Abstract

New Zealand's landscapes have played a central role in settler and Pākehā cultural imagination, probably none more so than those that are considered to be wild or wilderness. These are the mountains, forests, wetlands, and other environments that are unfarmed, nonurbanized, perceived to be natural, and mostly composed of indigenous plant and animal species. I draw on a range of literature relating to New Zealand's wilderness, from the journals of explorers and settlers, to contemporary advertising in conservation and tourism. I argue for the existence of a dominant settler and Pākehā understanding of such landscapes as uninhabited and primeval, which I refer to as the New Zealand wilderness myth. I contend that this myth relies heavily on what I term the regional construction of the South Island, which represents the South Island as the true place of New Zealand's wilderness. I utilize critical regionalism to investigate the myriad ways in which this myth arises out of the transmutation of...
European understandings of the wild and landscape, particularly romantic and Victorian ones, within the context of New Zealand. I suggest that, according to this myth, New Zealand's wilderness signifies the pre-human past of origin. Moreover, as this past is not only inaccessible but also imaginary, the wild stands in for its lack of existence, allowing it to be experienced within the present. This past, which I theorize exists through what I label the simulacrum of wilderness, is longed for through the emotion of nostalgia. I assert that via this myth, and the nostalgia that underpins it, Pākehā form a politics of nature nationalism, as I call it, through which they claim that New Zealand's wilderness is their home and place of origin. Finally, I critique this simulacral landscape and Pākehā claim of neo-indigeneity to it, and ask the following question: what is the possibility of a postcolonial wilderness in New Zealand?

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New Zealand nature experiences are among the most memorable in the world. View information on the unique flora and fauna, climate and geography. Whether you spend time in the wilderness areas of National Parks or lovingly manicured private gardens, you'll find an abundance of fascinating native plans found nowhere else on earth but New Zealand...(Flora). Geography and Geology (land). New Zealand is situated in the South Pacific ocean, between latitude 34°S and 47°S. The country runs roughly north-south with mountain ranges down much of its length. Its two main islands (North and South) cover 266,200 square kilometres (103,735 square miles), about the size of Japan or California and slightly larger than Great Britain. New Zealand's Animals, Birds and Marine Life. Being an isolated country for millions of years, the wildlife in New Zealand has evolved to be quite unique. We have a mix of crazy-looking birds you've probably already heard of the kiwi bird ancient reptile species and cute marine life. Kea – The world's only alpine parrot is highly entertaining. Found in the South Island, it tends to dismantle cars and your camera if you try to take photos of it. Penguins – Being as close to Antarctica as you can get, it's not so surprising that we have penguins in New Zealand. You can see the little blue penguins, yellow-eyed penguins and the crested penguins. New Zealand's landscapes have played a central role in settler and Pākehā cultural imagination, probably none more so than those that are considered to be wild or wilderness. These are the mountains, forests, wetlands, and other environments that are unfarmed, nonurbanized, perceived to be natural, and mostly composed of indigenous plant and animal species. I draw on a range of literature relating to New Zealand's wilderness, from the journals of explorers and settlers, to contemporary advertising in conservation and tourism. I contend that this myth relies heavily on what I term the regional construction of the South Island, which represents the South Island as the true place of New Zealand's wilderness.