequacy is determined within the viewing process of the picturesque. The picturesque way of looking *sees* the parts of the landscape as imaginary objects, which fit or do not fit into its overall composition. This judgemental process depends exclusively on the surface appearances of the objects observed. To remedy a picturesque problem such as the *moss-house,* one has to move from the viewing process of the picturesque to the process of redesigning the landscape according to the principles of the picturesque.

## DELABOURING THE PICTURESQUE LANDSCAPE: THE ART OF ENCHANTMENT

The crucial moment in the design process of the picturesque is when the designer/planner decides what is to be done. It is not the actual labour of the building of the moss-house (for example) which is important but the actual moment of the decision-making, *i.e.* the compositional decision. In the Halls' example, the destruction of the moss-house is a mere consequence of the decision to redesign the landscape from within the framework of the picturesque. With this in



mind, it can be argued that the picturesque framework is not interested in how the picturesque came into being (not in the brush strokes), but only in the appearance of the final product - the picture[esque].

There is an inherent tendency in the picturesque framework to reify the images of the landscape. The framework itself sees its images as compositional parts which make up the whole picture. These *parts* need to be stable in their depicted composition in order for the writer to provide a recognisable reproduction to the reader as a potential viewer of the actual landscape. And, as work is the production of a *thing* coming into being, it must by necessity be excluded from the framework. The *work* I am referring to here is that work which would alter the landscape, and not work which is continuous on the surface of the landscape, such as the herding of livestock, which is viewed as really idyllic and therefore non-work (Barrell 1980, p. 149). The only work recognised in the framework is the mental labour of decision-making of the designer.

Thus the landscape of picturesque tends to exclude the manual work of the actual production of the landscape. The only human *work* recognised in the picturesque is that of the designer. And this designer *designs* only the beautiful aspects of the landscape. By implication being truly natural, the sublime aspect of the dichotomy cannot be itself redesigned. The beautiful aspects of the picturesque are as ever surrounded by the sublime - the uncultivated wilderness. The following is an illustration of this from the Halls:

> The waters of Lough Bray are coloured very deeply by the peat which covers the surrounding hills, through which the waters permeate; and the deep and gloomy tint is increased by the shadow into which the lake is thrown by the over-hanging mountain to the south and west. There is one object connected with Lough Bray that looks like the work of enchantment; the Swiss cottage and grounds belonging to Sir P.Crampton, Bart. [the Surgeon-General] 'appears suddenly in the wild bog', and seems as if 'rising at the stroke of a magician's wand'. (1853, p. 104)

The delabouring of the building of the cottage is achieved in the passage by substituting the mundane work of physical construction with the idealised concepts of the 'magic of enchantment' and of the 'magician's wand'. The depersonalization of the social relations of production within the picturesque framework, is countered explicitly by the personalization of the ownership of the landscape, as in the above case of Sir P.Crampton's ownership of the Lough Bray. The object of the picturesque - the landscape - is personalised through ownership only. And in this way the ownership of the landscape is linked with the crucial aspect of design and planning within the picturesque framework. Because of his

ownership of the land, the landlord is the only person who has the power to physically reshape the landscape in a picturesque way. He controls the actual crucial moment of decision-making through his ownership of the object to be viewed - the land. Simon Pugh sees this relationship between ownership and the picturesque through the idea of *eminence*:

> A correct taste in landscape and a commanding view of the scene establishes 'position' and the right to generalize. This of course, 'coincides' with ownership of heritable property in land and the possession of a sufficient 'eminence' to look down on the world. (1990, p. 2)

The only person who can take a commanding view is the actual owner of the landscape. For he can only affect a change in the landscape on such a broad scale, which would be demanded by the dicta of the picturesque. The Irish tenantry in general at this period could not instigate such a change. Their perilous legal position and the smallness of their holdings prevented them from *painting* the landscape on such a large picturesque scale (Hancock 1850). The landlord's *commanding view* is the only one that can become a *command* to change the *view*. As a consequence of this powerful position within the picturesque framework, the landlords become identified not only with the picturesque in general but also with the specific aspect of the beautiful. In the above passage, the Halls have identified the beautiful aspects of Lough Bray with the cultivated area within the estate wall. But how does the work of man in the process of cultivation square with the idea of not showing work relationships within the picturesque? The answer to this question lies in uncovering the precise nature of the form of cultivation mentioned - the cultivation of the beautiful. We can do this by examining the historical evolution of landscape gardening in Ireland.

## LANDSCAPING THE GARDEN OF IRELAND: THE IDEOLOGY BECOMES AN IDEALISED REALITY

In the last section we suggested that the picturesque framework tended to exclude human work from its vision. This is by design. In the eighteenth century the landlords began to physically redesign their demesnes according to the dicta of the picturesque. The concepts of the picturesque jumped from their ideological frames into reality, in the form of the English informal style of landscape gardening. The word *gardening* is used here as by Stuart, in its very widest sense, *i.e.* wherever deliberate planting has been carried out, and wherever that planting has been done for its *looks* (1979, p. 14). As a consequence, the *garden* did not have to be



in the immediate surrounds of the landlord's house, *i.e.* in the parklands,[3] but it could be located in any picturesque part of the landlord's estate.

To formally define this *informal* garden we can turn to N. Pevsner:

> The English garden ... is asymmetrical, informal, varied and made of such parts as the serpentine lake, the winding drive and winding path, the trees grouped in clumps and smooth lawn (mown or cropped by sheep) reaching right up to the French windows of the house. (Lang 1974, p. 5)

The English landscaped garden was itself a movement away from the rigid formality and the curtailed vistas of the Dutch and the French styles (McCullagh 1987, p. 67). The greatest exponent of the English Garden was Capability Brown. The Brownian landscape was worked in three elements alone: wood, water and grass (Stuart 1979, p. 42). Formal gardens were ploughed over, avenues left to wander like country lanes; the vista from the window became one of gently rolling greenery, with cunningly placed clumps of trees in *natural* positions (McCullagh 1987, p. 67). Although engendering a spirit of simplicity, this type of garden created subtle changes to the people's relationship to their landscape. According to Stuart, Brown's most famous contribution was the transition from landscape seen in a two-dimensional way to a landscape fully integrated in three dimensions: landscape as sculpture, rather than as a painting (1979, p. 42). Probably more exact is to suggest that the Brownian landscape was a designed stage to be walked in rather than one stationary painting to be viewed only from the *Big House*. As a consequence, the *garden* began to move away from the immediate environs of the house, in many cases out of sight of the house itself, creating an even more *natural* feel to the redesigned landscape. In creating these *natural* gardens the Irish landlords used the most artificial of means possible - they constructed them to look natural. The pioneers of this theory of gardening in Ireland were Jonathan Swift and Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Delany (Hayden 1992). The Halls come across this type of manufactured landscape, without clearly emphasising the artificial dimension of it:

> ...in the demesne of *Altadore*, is a small glen called 'the Hermitage', for which nature has done much, and art more. And here is another of the magnificent waterfalls for which the country is so famous. It

3. Reeves-Smith has estimated that parklands on Irish estates in the early nineteenth century was about 850,000 acres or 10% of the total land area of the island (quoted in Duffy 1994).

> is but one of the many attractions in this delicious spot; the grounds have been laid out with exceeding taste, the walks through it are very varied; and considerable judgement and skill have been exhibited in so planting and 'trimming'- the one being even more necessary than the other where the growth is rapid and luxuriant - as to obtain a new and striking view almost at every step. (1853, p. 162)

It is initially difficult to uncover the artificial aspects of this garden, because its final product was to look as *natural* as possible. It is so *natural* that even in the above passage, it is not described as a garden but as a glen. However on closer inspection, we can detect that the landscape is designed to allow a person to walk through it so as to discover the 'striking views' along laid-out pathways. The artificial aspects of 'this delicious spot' are consciously hidden from view, because the artificial features of this garden are its design and the location of natural plants within that overall design.

The creation of this picturesque spot is the result of a set of meanings that are fixed before its construction (Pugh 1988, p. 5). Meaning suggests an intention, not only to create according to certain principles of design, in our case the picturesque, but also to have an effect on the viewing person. This *natural* construct had an inherent ideology. According to Gallagher (1989, p. 34), the emergence of the informal English garden in the middle of the eighteenth century, indicated a change in man's perspective to nature. Now the perspective was to see man's position as being within nature itself, rather than as an agent to tame and regulate its forces as in the Dutch and French formal gardens (Gallagher 1989, p. 34). In Ireland, the natural/sublime was more of a prominent feature of the picturesque than in England, according to Malins and The Knight of Glin:

> ...the prime difference in landscaping in the two countries: Ireland was little tamed by art as the milder climate and higher rainfall produced profuse horticultural growth. In addition, the much indented coastline, the many natural loughs amid mountainous scenery provided material for landscaping which was readily incorporated. These prospects, in which water played so large a part, created a very special harmony, unique to Ireland. (1976, p. 2)

This 'very special harmony' is to be understood from within the confines of the picturesque framework in that the natural features mentioned in the passage are those features which had a tendency to be perceived as sublime. These sublime/natural features tended to be outside the walls of the estate and therefore were appropriated into the picturesque scape



as a contrast to the beautiful in the demesne of the estate.

The equating of the beautiful with the *cultivated* in the demesne was not concerned with productive cultivation, but with the non-productive displays of pleasure parklands. Again the Halls provide such a contrast with regard to the Crampton estate at Lough Bray:

> The wall that surrounds these grounds is not, in some places as high as the bank of peat within a few feet of it, and the contrast between the neglect, the desolation, and barrenness that reign without, and the order, cultivation, and beauty within, is very striking, exhibiting the mastery which science and civilization hold over nature even in her sternest and most rugged domain. The cottage and grounds are here, in this lofty and unreclaimed region, "like Tadmor in the wilderness, or an oasis in the desert". (1853, p. 104)

The contrast between 'the neglect and the barrenness' of the sublime outside, and 'the order and cultivation' of the beautiful garden within, highlights the significance of the 'science and civilization' in the picturesque framework. And the symbol of 'science and civilization' was the ornamental tree. We need to examine this important role that trees played in the redesigned landscape and in the ideology of the picturesque.

## THE SOCIAL FORMS OF THE TREE WITHIN THE PICTURESQUE: *HUMANIZED* NATURE OR TREELESS *DESOLATION*

The tree became the essential tool of the landscape-gardener. Although we have already mentioned the use of grass and water in the Brownian landscape, they tended to be rather monotonous in tone and lacking visual variety in composition. As the essential contrast to these *featureless* features, the tree created the dramatic element of the picturesque, because of its physical variety and differing colour tones. They actually became the *brush strokes* of the landscape-gardener, as the following advice of Uvdale Price suggests:

> Consult the works of painters, and learn the principles which guided them in their combinations of natural and artificial objects. Group your trees on the principles they do. Connect your masses as they do. In short, apply their principles of painting whenever you intend any imitation of nature; for the principles of nature and of painting are the same. (quoted in Hadfield 1967, p. 133-4)

Trees, therefore, are the most useful and the most manageable material on the palette of the landscape-gardener. The Halls show such an

appreciation of the tonal qualities of planted trees in their description of the Meeting of the Waters in Co.Wicklow:

> Upon their calm and quiet 'MEETING', the mountains look down - one in the distance, bleak and barren; the other immediately above them, mixing the dark hues of the fir with the light tints of the ash - 'the brightest of green'. (1853, p. 145)

By mixing deciduous with evergreen trees and by placing them along differing planes in the landscape, the landscape gardener was able to achieve the same effect as the painters did in perspective. And since the number of tree species native to Ireland was limited, the ornamental planter tended to introduce foreign *exotics* into their Irish gardens such as sycamore, beech, walnut, lime and the horse chestnut (McCracken 1971, p. 135). Therefore, by mixing the colour tones of differing tree species, the planter was able to reproduce the compositional techniques similar to a Claudian landscape painting. But this reproduction was not a mere representation of a landscape, it was the real thing, a real landscape designed to look *picturesque*.

Trees also played a crucial role as screens in hiding estate boundaries from being viewed. These trees not only hid the boundaries between estates, but also blocked out the productive area of the landed estate. No work was to be seen in the *natural* pleasure garden. According to Repton:

> The pleasure of appropriation is gratified in viewing a landscape which cannot be injured by the malice or bad taste of a neighbouring intruder: thus an ugly barn, or ploughed field, or any obtrusive object which disgraces the scenery of a park, looks as if it belonged to another, and therefore robs the mind of the pleasure derived from appropriation, or unity and continuity of unmixed property. (Daniels 1982, p. 128)

Therefore, trees were used to conceal the confined outlook created by the presence of high estate walls. And according to Duffy, the demesne walls of Irish landed estates had no equivalent in England (1994, p. 15). But this act of concealment was only on one side of the wall. In screening the inside of the estate walls, the trees acted as a mirror, in reflecting back the eye to the *natural openness* of the pleasure parklands. The reality of an unstructured landscape in the productive side of the estate was hidden by an optical illusion. However, from the outside, anyone attempting to look in at this labour-free arcadia, the barrier to viewing was not an optical illusion but a real wall. The third function that the tree played in the *gardens* of the picturesque, was that of acting as theatrical props to the viewing process itself. Since the essential feature of the picturesque was



about viewing, views were *manufactured* by using trees to close off or open up views of the landscape. In a sense, they *framed* the views of the picturesque, by controlling the fixed viewing points in the foreground of the landscape. John Barrell stated that:

> This method of landscaping inevitably demanded that the pictures thus created to be seen from ordained and fixed points of view, connected with each other by walks thickly wooded enough to prevent the pictures being glimpsed from anywhere except the right place... (1972, p. 47)

This compositional technique of the picturesque landscape gardener is very much present in the landscape of Co.Wicklow, as the Halls demonstrate:

> The road leads along the west bank of the Avoca; on both sides the hill-steeps are clad with forest trees; the opposite being especially rich. From above their thick foliage peep, occasionally, the turrets of some stately mansion; beneath which the eye detects 'clearings' skilfully formed, so that the best points of view may be obtained; and, as the river takes a winding course, the means of amply examining the grace and splendour of the scenery are very frequent. (1853, p. 145)

The tree symbolized for the connoisseur of the picturesque the *work of civilization*. Consequently, when the picturesque connoisseurs refer to the idea of *cultivation* in their accounts, they are generally referring to the cultivation of these ornamental trees, and not to agricultural cultivation of the productive kind. Also, this ornamental cultivation is only carried on in the landscaped *gardens* of the *beautiful*. Beyond these gardens lie the hidden agricultural fields of the tenant farmers and the visible treeless terrains of the sublime. As we have already suggested the sublime aspect of the picturesque dichotomy could only be visually appropriated into the picturesque framework as the background to the beautiful. In the sense that in framing the picturesque, the landscape gardener could only physically reshape the beautiful aspects of the picturesque. This he did with the planting of alternating bands of grass and trees in the gardens of the beautiful. Therefore, the beautiful aspects of the picturesque had not only to be in these gardens, but they also had to form the foreground and the middle-ground of the picturesque view (Clifford 1962, p. 173). The sublime features could never be successively *planted* in the gardens of the picturesque, without losing those characteristics which has defined them as sublime, *i.e.* being truly *natural* and creating 'awe-inspiring and fearful feeling', which could be only achieved by looking into vast

distances beyond the comforting confines of the beautiful.

If the tree became the symbol of *humanized* nature in the picturesque, its non-appearance in the landscape generally symbolized the presence of the sublime. The sublime was always the distanced background of treeless *desolation*. In flora terms, the sublime was usually indicated by the presence of bogland, especially of mountain blanket bogs and with the adjective *wild* being applied to these areas (Bellamy 1986, p. 1). But, what really indicated the presence of the sublime was not the presence of bogland but the absence of planted trees. In the following, the Halls describe the sublime features surrounding the lakes at Glendalough:

> It is impossible to imagine aught in Nature more awfully grand than the lake, in the midst of mountains that surround it on all sides, except the east - in some parts bare of verdure to the summit, or covered with huge stones, among which revel the descending rivulets; in others clothed with brown heath or the sable peat; in others, a series of jutting crags between the interstices of which the grass grows luxuriantly, where the sheep and goat feed fearlessly secure, but where human foot has never trod; in others, perpendicular precipices from the base almost to the top, where the eagle makes his eyrie far away from the haunts of man... Except along the borders of the Lower Lake, and on the heights that divide the mountains of Lugduff and Derrybawn, not a tree is to be seen, and scarcely a shrub large enough to shelter a lamb; nothing to humanize its utter loneliness; it is hard to fancy that a few centuries ago the now barren district was a huge forest - a den for wolves and a nest for outlaws... (1853, p. 124/5)

This passage suggests that the tree has become politicised. In the sense that the planted tree, or better put, the tree of the planter, can actually *humanize* the landscape, while the natural tree of the primeval forest cannot. The planter's tree *humanize* the landscape because it is a symbol of political stability brought about by the political plantations of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[4] It should be stated that it is only in the period of the picturesque that the tree was perceived to *humanize* the landscape. It became a symbol of the power of the landlord/planter class

4. The native or the original tree of the primeval forest is to be feared, because it hid the forces of instability of this planter colony, both the natural forces of the wild animals and the political forces of the wild Irish septs. In a footnote to this travelogue, the Halls state that it was impossible to extirpate the 'wild Irish septs' from the country because of the impenetrable forests, in the time of Elizabeth 1 (1853, p. 100). The solution to the problem was found in cutting them'down (1853, p. 113). Therefore, ironically the *natural* sublime areas of Co. Wicklow are the consequences of the 'art of the civilized man' in the sixteen and seventeen centuries.



to *civilize* the countryside to their designs. But, the sublime had always to be beyond their control, as it owed its existence to the supposed power of nature alone - wild and uncultivated. The sublime could only be appropriated visually, as a backdrop to the beautiful, through the frame of the *beautiful* garden. But there is a way that the sublime could enter the garden of the beautiful, but not as a living plant but as a decaying object of a historical ruin. The existence of ruins, whether real or artificial, was an important feature of the picturesque landscape (Nevius 1976, p. 56). In Ireland the countryside was dotted with many remnants of the past - round towers, ruins of abbeys and houses, while in England many an estate owner had to actually build their own *Gothic* ruin (Malins 1976, p. 2). The Halls find their picturesque ruins among the sublime *ruined city* of Glendalough:

> But the absence of trees is felt as an evil far less at Glendalough than elsewhere; to naked grandeur it is mainly indebted for fame; the shadows that fall upon the lake, from the bare mountains which so completely environ it, giving a character of peculiar gloom - in solemn and impressive harmony with the ruins of remote ages; churches unroofed and crumbling; oratories levelled to the height of humble graves; sculptured crosses shattered into fragments; broken pillars, corbels, and mouldings, of rare workmanship; gorgeous tombs of prelates and princes confused with the coarse headstones of the peasants; and the mysterious ROUND TOWER - comparatively untouched by the Destroyer - standing high above them all! In contemplating these worn-down, and subdued, relics of ancient power,
> "A weight of awe, not easy to be borne,
> Fell suddenly upon our spirit - cast
> From the dread bosom of the unknown past". (1853, p. 124-5)

We can immediately see the role that the ruins played in the picturesque, as the locale for the contemplation of the transient nature of life. Gibbons sees the attraction of ruins for the romantic connoisseur lay in the air of decay which they exuded. They 'conveyed a sense of an irretrievable past, their relapse into a state of nature underlining the transience of human achievement' (Gibbons 1987, p. 62). We can also detect a relationship between the existence of ruins in the landscape and sublimity of the picturesque in the above passage. In that the ruins create a feeling of awe and 'agreeable horror' (Andrews 1989, p. 45) similar to that experienced in looking at the treeless sublime - the desolate areas of the picturesque.

Trees become the chief means of creating the beautiful aspect of the picturesque. The 'absence of trees is felt as an evil' (Halls 1853, p. 125),

because it indicated the presence of sublimity as the opposite of the beautiful in the picturesque. The picturesque framework has become the embodiment of a moral ideology.

## DETACHING THE LANDSCAPE FROM THE PLACE: THE OUTSIDER'S SENSE OF PLACE

We have discovered the powerful position of the landlord class within the framework of the picturesque, especially with regard to the *production* of the beautiful aspect of the picturesque. In praising the beauty of Co.Wicklow, the Halls were in actual fact praising the mental endeavours of this landlord class. Their travelogue of this county becomes an exercise in the moral appreciation of this landlord class and their designs of the beautiful. In places, this appreciation by the Halls moves beyond the confines of the physical to the actual personages themselves, as in their praise of the La Touche family of Delaney (1853, p. 162). But the Halls' obvious appreciation of the landlord class may have had practical reasons to it, that is, of gaining access to these picturesque locations. In specifying the locations of the picturesque, the Halls tended to reveal the *social* form of the picturesque, *i.e.* its presence on private property. The social form of the picturesque becomes manifest in the identification of ownership of these 'beautiful spots' (Somerville and Ross 1990, p. 168). This identification becomes necessary in the Halls' account because of the need to get permission to enter the demesnes of the landed gentry. Permission had to be given by the owner of the estate or their representative. Since the territorial identification of the picturesque spots are the seats of the landlords, and as entry is determined by the generosity of these lords, these landed estates become a *natural* part of the necessary directions and rites of passage to the picturesque of Co.Wicklow. The Halls visit sixteen picturesque spots in their account of Co.Wicklow, and in doing so they identify twelve owners of these *spots*. Villages and towns are only mentioned fleetingly as they pass through them on their way to a particular landed estate, where a specific picturesque view can be obtained. Therefore, Picturesque Wicklow is made up of a number of landed estates, which are the locations of the picturesque.

In this light, the Halls' sense of place is the landed estate of the Anglo-Irish landlord (MacDonagh 1983, p. 29). And by only identifying the picturesque parts of the estate, the Halls are ideologically filtering out the working/productive side of the landed estate. In doing so, they foster the notion of a socially empty space as they desocialize the peasantry/tenantry from the landscape. Within their text, the peasantry have become ideologically detached from the landscape. The Halls, by omitting the peasantry from their account, are replicating the *silences* of the seventeenth- century cartographers as they excluded the cabins of the native Irish from their otherwise *accurate* maps (Harley 1988, p. 292). Consequently, the peasantry play no part in the picturesque Ireland of the 1840s. When the Halls make reference to the peasantry it tends to be rather fleetingly, with no actual discussion with them. When they do appear as people in the landscape, they are represented as symbols or tokens of humanity, rather than as real working peasantry (Barrell 1980, p. 141). When the Halls do refer to the presence of the peasantry in the landscape, they tend to represent them as pictorial images, detached from the actuality of working relationships. The following exemplifies the way in which the Halls see the peasantry in terms of their visual manifestation on the landscape, *i.e.* their cottages/hovels:



> A dreary and uninteresting road it is, running nearly all the way through an arid and unproductive common; a few miserable hovels now and then skirting the way-side, with wretched patches of shrivelled potatoes, planted in bits of land the forcing of which into comparative cultivation can scarcely recompense the very extreme of poverty. (1853, p. 119)

Although rarely discussed by the Halls to the point of giving the impression of a non-inhabited countryside, the mention of the cottages of the peasantry as hovels may have had important consequences for the actual occupiers of these ideologically defined *hovels.* J.B.Harley in his work on *Maps, Knowledge, and Power,* has suggested that nineteenth century rural maps impinged on the daily lives of the ordinary people. As the clock brought *time discipline* on the new industrial workers, maps introduced a dimension of *space discipline* on the rural peasantry.

Following this line of argument, it could be suggested that the picturesque framework had a similar type of effect on the Irish tenantry, in that the picturesque introduced a dimension of *aesthetic discipline* on the Irish peasantry. Defining an area as picturesque within the domain of an *improving* landlord meant that the peasantry could never hope to gain access to that land for productive purposes. Even more harmful to a sitting tenantry is to have their occupied land defined as picturesque by a landscape connoisseur. This surely meant eviction for the newly defined *hovel* occupiers, as the landlord cleared these unsightly *objects* from his picturesque landscape (Gallagher 1989, p. 42). It could be suggested that this type of detachment is concerned with colonialism and imperialism. Edward Said would certainly suggest so. He recently has suggested that imperialism is an act of geographical violence through which every space in a country is explored, charted, and finally brought under control (1993, p. 271). The picturesque as we have described it fits into Said's conception of imperialism. In that the picturesque as part of the romantic movement in general explored the globe to discover new

picturesque spots. It charted and described these spots in written texts. And as an ideological movement it controlled the environs of these picturesque spots by preventing the native population from ruining the view. And finally, as part of this control, the picturesque actually changed the ecology of the local habitat, by introducing foreign plant species into their gardens. Said uses the work of Alfred Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: the Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900* to suggest that the colonialists had a conscious aim to transform the colonialised territories into the images of what they have left behind. Subsequently, the presence of the informal English garden in the wilds of Co.Wicklow can now be seen in a new context, the context of British colonialism of Ireland. If Said is right, the picturesque framework is a crucial element in the colonialist mind-set and an important part of the ideology of the planter colony. An ideology which detaches the peasantry from their native landscape.

How can a perspective such as the picturesque, which was inherently concerned with discovering the true essence of humanity and its relationship with nature, be so *inhuman* to the native people who actually live in, or at least around the landscape they have come to appreciate? The answer to this question can only lie in the ideological structure of the Beautiful - the man-made aspect of the picturesque. As a consequence the solution to this problem is to be found within the enclosed walls of the demesne.

Within the walls of the landed estates we have discovered the disguised gardens of the picturesque. These gardens are about consumption, they are about the consumption of views. The social vision of the picturesque is about restoring the *harmony* between man and nature. We saw this in the attempt to *paint* a picture combining the beautiful with the sublime, and in doing so to create a sense of harmony between the art of man and the forces of nature. But the experience of this restorative harmony was to be exclusively visual. And since the process of viewing is inherently an individual activity, any attempt to grasp nature through the visual had to be conceived of as an individual experience. It is not a collective experience. As a consequence, viewing the picturesque can be seen as constituting a form of bourgeois individualism, an ethic where the emphasis is on consumption and the activity of the individual subject (Lowe 1982, p. 15). This social relationship manifests itself in the personage of the picturesque tourist. And being a visual form of consumption, with its inherent principle of *seeing is believing*, it was necessary to exclude any form of visual *disharmony*. Disharmony cannot be natural - of nature - since in the picturesque nature as in the sublime was given. The idea of *disharmony* could only be ascertained as being determined by social factors, those which involved people interacting with nature or with other people, *e.g.* the Halls' example of the building of the moss house. Specifically with regard to the Halls' tourist account of the picturesque of Co.Wicklow, this meant that the peasantry had to be kept out of the frame, detached from the picturesque.



The picturesque is then about the way an outsider wishes to see the landscape, either as a colonialising landlord or as a tourist. It is about consumerism, *i.e.* consuming harmonious visions of the landscape. And because of this essential relationship, the actual landscape is changed to suit the wishes of these connoisseurs of the picturesque. The *fixing* of viewing points is crucial to the way the landscaper could respond to the wishes of these consumers of landscape. This desire to see in a certain way from a fixed point a particular landscape meant that the picturesque framework could evade not only the actuality of the working population but also the specific Irish social problems of overpopulation and poverty, which was considerable in the 1840s (Mokyr 1983, p. 6). This disappearance trick was achieved by removing them physically from the picturesque view. In filtering out the productive tenantry from the landscape, the framework has ideologically jumped from a *state of nature* to immediate consumption, without recognising the necessity of production. This ideological jump reconfirms the inherent process of reification in the picturesque movement. In that the object of nature becomes an object of consumption, without seemingly having to go through the social activity of production. So when the picturesque connoisseur came to appropriate a scene, through whatever artistic means chosen, the portrayal of that scene may have been an authentic representation of what was seen. The problem was that the scene itself was ideologically biased, *cocooned* away from the reality of the working countryside.

These picturesque spots are like oases in the desert. By only describing the oases, the impression given is that all is fertile in the desert. Detachment from the social relations of production, in whatever way they may manifest themselves on the landscape, is necessary in order to maintain the illusion of man's harmony with nature (reconstructed *nature*). The depopulation of the picturesque was intended to create the illusion that harmony with nature was to be a solitary experience, rather than a collective affair.

The picturesque landscape was designed to impress the mind of the viewer. In this sense the most important subject in the picturesque landscape does not actually appear in that landscape, because that person is doing the viewing. Continually detached from the sublime as they stood in the foreground of the beautiful, these connoisseurs could never experience real unadulterated nature, because they viewed it through the mediated form (frame) of the picturesque. But this sense of detachment from *real* nature was continually hidden from view because the culturally designed forms of the picturesque were enveloped in the natural forms

of grass, tree and water. Simon Pugh outlines such a relationship in the following:

> The garden presented radical changes in the working countryside *as if* they were natural. The 'nature' of the garden was labour-free (disguising its construction), unconfined (hiding its boundaries), self-yielding (obscuring cultivation). The land-owner, and to a certain extent the visitor, the poet, the painter and the guide-writer, became custodians and administrators of 'the natural' which in effect remained within the hahas of the garden and the 'game reserves', areas of play that shut off nature from those who had traditionally derived immediate sustenance from it. The subtle rhetoric of 'naturalising the natural' is summed up best in Kant's conundrum that 'nature proved beautiful when it wore the appearance of art; and art can only be termed beautiful where we are conscious of its being art, while yet it has the appearance of nature'. (1988, p. 12)

This type of *natural* garden will always be detached from the actuality of real nature and man's real productive relationships with that nature (Marx 1976, p. 39-40). Neil Smith argues that this is so because this concept of nature has exorcised all forms of social activity from it including work (1990, p. 16). In doing so, the so-called 'natural picturesque garden' has become dehistoricised. By excluding the concrete work of the Irish tenantry from the *garden*, the picturesque framework denies that class its social relationship to its native habitat and its subsequent historical relationship to that habitat. The picturesque framework in a typically colonial way denies a history to the Other (Said, p. 269).

Because the picturesque is essentially a visual phenomenon, the Halls as connoisseurs of that genre did not need to interact with the local population in order to make sense of the landscape. The knowledge needed to interpret was already in the heads of these *cultured* observers, *i.e.* knowledge of the principles of the picturesque. Therefore, the picturesque tourist did not need any local knowledge to make sense of the landscape. In this sense, the Halls like all other picturesque travellers employed an universal grid to read local landscapes. It was according to Barrell an outsider's sense of place:

> The concern to be always moving through a place, to see it never primarily as a place-in-itself, but always as mediated by its connection to one place to the east, and another to the west, produces a sense of space which is defined always by this linear movement... This detachment produces its own kind of sophistication... (1972, p. 89)



Our tourists, as Barrellian *outsiders*, mediated their visited places through the framework of the picturesque, and in doing so detached themselves from the local sense of place. So as outsiders, what did our picturesque tourists learn from their Co. Wicklow experiences? If Pugh is right, the only thing they learned on their journey was about themselves:

> Journeys, of course, separate the traveller from the places travelled through, places that become categorised as 'experience'; journeys makes us aware of being a subject, and the world about as object ...; journeys also force us to adopt certain ruses to 'get by', principally by reducing the world to a common denominator, to the human subject. [And the tourist] learns what it is to become detached from the world around him and to represent that detachment in a recognition of his own self-conscious identity. (Pugh 1988, p. 8)

This was certainly true for our Co.Wicklow tourists, but their detached picturesque attitude to the landscape became undone when they encountered the local guides of Glendalough.

## GLENDALOUGH: THE CONTESTED GLEN OF TWO VIEWS

The Halls' first reaction to their arrival at Glendalough is to quote Sir Walter Scott that Glendalough was 'the inexpressibly singular scene of Irish antiquities' (1853, p. 123). This was followed by a classic statement from a picturesque connoisseur:

> The city is now desolate - the voice of prayer, except when some wearied peasant is laid beneath the turf, is never heard within its precincts - year after year the ruins fall nearer to the earth, the relics of its grandeur are trodden under foot, and another generation may search for their foundations in vain. It is impossible to look upon the scene without 'waking some thoughts divine', receiving a lesson upon the mutability of the works of man, and feeling as if a fearful prophecy had been fulfilled...'. (1853, p. 126)

In a typical romantic fashion for them the *ruins* instil a feeling of the transience nature of human achievement. But the Halls' attempt to appreciate the ruins of Glendalough in a picturesque way is interrupted by a gathering crowd of guides:

> We recommend therefore, the passing a night at the inn at Glendalough - especially as the scene is infinitely more impressive

> in the twilight than at morning or mid-day. But those who pay it an evening visit should beware of the guides, who completely mar the solemn harmony of the surrounding objects: remunerating the crowd of men, women and children, to keep carefully out of sight and hearing, rather than of their 'company', and retaining their services for the next day, when the repose of thought may be less desirable. (1853, p. 123)

So the Halls are forced to compromise; they promise to hire some of he guides for a tour of the ruins on the following day. Now in the vening, they pay the guides to stay away. This curious manoeuvre by he Halls indicates that the romantic tourist cannot enjoy the true icturesque experience of the landscape with the meddling interference f these guides, the destroyers of the 'solemn harmony of the urrounding objects'. The guides of Glendalough as native subjects in this *uined* landscape can threaten the picturesque interpretation of the andscape. These custodians of the ruins can force the picturesque tourist o move from their respective silent monologue of the picturesque to a ialogue with the non-picturesque interpretations of the landscape. And his can be threatening as the following suggests:

> At Glendalough guides of all degrees start from beneath the bushes, and from amid the crags - we had almost written, and the lake - and 'they will do anything in the wide world to serve and obleege yer honours', except leave you to yourselves. (1853, p. 127)

These guides are conceptualised as if they were *natural* aspects of the andscape, which will do anything to please the picturesque tourist except isappear from the landscape, the one true desire of the picturesque ourist. The *natural* status of the guides within the landscape - their epiction as being potentially behind every object in the landscape - neans they will always be a potential threat to the reifying process of the icturesque. Their appearance will decompose the objects of the viewing rocess as they *subjectivize* these objects. The authors by naturalizing the uides within the landscape are actually culturalizing the landscape. In his sense the natives go along with the ruined landscape. In fact the Ialls find it impossible to get rid of their guides, as they continue:

> 'Is it let the likes of you alone, plase yer honour?' said a razor-faced youth. 'Be the dads, we've better manners than that anyhow, to lave the quality alone by themselves in such a lonesome place; and sure the lady won't forget the dowshy dancing sixpence among us, just as a compliment for our company!' If you get angry with them, their civility increases, and the end of it is, that you submit with the air of a martyr, while Kathleen and the selected guide, seeing that you are really in earnest and wish to be alone, keep the mob at a distance, who then follow in the wake. (1853, p. 127)



In the above, the guides are depicted as 'over-subservient' servants, who see themselves as always ready to serve their masters, whether they are wanted or not. The Halls now have to deal with another interpretation of the landscape. Their valley has become a contested glen of two views.

## St.KEVIN'S LABYRINTH: *THE STATIONS* OF GLENDALOUGH

The guides of Glendalough threaten to destroy not only the ideal picturesque qualities of the place by being in the frame so to speak, but also they provide an alternative interpretation of the landscape beyond the visual confines of the picturesque. These guides provide an oral understanding of the cultural significance to certain objects in the landscape, a significance which would not be noticed on a strictly visual plane. This non-visual plane - a spiritual landscape - is a labyrinth. And a labyrinth, according to John Barrell, is a complicated structure, whose secret cannot be learned without a guide (1972, p. 87). What makes up this cultural labyrinth is a number of distinct locales, like stations of the cross in Catholicism. These *stations* are linked together by a narrative, the story of Glendalough. The Halls as outsiders to this labyrinth had to submit themselves to the control of the local guides. Their only choice in the matter was to choose their particular guide from the multitude gathering around them. They choose George Wynder. George was described by the Halls as 'a wit', a 'poet', and 'storyteller' (1853, p. 127/8). The conflict which arises between the Halls and George was concerned with the authenticity of the revelations made by him. And unlike the picturesque interpretation of the landscape objects, George's interpretation is concerned with how these objects came into being as cultural objects within the overall story of Glendalough. What is significant to the guide's account is that the object observed is the embodiment of an aspect of the cultural labyrinth, and not the surface appearance as in the picturesque framework. The following is an example of such an interpretation:

> Of Fin Mac Cool's Cut - a singular gap in the mountain - he told us that 'Fin one day met a countryman, and axed what news of the battle, 'Bad,' says he 'we're bet into smithereens,' Och! murder', says Fin, 'why wasn't I there! I'll show ye what I'd have done'; so he makes a blow with his soord, and cut a piece out of the hill. We call it the jianunts' cut; himself and another jianunt used to shake hands

across the lake. (1853, p. 135)

It is the cultural essence of the object observed which is significant to the guide's oral interpretation. Invisible to the picturesque eye, the essential characteristic of an identified object could be conceptualised in a Hegelian way as if it had a mystical kernel within a physical shell. Making sense of the object involves an imaginary downward movement into this 'spiritual kernel'. This necessary imaginary movement is directly opposite to the picturesque sense of movement which skips along the surfaces of the objects observed. This mystical kernel cannot be *seen* in the visual sense, it can only be revealed through narration. The guides lead their tourists from one station to another. Like the picturesque framework, it was only certain locations or sites within the landscape which were of interest to these native interpreters of landscape. But, unlike the picturesque journey through the landscape which was a solitary venture, this escorted tour was a collective experience, as the tour guide made *visible* these cultural artifacts to an audience in and through his story telling.

Involved in this movement is the attempt to connect the discrete revelations of the highlighted artifacts together into a structured order of narration. In doing so, these guides create an intellectual attachment to the objects identified. A totemic relationship is formed in the Durkheimian sense between the *knowers* of these tales and the objects of these tales (Durkheim 1915, p. 140). As a totem, the identified object takes on the characteristic of sacredness, separating itself from the more profane objects in the landscape. Therefore, like the picturesque framework, these cultural stations are detached from the more mundane world of productive activities. But unlike the picturesque, the *rites of passage* to this *spiritual* landscape is essentially communal in nature, *i.e.* a group activity, and is particular to one location, unlike the universal nature of the picturesque.

Another important aspect of the oral *gaze* is the internal consistency of oral narration in handling chronological time (Henige 1974, p. 95). David Henige has suggested that the oral tradition dealt with historical evolution, but not in the way of an objective quantification of the past as in the written tradition of print capitalism (1974, p. 96). In the stories of the stations there is little effort given to precise chronological ordering of events. No historical dates are given. The periodization of events is achieved by internal narrated events in the stories themselves. An example of this type of periodization is the presence of skylarks being mentioned in the stories. In one story these birds were banned from the valley by order of St.Kevin. In a following story St.Kevin banished the last 'sarpint' in Ireland (who resided in the lower lake - Loch-na-Peche), the larks create a sense of time within the overall narration of this



labyrinth of legends and lore, as the following indicates:

> 'Now Kamaderry was a grate wood in them days, and it wasn't asy travelling. But the saint wasn't to be daunted; so he axes a lark to wake him (for this was before he made 'em quit the place)...'. (1853, p. 136)

The use of the lark story within other stories is an important way of introducing movement into this narrated labyrinth - the movement of historical time. Therefore, this oral interpretation of the landscape dealt with historical evolution unlike the ahistorical nature of the picturesque. Although the stories are of a fantastic nature, their narration is done within a logical framework, which attempts to link up the various revelations into a consistent whole. In consequence, establishing authenticity takes on a number of interesting features, which are related to external and internal factors such as physical marks on the objects observed.

We have already stated how the guide tended to move his narrated insight from the surface appearance of the artefact to the mystical kernel, in an imaginary downward movement. But the narration does not remain at that level, as there is a tendency for the guide to complete his story by moving back up to the surface again by indicating a physical mark on the object. In this way he attempts to establish the authenticity of his revelation. The physical mark is the proof of the authenticity of the story, as the following story indicates:

> '...a vagabond from Connaught stole the saint's mare and her fole, and the saint overtuck him and shtruck him dead upon the spot, wid a look he gav him; and immediately he ris a cross in the place as a warning to all marrauders; and the cross stands there now, with the marks of the mare's feet on the one side, and the fole's feet on the other!'. (1853, p. 135)

It is interesting to note that in the next line the Halls show us that they are aware of this mode of proof by the guides, by providing a drawing of the Mare's cross with the hoof marks on it. With the following caption: 'And so it does, for here is a copy of it'. This mode of proof is also evident in the story of the *Deer Stone*. In this story a poor widowed man was left with a new born baby and no means to feed it, in desperation he goes to St.Kevin:

> 'Come to this stone, my good man, every morning after airly mass,' says he,'and I'll go bail ye'll get a drop for the babby;' and sure enough at day-break the poor fellow saw a deer come, and lave a

> quart o' new milk in the stone, and that fed the cratur till he grew big enough and learned enough to be the saint's coadjutor; but the stone is there to spake to the miracle this day.' (And here, good reader, is a copy of it, to put the fact beyond dispute). (1853, p. 133-4)

The final line of the quotation shows the Halls entering into the spirit of establishing this form of proof, but in actual fact, they are really trivializing it as a mode of proof. The analytical movement back to the surface of the object is an attempt to establish the truth of the story which is internal to the narration at the station. But the Halls also use another criteria to assess this truthfulness, which is actually external to the oral narration.

## THE OUTSIDER'S TEXT DOMINATES THE INSIDER'S ORALITY

The Halls have a tendency to compare the oral account by the guides with written accounts. They look for distortions in the oral presentation from the written stories in published works. An example of this is the Halls' doubt concerning the placename of a ruined church:

> We are first introduced to the ruins, within about a mile of 'the city', on the road from Laragh bridge, but on the opposite side of the river; the remains are those of a church, which the peasantry call the 'MONASTERY'; but to which Ledwich refers as 'THE PRIORY OF ST.SAVIOUR,' and which is so marked in the Ordnance map. (1853, p. 125)

The Halls use a number of writers to check the authenticity of the guide's stories, such as Archdall, Ussher, Ledwich, Giraldus Cambrensis, Otway and Sir Walter Scott. In the following the guides are categorised as 'the authorities':

> The ruins are stated by 'the authorities' to consist of the Priory, the Cathedral, St.Kevin's Kitchen, 'Teampull-na-skellig', Our Lady's church, the Rhefeart church, and the Ivy church, making the mystical number of seven; the other sacred edifices 'appearing to be later constructions'. (1853, p. 126)

But in a long footnote that follows, the Halls question the idea of the 'mystical number of seven' by referring to the work of Dr. Ledwich on the idea of seven being sacred in old religions, and thereby of *superstitious purposes*. As a consequence, the Halls conclude that 'this



superstitious veneration for the number still maintains its influence over the mind of the peasantry' (1853, p. 227). The Halls use the written texts as a gauge to assess not only the authenticity of the oral stories but to compare the overall rationality of guide/peasant mind. In doing so, the Halls are clearly regarding the oral narration as inferior to the written sources.

David Henige has suggested that printed texts can have a major effect on oral accounts, in a process which he calls 'feedback'. Feedback, for Henige, is when printed information is co-opted into previously oral accounts (1974, p. 96). And this feedback process creates a sense of inferiority between the oral culture and the written culture (1974, p. 118). This tendency is inherent in the guides of Glendalough oral account as revealed in the Halls comment on an old guide, Joe Irwin: 'The following is Mr. Otway's [written account] version of this story, as told by Joe Irwin' (1853, p. 135). Joe himself realised the power of the written medium as he continually stated that he was 'the man that was down in the book' (1853, p. 127).

This relationship between the traditional oral narration (orality) and the written text is complex (Ong 1982) and must be assessed on many different levels. For example, in quoting the guides in their native idioms, not only is the difference between the standardised English of the text and the oral language of the guides become obvious but also the textual English is dominant on two counts. Firstly, there is the tendency for the oral narration to conform to the expectations and precision of the written texts, by co-opting written accounts into the oral presentation. Secondly, the structure of the style in the text itself seems to favour the standardised English of the Halls in the sense that the Halls use the standardised English to comment on/assess the ideas of the guides and their native idioms. It becomes dominant because it comments upon and is never commented on.

Part of this type of dominance is the difference in spelling within the two discourses. In their attempt to achieve a realistic representation of the native idioms, the Halls spell the guides words phonetically, but of necessity wrongly within the structure of standardised English. The authenticity of the guide's story is further undermined in the sense that the medium used to express those ideas is presented as if it is the work of a childish mind, full of spelling errors. Our quotations are full of such examples, 'jianunt' for giant, 'axed' for asked, and 'laagends' for legends, etc.

Also, according to Leerssen, the reported stories of the native Irish are always mediated through a *buffer* relationship, where the behaviour and the language of the native Irish is explained to the English reader by the author. The culture of the native is never approached directly, that is, the native does not speak in its own voice but is spoken for (Leerssen 1990,

p. 260). The native culture is always detached from the reader because of the mediating role played by the text itself in explaining the Irish situation to the English reader (Leerssen 1990, p. 258). Because of these features, the reported discourse of the guides is represented as subservient to the language of standardised English, the discourse of the colonialiser (Henige 1974, p. 199). But this discussion of the colonial relationship between orality and written accounts needs to be tackled at another time, in another context and another text. To conclude, Walter Ong highlights the notions of attachment with regard to orality and the detachment of written knowledge, imitating the individualistic detachment of the picturesque and the sense of attachment of the oral *gaze*:

> For an oral culture learning or knowing means achieving close, empathetic, communal identification with the known, 'getting with it'. Writing separates the knower from the known and thus sets up conditions for 'objectivity', in the sense of personal disengagement of distancing. ...Primary orality fosters personality structures that in certain ways are more communal and externalized, and less introspective than those common among literates. Oral communication unites people in groups. (Ong 1982, pp. 45 and 69)

## CONCLUSION

Our critical analysis of the Halls' discourse allowed us to discover the complex nature of how Irish landscape was interpreted in the historical period when modern tourism began. By using the work of the Halls on Co.Wicklow, I have pointed out that there seems to be two ways to interpret Irish landscape. Both perspectives on Irish landscape are mediated relationships to that landscape, which were socially constructed within their own respective frameworks and with their own subsequent and often competing ideologies.

The picturesque framework created a sense of detachment from the local sense of place. In whatever form it manifested itself the picturesque had a tendency to represent a terrority as an *empty space*, especially empty of productive work. But the crucial point that we discovered through our analysis of the Halls' text, is that the landlord class actually changed the physical landscape in order to *look* like the picturesque. Therefore the ideology of the picturesque became a reality through landscape gardening, although an *idealized* reality. The inherent sense of loneliness in the constructed picturesque landscape created the similar relationships of desire from the mind-sets of the landlord class and the romantic tourist, even across historical time. The legacy of the landlord class in



their construction of the picturesque, can still be appreciated today in certain picturesque *spots, e.g.* Lough Tay.

In contrast, the oral framework generally emphasised attachment to the landscape and the local sense of place, which tended to create a collective history. The picturesque is ahistorical which emphasise the role of the individual in its appreciation of Irish landscape. To use Urry's terminology, both are 'gazes' (Urry 1990) and they are also idealizations. Idealizations which filter out the productive relationships of the Irish countryside.

I suggest that we need to look at other travelogues of the same period and beyond, in order to assess whether the picturesque or the oral interpretations emerge in those discourses. Later, this project might be extended to modern representations of landscape, especially film.

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