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Imag(in)ing Paradise: Colonial Representations of Samoa in Landscape Photography, 1875-1925

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Imag(in)ing Paradise: Colonial Representations of Samoa in Landscape Photography, 1875-1925

Figure 1. Thomas Andrew, '[Island with Rocky Foreground]', (Auckland War Memorial Museum - Tamaki Paenga Hira, c. 1891-1910), Black and White Photograph, Platinum Print, PH-1992-6-65.

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Introduction

'Samoa is one of the last unspoilt paradises in the world'[1] – Travel Samoa

The Islands of Samoa, like many of their Pacific counterparts, have been long associated with paradisiacal conceptions of natural beauty and aesthetic timelessness.[2] This equivalence, as Eleanor M. Hight and Gary D. Sampson have proposed, has been not only an attempt to make the strange more desirable and translatable to Western audiences past and present but furthermore, in the colonial context, the 'visualisation of place' in the imperial imagination has been a method of exercising control over the physical terrain.[3] The quotation above, taken from the Samoa Tourism Authorities' official website, betrays the two main features of how colonial representation in both photography and literature have been historically characterised; firstly the use of the term "unspoilt" erases the turbulent political and social history of the region, especially in the context of Western Samoa, where the successive Imperial regimes of Germany and New Zealand culminated in the violent repression and eventual success of the *Mau* Independence movement.[4] This propagates the colonial trope of Pacific Islands being only ever partially "glimpsed" by the Western observer and that they remained unchanged by this interaction.[5] Secondly, the label of "paradise" is equally problematic, as it was initially employed as a conceptual framework by European and American travellers in the Pacific to essentialise and ground the contemporary Samoa in a biblical prehistory, rather than understand the culture and terrain within its own context. Such Christian understandings were then reinforced by the colonial application of Social Darwinism which, through the theory of the "survival of the fittest", provided the historical justification for the imperial domination of supposedly "primitive" indigenous people and Edenic landscape.[6] It has been generally argued that

[1] Travel Samoa, 'Beautiful Samoa', Samoa Tourism Authority, ([Accessed 19/02/2023 2023]. From now on will be abbreviated in mentions to STA.
[2] Alison Devine Nordström, 'Early Photography in Samoa: Marketing Stereotypes of Paradise', *History of Photography,* 15 (1991), 272.
[3] Eleanor M. Hight, and Gary D. Sampson, 'Introduction: Photography, "Race", and Post-Colonial Theory', in *Colonialist Photography: Imag(in)ing Race and Place*, ed. by Eleanor M. Hight and Gary D. Sampson (Taylor & Francis Group, 2002), p. 4.
[4] I. C. Campbell, 'Resistance and Colonial Government: A Comparative Study of Samoa', *The Journal of Pacific History,* 40 (2005), 46.
[5] Michael Hayes, 'Photography and the Emergence of the Pacific Cruise: Rethinking the Representational Crisis in Colonial Photography', in *Colonialist Photography: Image(in)ing Race and Place*, ed. by Eleanor M. Hight and Gary D. Sampson (Taylor & Francis Group, 2002), p. 177.
[6] Patricia Johnston, 'Advertising Paradise: Hawai'i in Art, Anthropology, and Commercial Photography', in *Colonialist Photography: Image(in)ing Race and Place*, ed. by Eleanor M. Hight and Gary D. Sampson (Taylor & Francis Group, 2002), pp. 193-8.

western photographers operating in Samoa at the turn of the twentieth century significantly contributed to this conceiving of a 'model tropical island'.[7]

Furthermore, despite the supposedly post-colonial context of Samoa today, in which both the Western and American islands are predominantly governed within the traditional framework of the *fa'amatai* (the Indigenous Chiefly political system) and *fa'a Samoa* (the Samoan Way), the imagery and language used to describe the Islands still appear to conform to this Imperial standard, as demonstrated by the quotation from the STA. To adequately address why this perspective is still pervasive is beyond the scope of this singular essay, yet I will instead attempt to provide an analytical account of how Samoa was pictorially imag(in)ed in the colonial period, with a particular focus on landscape, in order to contribute to the wider historiography of the legacy of colonial photography in the Pacific.

This paper will examine the work of three main photographers who took up permanent residence in Apia at the end of the 19th and early 20th Century, namely the Australian John Davis (1831-1903), as well as the New Zealand-born Alfred James Tattersall (1866-1951), and Thomas Andrew (1855-1939). Collectively they represent the largest photographic study of Samoa, producing over 15,000 images between 1875-1925.[8] The majority of these were distributed overseas in tourist markets in Europe and the United States as postcards, full-plate prints, documentary albums, or as illustrations for travel books, magazines and academic journals.[9] Such was the diversity of their application that images produced by these photographers were employed as both large-scale prints in the private collection of the British Consul in Apia from 1890 to 1898; Sir Thomas Berry Cusack-Smith, as well as ethnographical scientific studies of the region, such as Augustin Kramer's treatise, *Die Samoa Inseln* (1901-3).[10] The appetite for such imagery is evident from the volume of their production in Samoa, which was catalysed through the development in the 1890s of the half-tone screen in publishing, enabling the mass reproduction and dissemination of photographs.[11] In this essay, their work will be contextualised within a broader array of visual materials, particularly

[7] Leonard Bell, 'Eyeing Samoa: People, Places, and Spaces in Photographs of the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries', in *Tropical Visions in an Age of Empire*, ed. by Felix Driver and Luciana Martins (University of Chicago Press, 2005, p. 160.
[8] Tobias Sperlich, 'Photographing Mata'afa Iosefo: Encounters, Interactions and Engagements in Colonial Samoa', *History of Photography,* 38 (2014), 296.
[9] Nordström (1991), 272-86.
[10] Bell (2005), p. 161.
[11] Lanny Thompson, *Imperial Archipelago: Representation and Rule in the Insular Territories under U.S. Dominion after 1898* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2010), p. 35.

landscape paintings. Furthermore, I will buttress this analysis by simultaneously exploring the imagining of Samoa in travel literature from the same period, namely the work of Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894), his wife Fanny Stevenson (1840-1914), and Frederick Moss (c. 1827-1904). While the focus of this essay will primarily centre around Western Samoa between 1875-1925, as this is where the majority of images were produced in this time frame, I will still address the Islands holistically due to their shared cultural identity, comparable geographies and present tourist exposure,[12] thus American Samoa will not be absent from my discussion. After all, despite internal political strife, their ideological separation was only manufactured through colonial intervention, rather than indigenous instigation.[13]

The sources I am employing are not unique to the historiography of Samoa, as I will later demonstrate, yet their analysis has often exclusively focused on the portrayal of indigenous people and culture rather than its landscape. Colonial representations of the Samoan landscape have been generally dismissed as conforming to the Imperial archetype of a tropical paradise marketed for Western audiences, wherein the Islands are presented as exotic yet inviting, however this has been argued without any major individual examination of such work.[14] Thus, through exclusively scrutinising portrayals of Samoan landscapes, this essay represents an effort to broaden the field of study and perhaps nuance previous historical examinations by addressing what I have determined to be a gap in the relevant academic literature on Samoa. My dissertation will argue that imag(in)ings of Samoa from the Western perspective cannot be understood as binary or stable, as the physical Samoan terrain was translated for its European and American market through various aesthetic and philosophical frameworks that could be at times contradictory, producing disparate illusory constructions of landscape that cannot neatly be reconciled. These I have separated into three distinct representational practices: that of the Picturesque, the Surveyor and the Sublime, which form the tripartite Chapter structure of this essay. They are by no means definitive, as there will surely be landscape photographs that fall outside or between these boundaries. Yet, through analysing multiple photographic representations of the Samoan landscape, this dissertation will test the veracity of a singular colonial depiction of "Paradise" and will thus contribute to the post-colonial

[12] As of 2019, Western Samoa has a 0.85:1 annual Tourist to Resident ratio, whereas American Samoa has a 0.41:1 ratio. While Western Samoa receives over double the amount of tourists per capita than American Samoa, both ratios indicate a substantial tourist market in the region. Data found at: https://data.worldbank.org

[13] Kees van Dijk, 'The Partition of Samoa', in *Pacific Strife* (Amsterdam University Press, 2015), pp. 409-10.

[14] Bell (2005), pp. 168-9.

historical understanding of the Pacific in general, wherein its Imperial past is not only acknowledged but thoroughly scrutinised.

Defining Landscape:

In order to conduct this evaluation of how Samoa was depicted through landscape photography, it is first essential to obtain a working definition for "landscape" itself. Initially, this may seem like a relatively straightforward term, denoting a focus on terrain and fauna rather than human subjects. However, as Denis E. Cosgrove has argued, Landscape is instead 'a way of seeing'; a method of compositionally 'structuring the world' through which the spectator creates an 'illusion of order and control'.[15] A landscape photograph, therefore, does not faithfully recreate a real environment but rather creates an imagined, idealised version of that terrain that is subject to and reflective of the photographer's own cultural gaze.

While views of nature are often ascribed an essential innocence,[16] as they are supposedly untainted by human corruption, depictions of landscape have frequently been accompanied by exercises of very tangible power, as that which falls within the borders of the frame is commodified and consumed by an audience; it is made passive and denied agency of its own.[17] Hence, seemingly "pure" portrayals of the natural world are still intrinsically defined by their human context. This is rooted in landscapes' origin as an aesthetic medium within the context of early sixteenth-century Italy, where *paesaggio* paintings were produced for proprietors in order to express their palpable domination and ownership of land through pictorial representation.[18] Landscape is often used interchangeably with nature, which shares its Latin root *nat*- with *nat*ion and *nat*ive, thus creating a conception of landscape that is imbued with notions of race, normalisation and ethnocentrism.[19] As a consequence, it is unsurprising that representations of landscape have been particularly effective in the colonial context as a means of both conceptually and physically transforming terrain,[20]

[15] Denis E. Cosgrove, 'Prospect, Perspective and the Evolution of the Landscape Idea', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers,* 10 (1985), 55.
[16] Gina Crandell, *Nature Pictorialized: "The View" In Landscape History* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. 6.
[17] Julian Thomas, 'The Politics of Vision and the Archaeologies of Landscape', in *Landscape: Politics and Perspectives*, ed. by Barbara Bender (Providence, 1993), pp. 22-4.
[18] Cosgrove (1985), pp. 52-6.
[19] Kenneth Olwig, 'Sexual Cosmology: Nation and Landscape at the Conceptual Interstices of Nature and Culture; or What Does Landscape Really Mean?', in *Landscape: Politics and Perspectives*, ed. by Barbara Bender (Providence, 1993), pp. 309-17.
[20] Howard Morphy, 'Colonialism, History and the Construction of Place: The Politics of Landscape in Northern Australia', in *Landscape: Politics and Perspectives*, ed. by Barbara Bender (Providence, 1993), p. 206.

generating new imagined environments in which previous histories can be erased and supplanted by Imperial projects.

Thus, by taking into consideration the multivalent aspects of "landscape", we can, as Jo Guldi has offered, draw 'seemingly diverse actors into the same frame', enabling scholars to reveal 'how multiple causal factors converge in a variety of realities' within a singular image.[21] As such, this essay when dealing with representations of landscape will not treat such images as literal and impartial, but will rather consider the multiple interactions of power within its composition.

Historiographical Review:

Post-colonial Photography

As one of the foundational texts of postcolonial studies, Edward W. Said's *Orientalism (1979)* provides the theoretical cornerstone on which this essay's analysis shall build. Said's discourse on the relationship between power and the production of knowledge, wherein Western literature and by extension photography, became a means of distributing and normalising representations of colonised people.[22] I posit that images of the Samoan landscape can be considered within this same correlation of power/knowledge, as the colonial observer through creating imagined visual representations of the Islands, and subsequently disseminating them through information networks, dictated and normalised conceptions of the region from an entrenched western perspective. The physical landscape of Samoa became subservient to the constructed visualisation of space in the imperial consciousness. However, Lanny Thompson has criticised Said's hypothesis of alterity, by which cultural differences were repressed, as he argues that in the context of the Pacific, these demarcations were rather enhanced to essentialise the exoticness of colonial subjects and landscapes, in order to make them more attractive to the polarised "civilised" man.[23] This essay will align itself with Thompson's argument, as I will contend that colonial representations of the Samoan landscape did not conform to a singular homogenous stereotype, but rather that these imaginings were visually diverse and intended for different purposes, yet they simultaneously remained a method through which knowledge of the Pacific was generated from an exclusively western perspective.

[21] Jo Guldi, 'Landscape and Place', in *Research Methods for History*, ed. by Lucy Faire and Simon Gunn (Edinburgh University Press, 2016), p. 76.
[22] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 1979), pp. 1-6.
[23] Thompson (2010), pp. 4-72.

In regard to general postcolonial discourses which are centred on the utilisation of visual materials, Eleanor M. Hight and Gary D. Sampson's *Colonialist Photography: Imag(in)ing Race and Place (2002)* represents a significant development in the field. By advocating the strong linkage between 'colonialism and visual representation', they are able to analyse 'the ways in which photographs operate as complex discursive objects of colonial power and culture'.[24] My dissertation will attempt to emulate this approach to visual materials; a commitment evidenced by my chosen title which is a corruption of their studies' heading. Furthermore, the historical importance of photography in colonial discourses has been highlighted by Joan Schwartz and James Ryan, who have identified its significant role in the collection and classification of geographical knowledge.[25] However, while in both these works imagery of landscape and place are considered, this is always done with a focus on a human subject and furthermore no photographs that lack an individual's presence are analysed. As images of this type are numerous, this represents a missed opportunity to comprehensively examine pictorial representations of colonial environments; a notion that this essay seeks to address.

Photography in the Pacific

Historical studies of colonial photography in the Pacific have generally produced a similar standardising view of landscape imagery. Michael Hayes has noted, in the context of Pacific cruises, that the observation of terrain through the photographic lens 'is perhaps one of the most insidious forms of colonialism' as the indigenous landscape 'becomes an object of representational knowledge…and a site for reproducing colonial relationships of power'.[26] While on this point this essay concurs, I will challenge his assessment that this landscape can then be reduced to a singular depiction of nature, wherein 'indigenous peoples, terrain and culture are homogenised'.[27]

This interpretation has been reiterated by Elizabeth Edwards, who posited that photography propagated these binary cultural tropes of landscape, 'constructed in the popular imagination as a paradise'.[28] However, Edwards contradicts herself in acknowledging that photographs defy any

[24] Hight and Sampson (2002), p. 1.
[25] Joan M. Schwartz, and James R. Ryan, 'Introduction: Photography and the Geographical Imagination', in *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination*, ed. by Joan M. Schwartz and James R. Ryan (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 5.
[26] Hayes (2002), p. 172.
[27] Ibid, p. 177.
[28] Elizabeth Edwards, 'Negotiating Spaces: Some Photographic Incidents in the Western Pacific, 1883-84', in *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination*, ed. by Joan M. Schwartz and James R. Ryan (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 263.

individual understanding and thus counter simplification.[29] Hence, by her own admission, how can conceptions of colonial landscape photography in the Pacific be essentialised into a definitive understanding of a tropical paradise when such a generalisation surely undermines the historian's own analysis; by performing a simplification of colonial representation, historians create knowledge in the same manner to that which they are critiquing. Thus, in order to not fall into producing homogenising stereotypes of colonial representation, it is important to recognise and explore contrasting and divergent narratives of landscape photography.

Patricia Johnston has alternatively claimed, concerning the travel advertising of Hawai'i during the late 19th and early 20th century, that cultural difference was increasingly used as a means of marketing the potential of adventure in the Pacific, rather than offering a standardised and familiar conception of Paradise.[30] Johnston's analysis is largely focused on pictorial depictions of indigenous peoples, particularly those of Hawai'ian women, rather than geography. However, this essay will endeavour to extend this more nuanced portraiture approach, in which the multiple influences of 'iconography and romanticism of high art filtered through the lens of popular culture' are considered,[31] towards a study of landscape photography.

Colonial Photography in Samoa

Scholarship addressing colonial photography in Samoa is relatively narrow, and to this date no works have directly considered landscape photography through extensive visual analysis as this essay will attempt. Alison Devine Nordström's 'Early Photography in Samoa: Marketing Stereotypes of Paradise' (1991) is perhaps the first to address the topic in-depth and has thus been a major point of reference for all subsequent work. Through a study of the output of the three resident photographers in Apia (the same which this essay shall utilise), Nordström has categorised the pictorial representations as 'combining themes of primitive exoticism with an emphasis on the positive influence of western development' that propagated 'romantic myths of the South Seas'.[32] While I do not dispute that this was undoubtedly one of the products of colonial representation, my essay will hazard against such a totalising view of photography in Samoa.

[29] Ibid, pp. 261-2.
[30] Johnston (2002), p. 188.
[31] Ibid, pp. 191-2.
[32] Nordström (1991), pp. 272-278.

This perspective has then been partially dismantled by Anne Maxwell, who through reassessing the work of John Davis, Alfred James Tattersall and Thomas Andrew, has identified in them 'a new system of representation' that went beyond the standard colonial ethnographic stereotype.[33] In particular, Maxwell has noted that Thomas Andrew 'concentrated on capturing the personalities of his sitters' which embodied a cultural exchange between photographer and colonised that was not 'always an exploitative one'.[34] Maxwell's argument primarily centres on Andrew's portraits of indigenous women, such as *Samoan Half-Caste (1886)*, Figure 2, which as she describes departed from the tourist stereotype of 'the native belle'.[35] This essay will not dispute whether such an image can be considered unconventional or progressive, as through directly confronting the viewer with a confident wry smile, the woman markedly disrupts the dominant colonial power relationship; she is photographed on her own terms and is not exoticized through sexualised poses or clothing.

Figure 2. Thomas Andrew, 'Samoan Half Caste', (Views in the Pacific Islands: Museum of New Zealand - Te Papa Tongarewa, 1886), Black and White Photograph, Albumen Silver Print, O.037952.

[33] Anne Maxwell, *Colonial Photography and Exhibitions: Representations of the 'Native' and the Making of European Identities* (London: Leicester University Press, 1999), pp. 165-6.
[34] Ibid, pp. 166-174.
[35] Ibid, p. 170.

The image has been copied by the Samoan-born artist Yuki Kihara, who has used the figure as a reference for creating a series of decolonial photographs that force 'the reconsideration of the history of Samoa' through surveying 'significant sites, points of historical and continued contact between Polynesian and *palagi* (foreigner), and invites the viewer to look with her, rather than at her'.[36] Furthermore, Thomas Andrew's work has been praised by Samoan scholar Sau'ia Louise Mataia-Milo for not simply propagating an image of 'helpless indigenous people', and is viewed as an important visual collection for generating native-led narratives of Samoan history.[37] Thus, it is not appropriate for me as a Western historian to question Maxwell's argument in this regard and dictate the representational narrative of these select images when indigenous discourses uphold such a view.

However, this essay will attempt to expand and nuance her interpretation of a progressive colonial pictorial discipline in Samoa through a study of landscape photography, which she has neglected to engage with significantly. Rather, she has instead characterised all pictures of terrain as conforming to the vision of an exemplary tropical paradise.[38] In this way, my essay will form part of the more recent scholarship on photography in Samoa which has sort to readdress and provide a more varied analysis than that of the work produced in the 1990s. As Max Quanchi has perceived, studio portraits of indigenous Samoan people have been 'repeatedly privileged by academic debate' over any other form of photograph, and thus such limited source analysis perhaps reveals more about 'research parameters…than it does turn-of-the-century Euro-American perceptions of Samoa'.[39] Hence, in order to broaden the study of photography in Samoa, historians must progress past reviewing this narrow collection of seated studies.[40] Furthermore, as Tobias Sperlich notes, historians 'must not aim to isolate single and exclusive interpretations' of images as Nordström and Maxwell can perhaps be accused, but rather 'promote alternative ways of understanding the…meanings of historical photographs in colonial contexts'.[41]

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[36] Mandy Treagus, and Madeleine Seys, 'Looking Back at Samoa: History, Memory, and the Figure of Mourning in Yuki Kihara's w*here Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?*', *Asian Diasporic Visual Cultures and the Americas,* 3 (2017), 87-90.
[37] Sau'ia Louise Mataia-Milo, 'Picturing Sāmoa: Photographs by Thomas Andrew', *The Journal of Pacific History,* 49 (2014), 355-6.
[38] Maxwell (1999), p. 166.
[39] Max Quanchi, 'The Imaging of Samoa in Illustrated Magazines and Serial Encyclopaedias in the Early 20th-Century', *The Journal of Pacific History,* 41 (2006), 216.
[40] Bell (2005), pp. 160-1.
[41] Sperlich (2014), 297.

Methodology:

Due to its reproduction of the physical world by directly translating a material reality through a mechanical rather than human process, photographs are often credited with possessing some form of innate truthfulness in their representations. However, this assumption negates the subjectivity involved in the composition of images and disguises the camera's mediating role in human interactions between 'people and place'.[42] Photographs are thus not simply an act of recording but are artefacts in their own right; both an interpretation of the real and a physical trace of cultural exchange.[43] Images can therefore create meanings distinct and potentially contradictory from those explicitly visible.[44] Thus, in order to effectively analyse landscape photography in Samoa, this essay will attempt to explore the visible compositional elements of a frame, as well as its initial intention and ultimate effect. These cannot be presumed to be one and the same, as the perspective of the photographer can be harnessed and reorganised by its recipient audience to create imagined knowledge that may contradict its author's design. In this way, the photographer's gaze may at times reconcile or diverge from that of the spectator within the same image, as the viewer injects their own personal subjectivity into the frame. Therefore, this essay will endeavour to be sensitive to the multiple ways in which photographs create meaning or have meaning imposed onto them.

While there is a large body of photographic work produced in Samoa by itinerant artists, historians have almost exclusively focused on the material of the three resident photographers John Davis, Alfred James Tattersall and Thomas Andrew. On this point, my dissertation will not be an exception, as in order to engage with and nuance the arguments of the previous literature on Samoa, it is vital that I employ the same source material. However, by exclusively focusing on their photographic portrayal of landscape, I will be diverging from these previous approaches, thus broadening the historical understanding of photography in the region. While the images of these photographers are numerous and extensively distributed, this study will be drawing on three collections that are some of the largest individual compendiums of their work, and more importantly, are digitally and publicly available. These are the Museum of New Zealand: Te Papa Tongarewa collection, the Auckland War Memorial Museum archive, and finally the British Museum. Overall,

[42] Schwartz and Ryan (2003), p.3.
[43] Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (London: Penguin, 2008), p. 154.

[44] Leonard Bell, 'Pictures as History, Settlement as Theatre: John Davis's Photo-Portrait of Robert Louis Stevenson and Family at Vailima, Samoa, 1892', *Journal of New Zealand Literature (JNZL)* (2002), 96.

these records hold 245 individual photographs by the three artists, and out of this collection, I have identified 129 photographs that can be considered as landscapes. Thus, across even this relatively narrow selection of their work, the notion that over half of the source material has currently lacked in-depth study is justification enough for a more comprehensive examination of the photographers' imagery.

In order to explore how landscape photographs created visual narratives of Samoa within the colonial imagination, this essay will explore the gaze of the photographer by scrutinising the composition of images within the context of Western aesthetic traditions, as these would have been the intentional or subconscious influences that inform how a picture is arranged.[45] As there are no surviving records of these photographers' personal journals or diaries,[46] I will endeavour to provide speculative insight into the personal opinions and perspectives of these men by supplementing their imagery with travel accounts and literature from other Western residents in Samoa who can act as cultural stand-ins. While this solution is not ideal and therefore represents a limitation of this study, the lives of Thomas Andrew and Robert Louis Stevenson for instance are not too dissimilar, as they both occupied a physical and social middle ground between indigenous communities and colonial officials.[47] Therefore, travel literature will at least flesh out the historical context in which these photographers operated.

The study of the period 1875-1925 has been selected as this is when the majority of images found within the three collections were produced. Furthermore, it also represents a particularly turbulent period in Samoan colonial history, as it encompasses the establishment of military outposts, the separation of the islands in the 1899 Tripartite Convention, as well as the initiation of the subsequent *Mau* movements in both Western and American Samoa.[48] In this context, photographic depictions of Samoa were crucial in translating the newly acquired territory to audiences in the Imperial metropoles, and thus their efficacy as artefacts of colonial discourse is perhaps at its utmost during this period.

[45] Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence* (Reaktion Books Ltd, 2014), p. 55.
[46] Max Quanchi, 'Photography and History in the Pacific Islands: Visual Histories and Photographic Evidence', *Journal of Pacific History,* 41 (2006), 170-1.
[47] Maxwell (1999), p. 177.
[48] David A. Chappell, 'The Forgotten Mau: Anti-Navy Protest in American Samoa, 1920-1935', *Pacific Historical Review,* 69 (2000), 217-20.

Overall, this methodological approach seeks to broaden the historical enquiry on colonial photography in Samoa by providing the first in-depth study that focuses exclusively on landscapes, which other historians have generally ignored or have characterised as conforming to a singular stereotype; a point which this essay seeks to rebut.

Structure:

This essay will use a three-part chapter structure in order to demonstrate the various ways in which the landscape of Samoa was photographically represented. This will consist of:

Chapter 1 – The Picturesque: This chapter will demonstrate how Samoa was visually constructed as a touristic paradise through the aesthetic tradition of the Picturesque. This will then provide the supposed representational norm that my essay will seek to challenge.

Chapter 2- The Surveyor: This chapter will explore how the Samoan landscape was commodified through photography, which was used to justify its physical and conceptual transformation.

Chapter 3- The Sublime: This chapter will investigate how images of landscape in Samoa could be critical of colonial rule through the visual framework of the Sublime.

Chapter 1 – The Picturesque

In this first chapter, I will examine how photographs of the Samoan landscape propagated the stereotype of the ideal "tropical island", as they have been generally characterised by historians, through highlighting their conformation to the aesthetic tradition of the Picturesque.[49] My approach to these images will engage with Krista A. Thompson and Nicholas Thomas' theory of *Topicalization*, wherein I will not only explore the visual systems used by the photographs to advertise to a tourist market, but further consider the social implications of such a representation on the 'actual physical space [of] the islands and their inhabitants'.[50]

The Picturesque can be defined as an artistic and visual representational mode of landscape that emphasises the emotive response of the (European) viewer to the scene.[51] The focus is uncompromisingly on the aesthetic fidelity of the terrain, and as such, it should be devoid of any suggestions to the contemporary social or political context of the region being documented.[52] Rather, the Picturesque developed as a visual and linguistical technique for exploring the beautiful and "pure" features of the natural world. It, therefore, prioritised scenery that could be described as dramatic, or conversely quaint, and often depicted the intersection of the two. The theories of the Picturesque that matured in the late 17th and 18th centuries propagated a new style of romantic landscape painting that utilised an instrument known as the Claude glass to distort representations of the physical environment. The resulting artworks were then copied by landscape designers to create estate gardens that seemed painting-esque. In the same way, tourist promoters marketed Samoa as conforming to depictions of a Picturesque landscape, or 'more specifically, as "like photographs"'.[53] In the Pacific context more generally, the aesthetic approach was first utilised by the artist William Hodges during James Cook's Second Voyage (1772-1775) in search of *Terra Australis*, wherein it was employed as a method through which the travellers could relate the strange and exotic landscapes they encountered in 'comfortably familiar terms'.[54] As they initially

[49] Krista A. Thompson, and Nicholas Thomas, *An Eye for the Tropics: Tourism, Photography, and Framing the Caribbean Picturesque* (Duke University Press, 2007), p. 6.
[50] Ibid, p. 5.
[51] John McAleer, 'The Sublime Aesthetic and Nineteenth-Century Representations of the Victoria Falls', *Postgraduate Journal of Aesthetics,* 1 (2004), 126.
[52] Gary D. Sampson, 'Unmasking the Colonial Picturesque: Samuel Bourne's Photographs of Barrackpore Park', in *Colonialist Photography: Imag(in)Ing Race and Place*, ed. by Eleanor M. Hight and Gary D. Sampson (Taylor & Francis Group, 2002), p. 90.
[53] Thompson and Thomas (2007), p. 8.
[54] Bernard Smith, 'European Vision and the South Pacific', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes,* 13 (1950), p. 73; McAleer (2004), 126.

lacked the vocabulary to provide topographical or scientific accounts of the terrain they were witnessing, the Picturesque was used to visually communicate their emotional experience of these new territories instead. This style would then be exploited by colonial photographers and tourist companies to promote a view of Samoa, and other Pacific archipelagos, to the European and American publics that stressed the sensory experience of the environment being 'luxuriant, verdant, [and] welcoming'.[55]

Figure 3. William Gilpin, 'Landscape', (Royal Academy of Arts, 1 February 1794), Aquatint, Etching and Colour Washes, 06/1128.

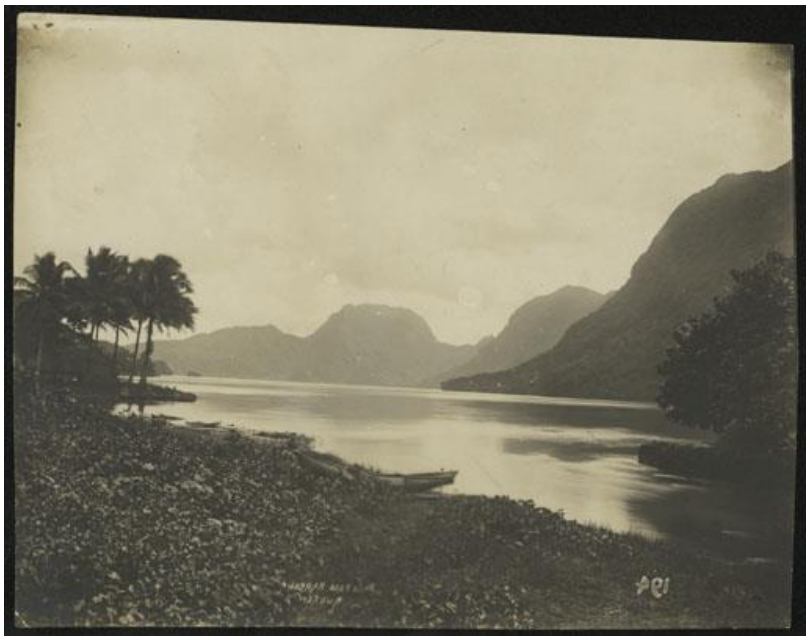

Figure 4. Thomas Andrew, 'Pago Pago Harbour', (Auckland War Memorial Museum – Tamaki Paenga Hira, c. 1890-1910), Black and White Photograph, Gelatin Silver Print, PH-1992-6-92.

[55] Bell (2005), pp. 159-60.

Figures 3 and 4 provide clear evidence for the utilisation of the Picturesque within landscape photography in Samoa. Figure 3 is taken from a collection of six landscapes produced by the Reverend William Glipin (1724-1804). Gilpin was one of the first pioneers of the Picturesque in relation to landscape, which he originally proposed in his An *Essay upon Prints (1768)*.[56] With its meandering valley, stunning cliff formations, rustic wilderness and lofty mountains in the background, Figure 3 represents a quintessential expression of a picturesque composition. Now if we turn our attention to Figure 4, an image by Thomas Andrew of Pago Pago Harbour in Tutuila, the visual similarities are evident. In fact, Thomas' image almost appears to be an exact derivative of Gilpin's painting. I would not go as far as to presume that Thomas was aware of such a comparison, yet the obvious aesthetic resemblances suggest that he was intentionally engaging with the culture of romantic art and the Picturesque more generally. Through this arrangement, Thomas is thus conflating the Samoan environment with a visual tradition that had been commonly used for over a century to depict continental Europe. This, as Terry Smith has argued, constructed Samoa as an imagined environment that was visually relatable to a Western audience, making it more appealing as a touristic destination for the hesitant traveller; the experience could not be marketed as too daring.[57] Furthermore, the visual motif of the Picturesque helped to conceptually link disparate Pacific communities together into a homogenous understanding of the "Tropics".[58]

As we can observe in Figure 5, such imaginary representations of familiarity could then manifest itself literally in the environment. Taken by John Davis in Matautu, Upolu – a village located to the east of the capital Apia – the image documents the British Consulate building. It depicts a relatively standard colonial structure, yet I propose it more significantly reveals a cultivated tropical garden, hemmed in with a charming white picket fence. Such a 'perfectly manicured' scene of nature highlights another method through which exotic fauna was contextualised within a familiar European visual framework.[59] As Frederick Moss reveals in his travel account *Through Atolls and Islands in the Great South Seas (1889)*, 'homelike' features such as 'tame pigeons cooing from the dovecote', the 'little cow grazing quietly on her patch of freshly planted grass', or the well-kept garden in this instance provided pleasant relief for the weary

[56] William Gilpin, *An Essay Upon Prints: Containing Remarks Upon the Principles of Picturesque Beauty* (Cambridge University Press, 2014).
[57] Terry Smith, 'Visual Regimes of Colonization: European and Aboriginal Seeing in Australia', in *Empires of Vision: A Reader*, ed. by Martin Jay and Sumathi Ramaswamy (Duke University Press, 2014), p. 275; Johnston (2002), p. 188.
[58] Smith (2014), p. 268.
[59] Thompson and Thomas (2007), p. 6.

traveller who had ventured through ‘so many monotonous atolls’.[60] While Moss’s remarks could perhaps be atypically dramatic, they still illustrate how picturesque representations of landscape provided would-be-tourists with visual assurances of cultural comforts, hence making Samoa more attractive and conceptually accessible to a Western audience.

Figure 5. John Davis, 'British Consulate, Surrounded by Palm Trees and Picket Fence', (British Museum, Late 19th Century), Black and White Photograph, Albumen Print, Oc, B125.24.

Figure 6, which portrays an idyllic lake scene, similarly conveys a familiar picturesque composition. Despite the serenity and calmness exuded by the still and reflective water, the European-style clinker rowboat is needed to ground the viewer in a culturally relatable setting so they then can insert themselves into the scene and imagine being in Samoa. From this stable conceptual position, the viewer can then pleasurably regard the strange tropical environment. The picturesque approach in colonial landscape photography, therefore, enabled security in perceived alterity. However, as a consequence of basing the image in this acquainted western framework, the scene is sanitised of any cultural threats. The local inhabitants in the foreground fishing are not intended to be individuals you may imagine interacting with, but they are rather pictorial objects that help to essentialise the exotic milieu.[61] As such, Picturesque landscape photographs marketed to tourists contributed to the representative stereotyping of Pacific Islanders as ‘feminised, “primitive”, or

[60] Frederick J. Moss, *Through Atolls and Islands in the Great South Seas* (London: Gilbert and Rivington, Limited, 1889), p. 39.
[61] Michael Boyden, *Climate and the Picturesque in the American Tropics* (Oxford University Press, 2022), pp. 86-7.

anachronistic' and reasserted the privileged position of Euro-Americans in power relationships with people and terrain.[62]

Figure 6. Thomas Andrew, '[Village Scene]', (Museum of New Zealand - Te Papa Tongarewa, c. 1891-1920), Black and White Photograph, Platinum Print, O.005535.

Though accounts such as Moss's provide some insight, we can only speculate as to the personal convictions of the photographers in making these picturesque representations of landscape. Tourism, after all, was their primary industry and demand dictated that their living was made through producing images of this ilk. Yet, this does not automatically imply that they shared the same view of a Samoan "tropical Paradise" as the images that they were creating.[63] Nevertheless, as I have shown in these select figures, picturesque landscape photography sought to make Samoa more conceptually available to a western tourist viewership, as its exoticness was visually translated through a familiar aesthetic tradition. This then further contributed to the commodification of Pacific environments within the colonial imagination as a place to see established "sights" based on the catalogue of circulated picturesque photographs, rather than view the culture within its own terms.[64] As consequence, even if we assume Davis, Tattersall and

[62] Hayes (2002), p. 173.
[63] Dirk H. R. Spennemann, 'A Commercial Animal During Times of Social Upheaval: John Davis in Samoa 1871-1903', in *Shifting Focus: Colonial Australian Photography 1850-1920*, ed. by Anne Maxwell and Josephine Croci (Australian Scholarly Publishing Ltd, 2015), pp. 134-6.
[64] Hayes (2002), p. 173.

Andrew did not support this representational influence, their continued and willing output of such photographic tropes perhaps nuances to what extent we can consider them progressive individuals in regards to their images of indigenous people, as Maxwell has done.[65]

Therefore, this chapter has demonstrated how stereotypes of a paradisical Samoa were certainly propagated by colonial landscape photography. Yet, in contrast to historians who have generalised all pictorial representations of the Samoan terrain into this singular category, the subsequent chapters of this essay will exhibit how such work could potentially contravene from this totalising perspective.

[65] Maxwell (1999), p. 170.

Chapter 2 – The Surveyor

In this second chapter, I will examine the process by which landscape photography in Samoa was utilised to relate the priorities of colonial expansion; that is to say the transferred control of 'indigenous land and its environmental transformation'.[66] Jarrod Hore has studied, in the contexts of Australia and New Zealand, the methods through which colonial photographs created new imaginations of land that justified indigenous subjugation through renderings of productive improvement.[67] This chapter will argue that images of plantations, industry and infrastructural development created narratives of benevolent Imperial influence polarised against imagined underutilisation in supposedly primitive societies, as well as reinforcing 'colonial fantasies of environmental abundance'.[68] These, I will label as coming from the perspective of the Surveyor, as land is not judged in aesthetic, but rather quantitative and material terms.

Samoa cannot be considered a settler colony in the same vein as Australia and New Zealand, as it lacked extensive Euro-American immigration and had only between four and five hundred permanent western residents during the 1890s.[69] Nonetheless, Samoa became a site of environmental transformation through the development of plantations, improved roads, and the establishment of a significant Navy coaling station at Pago Pago.[70] All of which was documented by the incumbent Davis, Tattersall and Andrew. This chapter will argue that landscape photography which depicted such a physical geographical alteration cannot be considered within the stereotypical narrative of a visual "paradise". The selected imagery portrays the ways in which settlers repurposed the Samoan terrain in order that it conformed to the colonial precedent of a transnational economy of extraction and exchange,[71] which is at odds with marketed depictions of an essentialised tropical community. Unlike other Pacific archipelagos, Samoa does not possess extensive areas of flat terrain that are suitable for large-scale cash-crop production due to its volcanic composition. Furthermore, only a fifth of the landmass can be considered usable for arable

[66] Jarrod Hore, *Visions of Nature: How Landscape Photography Shaped Settler Colonialism* (University of California Press, 2022), p. 43.
[67] Ibid, p. 5.
[68] Ibid, p. 6.
[69] Bell (2005), p. 159.
[70] Chappell (2000), 222-38.
[71] Strother E. Roberts, *Colonial Ecology, Atlantic Economy: Transforming Nature in Early New England*, *Early American Studies* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019), p. 4.

purposes.[72] Despite this, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, the terrain of Samoa would be transferred from traditional agricultural practices into Euro-American style plantations, with copra becoming the main export of the islands in the 1870s.[73] Figures 7 and 8 highlight this process, as they depict some of the stages of production. Taken by Alfred Tattersall at some point in 1918, their location is uncertain, although we can presume that they were captured somewhere on Upolu due to this being the primary site of western plantations in the region.[74]

Figure 7. Alfred James Tattersall, 'Copra Plantation', (Museum of New Zealand - Te Papa Tongarewa, c. 1918), Black and White Photograph, Gelatin Silver Print, O.041888.

Figure 7 documents the initial collection of the coconut (*niu*) fruit by indigenous labourers under the supervision of their settler managers. The palm trees' linear distribution scheme draws the unimpeded eye from the foreground through to the infinite white of the background; the viewer

[72] Holger Droessler, 'Changes on the Plantation: An Environmental History of Colonial Samoa', in *Migrant Ecologies: Environmental Histories of the Pacific World*, ed. by James Beattie, Ryan Tucker Jones and Edward Dallam Melillo (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2023), p. 100.
[73] Ibid, pp. 100-1.
[74] Ibid.

cannot see or presume any end to the plantation and thus its imagined scale is limitless. Here, through a colonial lens, the image creates a perception of Samoa in which its productive capabilities are profuse, and consequently, its utility to the project of Empire is evident. Samoa is therefore visually constructed as functioning within, and contributing to, the contemporary colonial system of trade, which juxtaposes the narrative of an imagined primitive Samoa. The structural assemblage of the trees is significant for two main reasons; firstly, through physically bringing collective order to the natural environment, this acts as a visual metaphor for how civilisation has been brought to Pacific communities in general, and in the minds of a colonial audience, this benevolent paternalism was used as justification for Euro-American intervention.[75] Secondly, the rearrangement of copra plants into neat rows was a method by which control could be more easily exercised over indigenous workers and their progress quantitatively measured.[76] Tattersall's image can be interpreted consequently as alluding to the cultural power relationships that intersect through colonialism, wherein plantation production operated within a strict racial hierarchy.[77] The presence of the figures in the centre of the frame highlights this notion, as the bodies of the white settlers literally bound the space of the Samoan labourer, visually trapping them within this enforced agricultural service to Empire. The inclusion of the barbed wire fence stretching across the right-hand side of the frame further illustrates the transferral of control from the indigenous to the colonial, as the introduction of 'clearly defined and permanent' boundaries into the islands' geography disrupted 'Samoan conceptions of space and time'.[78] Thus, through photographing this restructuring of the Samoan landscape, Tattersall is producing an image which contradicts the perceived stereotype of colonial "glimpsing", as well as any notions of an untouched Edenic paradise. Figure 7 demonstrates a permanent transformation of the landscape that, like the image itself, has been constructed from a Western cultural perspective.

The Cruise of "Janet Nichol" Among the South Sea Islands (1914) by Fanny Stevenson also presents this 'less-than-paradisical' view of the Pacific, as her 'European colonial gaze' is framed upon the productive potential of each new island encountered.[79] As these sources are from the

[75] Thompson (2010), pp. 184-5.
[76] Ibid, p. 110.
[77] James A. Delle, *The Colonial Caribbean: Landscapes of Power in Jamaica's Plantation System* (Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 67.
[78] Droessler (2023), pp. 100-5.
[79] Heather Waldroup, 'Picturing Pleasure: Fanny Stevenson and Beatrice Grimshaw in the Pacific Islands', *Women's History Review,* 18 (2009), 12-3.

same period, and are both from a similar western perspective,[80] Stevenson's work can be used to understand the pictorial intentions of the photographer. Rather than emphasising the natural beauty or opportunities for cultural escapism, Stevenson instead grounds her narrative in rigorous topographical depictions and reports of plantation production. For instance, when visiting the Island of Olosega, she remarks that it is 'rich' and 'with plenty of soil'. She also lodges her disapproval of its underutilization by the half-caste 'King Jennings', as it supposedly had the potential to 'bring in a very comfortable revenue' if managed appropriately.[81] James Beattie has noted that such a focus reveals Imperial environmental anxieties concerning the need for 'constant material improvement' that stemmed from rapid industrialisation and was consequently transmitted to the colonies.[82]

Figure 8. Alfred James Tattersall, 'Copra Drying', (Musuem of New Zealand - Te Papa Tongarewa, c. 1918), Black and White Photograph, Gelatin Silver Print, O.041890.

[80] Alfred James Tattersall and Fanny Stevenson knew each other and moved within similar social circles as Tattersall worked in the studio of John Davis from 1886, and they collectively photographed the Stevenson family at Vailima several times. See Bell (2002), 94-7.
[81] Fanny Van de Grift Stevenson, *The Cruise Of "Janet Nichol" Among the South Sea Islands* (The Project Gutenberg, 1914), p. 34.
[82] James Beattie, *Empire and Environmental Anxiety: Health, Science, Art and Conservation in South Asia and Australasia, 1800-1920*, *Palgrave Studies in World Environmental History* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 4-6.

Figure 8 further evidences this perspective, as the desired attention of the image is clearly directed at the copra product which has been laid out to dry. Through positioning the camera close to the subject, and additionally using a top-down perspective, the copra dominates the frame and thus its quantity is exaggerated. The unnamed Samoan worker is marginalised by the produce, which perhaps can be interpreted as a compositional metaphor to reflect the imperial priorities in Samoa; resource extraction takes precedence over indigenous consideration. Figure 8 could potentially be construed as a critique of colonial intervention in the Samoan landscape, yet in the context of Fanny Stevenson's work, Tattersall's emphasis on the scale of the fruits yield instead conforms, I would argue, to the same precedent of glorifying maximum material utilisation. Additionally, as Hore has described, this image further propagates the myth of environmental affluence that was applied onto colonial possessions.[83]

Therefore, in contrast to the argument presented by Anne Maxwell, that landscape photographs, particularly those produced by John Davis and Alfred Tattersall, were used to portray 'Samoa as a touristic paradise',[84] these images have demonstrated that this characterisation is too generalised and misleading. While I do not deny that images of this kind were produced, as I have explored such examples in Chapter 1, I have argued that Figures 7 and 8 betray an alternative ambition. They have shown that landscape photographs could take on the role of the Imperial surveyor, in which terrain is imagined in terms of productive capability rather than its aesthetic quality. While these photographs can be interpreted as either condoning or criticising the colonial transformation of land, though as I have shown I would steer towards the former, their very existence challenges the conjecture that landscape photography in Samoa only produced a homogenous vision of paradise, as they portray a topography that has been reorganised and harnessed by Euro-American settlers.

[83] Hore (2022), p. 6.
[84] Maxwell (1999), p. 166.

Chapter 3 – The Sublime

In this third and final chapter, I will attempt to demonstrate how landscape photography in Samoa could also conform to the philosophical tradition of the Sublime. John McAleer has argued that, in the context of the African continent, the sublime functioned as an important tool for the 'European epistemological appropriation of this potential colonial landscape'.[85] On this notion I will disagree, as in a departure from the lenses of the Picturesque or the Surveyor that I have contended served only an Imperial purpose and market, I instead posit that visual sublimity in landscape photography could be used as a vessel through which to critique colonial intervention in Samoa.

Figure 9. Thomas Cole, 'The Course of Empire: The Savage State', (New York Historical Society, 1834), Oil on Canvas.

The Sublime is an aesthetic philosophical concept that was first separated from comprehensions of natural beauty by Edmund Burke in his *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful (1756)*.[86] Similarly to understandings of the Picturesque, the Sublime focuses on the human response to provocative landscapes yet is differentiated by its emphasis on the extremity of terrain and climate. While I have demonstrated that the Picturesque functioned

[85] McAleer (2004), 124.
[86] Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful; with an Introductory Discourse Concerning Taste* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1844).

through providing viewers with familiar cultural indicators and compositions, the Sublime is instead defined by its capacity to generate overpowering emotions that can be equally awe-inspiring as well as terrifying. In this way, the Sublime is unique in its contradictory synthesis of 'horror and pleasure'.[87] As Hermann Wittenberg has discussed, the growth of Industrial capitalism and the urbanisation of rural terrain during the course of the nineteenth century reduced the possibilities of the Sublime to be evoked in the European landscape.[88] Consequently, romantic artists and writers increasingly exploited the new Colonial frontiers as regions in which to conceptually locate 'a space of sublime antiquity'; imagined areas where grandiose, 'unfettered wilderness' and the frightening displays of natural power collided.[89] (see Figure 9) It has been argued that, in the same way as the Picturesque, Sublime depictions of Colonial landscapes were then used to justify the 'European project of civilisation and progressive development' through containing and appropriating these environments within a 'Western philosophical framework'.[90]

Figure 10. Caspar David Friedrich, 'Das Eismeer (the Sea of Ice)', (Hamburg, Germany: Kunsthalle Hamburg, 1823-1824), Oil on Canvas, Inv.Nr.:HK-1051.

[87] Nina Hinrichs, 'Das Eismeer - Caspar David Friedrich and the North', *Nordlit: Tidsskrift i litteratur og kultur,* 12 (2008), 138.
[88] Hermann Wittenberg, 'The Sublime, Imperialism and the African Landscape' (University of the Western Cape, 2004), p. 5.
[89] Hore (2022), p. 10; Wittenberg (2004), p. 5.
[90] McAleer (2004), 132.

Figure 11. Thomas Andrew, 'Wreck of the German Ship Adler', (Museum of New Zealand - Te Papa Tongarewa, c. 1900), Black and White Gelatin Glass Negative, C.001563.

However, in regards to landscape photography in Samoa, I instead conject that the Sublime was harnessed as a visual language through which to criticise the expansion of Empire. I will evidence this argument through comparing the painting *Das Eismeer (c. 1823-1824)* by the German artist Caspar David Friedrich (Figure 10) and an image of a wrecked ship in Apia harbour by Thomas Andrew (Figure 11).

Das Eismeer depicts a vast Arctic seascape wherein a European ship is being consumed by monolithic packs of ice. The Arctic in the European imagination during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries became defined as 'a region of the sublime and almost inhuman majesty'.[91] In Germany in particular, industrial consumption of local wilderness led to anxieties over the maintenance of the supposedly distinct German character, and thus imaginings of this national identity were projected into origin myths of the Far North.[92] In this context, *Das Eismeer* has been read by Nina Hinrichs as an exploration of the 'limits of mankind'; the human 'confrontation with

[91] Russell A. Potter, and Douglas W. Wamsley, 'The Sublime yet Awful Grandeur: The Arctic Panoramas of Elisha Kent Kane', *Polar Record,* 35 (2009), 203-4.
[92] Brandon Luedtke, 'A Nation on Ice: Germany and the Arctic', *The Polar Journal,* 3 (2013), 348-51.

nature, infinity, and death'.[93] As demonstrated by the painting, human ambition – represented by the wrecked ship – is made compositionally infinitesimal in comparison to the might of sublime nature, provoking existential questions over the purpose of this attempt to conquer a "pure" environment.

Thomas Andrew's image echoes this motif of the broken ship. Taken around ten years after the 1889 Apia cyclone, the context of this image is significant; a warship standoff between the Imperial forces of Great Britain, Germany and the United States, who were all vying for control of Samoa, was disrupted by a devastating tropical storm that left six out of the eight major vessels in the harbour at the time destroyed or severely damaged. In this setting, Figure 11 contravenes any stereotype of a touristic Paradise as the skeletal remains of the ship stands testament to the threatening physical environment of the Pacific. Similar to *Das Eismeer*, this is not hidden or contextualised within a Picturesque framework but rather starkly confronted by the lens; the viewer is encouraged to directly contemplate the sublime power of nature and is not given any comforting repose. Contemporary media responses to the event provide further insight, as they personified the storm as an incensed manifestation of "mother nature" whose 'violence' and 'fury' produced a spectacle that 'the people who saw it will never forget'.[94] The representation of Samoa that is generated by the photograph is evidently a hostile one and its desired effect is cautionary. Therefore, by imaging the wreck of the ship, Andrew is drawing the viewer's attention to the inability of western civilisation to conquer this frontier of essentialised nature. Compositionally, this notion is highlighted by the minute stature of the figures to the right of the hull; they are dwarfed by the wreck and this in turn has been reduced to ruin by the Samoan environment. Or, in the words of Robert Louis Stevenson who was present for the event:

> 'the hugest structure of man's hands within a circuit of a thousand miles – tossed up there [onto the reef] like a schoolboy's cap upon a shelf; broken like an egg: a thing to dream of.'[95]

Through conflating the destruction of a warship with imagery of youthfulness, Stevenson is infantilising the Western colonial powers, and thus reducing their exploitative ambitions in Samoa to futile and boyish arrogance, as 'within the duration of a single day…their disciplined hundreds'

[93] Hinrichs (2008), 137-44.
[94] 'Violent Hurricane at Apia, Samoa', *The Bacchus Marsh Express (Vic.: 1886-1943)* 6 April 1889, p. 4.
[95] Robert Louis Stevenson, *A Footnote to History: Eight Years of Trouble in Samoa* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1895), pp. 253-4.

were diminished 'to a horde of castaways'.[96] In the same manner, the *Adler* in Figure 11 has been 'reduced to junk'.[97]

The personality of Robert Louis Stevenson perhaps provides a useful case study with which to flesh out the intention of Thomas Andrew in Figure 11. As Kirsten Sandrock has noted, Stevenson's pessimism of Colonial expansion was rooted in his unhappy traditional engineering background, wherein from an early age he 'questioned its principles of economic, political and progress'.[98] Andrew seemingly was also more than contented to 'relinquish political and cultural ties' with his New Zealand homeland as he had suffered 'several family and business misfortunes' including the death of first wife and the destruction of his photographic study.[99] In this sense, we can potentially view Andrew and Stevenson as individuals who were attempting to escape Western society and return to a more "primitive" state of being, as it had only brought them tribulation. They both occupied, to borrow a term from Mary Louise Pratt, a social 'contact zone' in Samoa wherein they regularly interacted with other western or mixed-race individuals who had been similarly marginalised by the New Zealand colonial administration.[100] Consequently, this rationalises the intersection of the contradictory themes within sublime landscape photography in Samoa; it could on one hand essentialise the environment and its people whilst also critiquing colonialism on the other. I posit that Andrew and Stevenson both wished to maintain an idyllic conception of the imagined primordial Samoa that they had become invested in, and thus sort to challenge colonial influences that were attempting to transform this environment.

Therefore, as I have demonstrated, landscape photography in Samoa could conform to the aesthetic tradition of the Sublime through emphasising both awe and terror within its composition. This, I have argued, generated images which can be interpreted as being critical of colonial presence in the region, and thus they digress from any generalised assessment of landscape photography in Samoa that has concluded only stereotypes of an advertised Paradise were produced in this period.

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[96] Stevenson (1895), p. 267.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Kirsten Sandrock, 'Melancholia in the South Pacific: The Strange Case of Robert Louis Stevenson's Travel Writing', in *The Literature of Melancholia: Early Modern to Postmodern*, ed. by Martin Middeke and Christina Wald (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 147-59.
[99] Maxwell (1999), p. 178.
[100] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 2009), p. 4; Maxwell (1999), p. 177.

Conclusion

Using the collections of John Davis, Alfred Tattersall and Thomas Andrew, this dissertation has argued that landscape photographs in Samoa, during the period 1875-1925, cannot be representationally reduced to a singular homogenous stereotype of Paradise.

In contrast to this notion, I have demonstrated three distinct photographic practices that were employed by these photographers to depict the Samoan environment; these namely being the Picturesque, the Surveyor, and the Sublime. Through grounding these different colonial lenses in their respective aesthetic or historical contexts, I have demonstrated how the Samoa was depicted in a number of ways that diverge in both interpretation and presumed intent. Landscape photography could contradictorily be employed to serve western tourist markets, which relied upon seemingly prehistorical portrayals of environment and people, whilst also being conversely utilised to display a transformed and "improved" Samoa that appealed to sentiments of Imperial expansion and progress. Furthermore, as I have demonstrated through the use of the Sublime, landscape photography could then even be used as a means of questioning colonial involvement in the region altogether. These identified perspectives have then been reinforced through the use of relevant landscape paintings and contemporary literature. Overall, such analysis produces a view of landscape photography that simply cannot be cornered into a neatly demarcated category. These images were produced by complex individuals for a variety of audiences, and thus must be appreciated as cultural artefacts with multivalent meanings and applications. To deny this notion and succumb to generalisation would in fact repeat the manner in which western knowledge of the "other" and "foreign" was colonially created.

While this study has provided an in-depth analysis of these three photographers work, they are by no means the exclusive producers of all colonial landscapes in Samoa. The invention of the Kodak "Brownie" box camera from 1900 onwards, which utilised roll film, put a portable and affordable picturing device in the hands of thousands of tourists who would then travel the Pacific, producing images of their own.[101] In order to address the broader question of why imag(in)ings of the Samoan landscape still conform today to the notion of an "unspoilt paradise", I suggest that the

[101] Thompson (2010), p. 35.

capturing, dissemination and legacy of amateur photographs deserve a significant study in their own right, as their work represents a huge currently untapped archive.[102]

[102] Quanchi (2006), 170-1.

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