LANDSCAPE AND POSTCOLONIALISM IN BRITISH WEST INDIES TRAVEL NARRATIVES, 1815-1914

A dissertation submitted to Kent State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

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CHAPTER 1  
INTRODUCTION

Tourists have always had a unique relationship with the landscapes of the places they visit. As outsiders, tourists are not dependent on the landscape, nor do they have the types of associations and connections that insiders have with the landscape. Yet tourists have traditionally placed a high value on landscape, and visual landscape scenery has always been an essential component of the tourist experience. The rise in fashion of landscape painting and the emergence of aesthetic movements in eighteenth century Britain brought about new ways of looking at, experiencing, and judging landscapes. These new ideas were influential in the development of British tourism, first at home and then abroad. Tourists increasingly sought foreign, exotic, colonial destinations where they could compare scenes of nature with those depicted in art.

In the period following the end of the Napoleonic Wars in the early nineteenth century, the British West Indies came to be seen as a suitable tourism destination. Visitors to the region at this time had different reasons for travel there, but all had a distinct interest in the landscapes of the islands they visited. In most cases, tourist landscape experiences were primarily based on vision informed by the techniques and ideas of art. Tourists were instructed on how to appreciate landscapes in all regards, from where to view landscapes to how to compose the scene. In particular, these ideas
dictated a physical and conceptual separation of people from nature and placed the viewer in a position of mastery or dominance over the landscape.

During the nineteenth century, travelers and tourists frequently left a record of their journey and their landscape experiences in the form of travel narratives. These books provided readers with entertainment and information. Perhaps most significantly, however, travel narratives represented the landscapes of the places visited. The vivid, detailed landscape descriptions and illustrations created a distinct image of the islands of the Caribbean in the minds of readers. If these readers had the opportunity to travel to the region, they carried these images with them. They sought the prospects and views described in travel narratives, and they had the types of landscape experiences as those who came before them, ultimately creating a cycle of expectation. Therefore, the patterns of tourism and tourism representations established for the British West Indies during the colonial period have been maintained, and they continue to influence the tourism industry in the islands today.

This dissertation is based on archival research of published travel narratives written by British travelers and tourists during the period 1815 and 1914 that apply to the rural landscapes of the British West Indies. The purpose of this research is to understand the historical relationships between colonial tourists and the landscapes of the British West Indies through travel narrative representations of tourism landscape experiences, to examine the evolution of these patterns over the time period under consideration, and to discuss the implications of these early relationships and patterns on the modern era of tourism in the region. In support of this purpose, I will:
employ a perspective that draws upon concepts from both landscape and postcolonial studies,

- thoroughly analyze the rural landscape descriptions present in travel narratives produced between 1815 and 1914 through a process of coding,
- examine the use of binaries in travel narrative landscape descriptions that make up the layers of the culture/nature binary, a form of the fundamental colonizer/colonized binary,
- explore the implications of this binary in the patterns of tourist interactions with and representations of the landscapes of the British West Indies, and
- highlight the circulation of representations that has allowed the patterns of the past to continue to influence the present.

In this chapter, I will establish the framework of this project through an introduction of the conceptual approach used, the time period chosen, and the data sources selected. In addition, I will provide an overview of each of the subsequent chapters.

The Conceptual Approach: Landscape and Postcolonialism

This research draws upon concepts from both landscape and postcolonial studies. These two approaches are compatible in regard to the type of data used (travel narratives), the temporal standpoint (palimpsests in which the past informs the present), and the subject (representations of culture/nature issues). Furthermore, each approach contributed a crucial perspective to the project. Concepts from landscape studies provided the aesthetic framework within which nineteenth century British travelers and tourists viewed and represented the natural environments of the West Indies. Concepts from postcolonial studies provided the analytical framework for investigating the
contrasts and contradictions that existed in the ways the travelers and tourists viewed and represented the landscapes.

The landscape concept has a long and varied history. The tradition of landscape used in this study has its origins in the sixteenth century. At this time, landscape became associated with the artistic and literary representation of the visible world (Cosgrove 1998). In particular, I drew upon Riley’s (1997) three relationships between vision, landscape, and landscape experience. First, the visible involves vision as a source of mental and sensory information about the landscape. Second, the visual involves vision as a source of pleasure derived from the landscape based on the ordering of landscape features. Third, the vicarious involves vision as the raw material that creates internally experienced landscapes with the ability to shape experiences with external landscapes. These different relationships are affected by a variety of factors including different perspectives, personal preferences, and cultural conventions.

Landscape studies provided an appropriate framework for investigating the relationships between travelers and the landscapes of the places visited through vision. It provided a clear focus on the rural landscape descriptions that were found in travel narratives. Finally, landscape studies offered the means of interpreting these descriptions with respect to the influential concepts and conventions that were associated with landscape painting and appreciation during the time period under study.

Postcolonialism arose more recently but is no less complex than landscape. Postcolonial studies are a diverse and interdisciplinary set of approaches concerned with the culturally constructed nature of representations of the colonial world. Culture was
transmitted through imperial expansion and acted as a lens through which other places were experienced, represented, and transferred back to the West (King 2003). In particular, through colonial representations, the West viewed the world in terms of binary oppositions (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2000; Clayton 2003; King 2003). Binaries create extreme difference between categories, in which one category is always dominant over the other. For colonialism, the fundamental binary was that of colonizer over colonized, and this could be rearticulated in any number of ways. Finally, postcolonial studies are often interested in revisiting, interrogating, and making theoretical sense out of the colonial past, as well as the ways in which the colonial past is embedded in the present (Gandhi 1998).

Because postcolonial studies provide an appropriate framework for understanding colonial representations, this is a key approach in many studies of travel narratives such as this one. Concepts from postcolonialism contributed to understanding the ways in which travelers viewed the landscape, and it was instrumental in investigating relationships between travelers and landscapes by examining the layers of binaries that shaped these relationships and were shaped by them.

Although the connections between landscape and postcolonialism have only begun to be explored, the two perspectives are compatible. Both perspectives have been employed in the investigations of cultural representations of literature, and both recognize the importance and influences of past processes on those of the present. In addition, both have also been recognized in recent years as potential approaches to culture-nature issues.
Both perspectives were employed in this project in a blended conceptual approach that drew upon the strengths of each.

The Historical Perspective: 1815-1914

Over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the European powers fought to secure a position for themselves in the Caribbean (Map 1). During the many colonial wars, alliances between countries were made and broken, and many of the islands in the region changed hands several times. In addition to the violence of war, the Caribbean was subject to the threat of pirates, both the government-sponsored privateers and especially the ruthless, unsanctioned buccaneers (Watts 1987). By the early nineteenth century, however, the buccaneering threat had largely been subdued and the wars over the Caribbean concluded with the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815. Territorial ownership of the islands was finally, formally established, and Britain emerged as the dominant naval power in the region (Hart 1998).

A new era began over the course of the next century. Many important changes were taking place in the Caribbean. Perhaps the most important was the end of the slave trade and the eventual end of the institution of slavery. In the British islands, the transition from slavery to apprenticeship began in 1834, followed by full emancipation in 1838 (Burns 1954; Richardson 1992; Hart 1998). This change was important because it also brought about the end of the dominance of sugarcane in the British West Indies as well as the end of the political and economic importance of the islands. On most islands, planters and farmers sought new agricultural products to diversify exports. In many
Map 1: The Caribbean region
(Watts 1987, 2)

cases, large-scale plantations were gradually replaced by smallholder peasant agriculture or simply abandoned and allowed to revert back to wilderness.

Throughout this period, the islands of the British West Indies were perceived to be increasingly stable. This, combined with improving means of cross-Atlantic transportation, yielded greater opportunities for visitation. Among the Caribbean’s British colonial islands, Antigua, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Nevis, Montserrat, St. Kitts, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Tobago, and Trinidad provided a suitable outlet for foreign tourism (Map 2). These islands were easier to reach from the British Isles than comparable islands in the South Pacific, and the absence of a significant hostile native population made this part of the tropics more appealing than parts of Africa or Asia. The natural environment of the islands provided enough of a contrast to that of the
Map 2: The islands of the British West Indies visited by travel writers

(from Watts 1987, 2)
British Isles to sufficiently fuel the British imagination, and the extent of cultivation on some of the islands provided a civilizing factor.

Travelers came to the region for a variety of reasons. They had official capacities in the colonies, business ventures, scientific interests, or family and friends. Some wished to experience these tropical island environments, while others took a greater interest in the colonial legacies, conditions, and changes that were taking place in the islands. Over the course of these ninety-nine years, until temporarily disrupted by World War I, travelers increasingly undertook this type of trip for health, pleasure, and scenery. The tourism industry was just beginning, and over time, it would eventually come to replace agriculture as the principal source of income for the islands of the Caribbean.

Travelers and tourists alike frequently left behind a record of their journey in the form of travel narratives. During this time period, travel narratives were a popular form of literature (Korte 2000). Travel narratives provided information about distant places, presented individual tourism experiences, and created distinct ideas and images of tourism destinations in the minds of their readers. Furthermore, they were influential in shaping what tourists did, saw, and expected at a particular place. Tourists often explicitly sought scenes that had been described by earlier travelers, and they tested their literature-based preconceptions with reality. Some found that the actual tourism experience did not live up to expectations, but more often, the experience met or exceeded their expectations. These travelers reaffirmed ideas of the destination in their own narratives, contributing to a cycle of expectation.
The Data: British West Indies Travel Narratives

Travel narratives were the principal source of primary data used in this study. I selected twenty travel narratives published by British authors during the time period established above. Many travel writing studies employ only a few sources, typically one to four (see, for example, McEwan 1996; Guelke and Morin 2001; Naylor 2001; Khan 2003); however, I sought a broader perspective. Because I wanted to examine the types of representations that were being circulated about the region throughout the time period, I selected published travel narratives. Furthermore, I selected a diversity of published travel narratives that might be read by different target audiences. Various types of travelers and tourists produced narratives of their journeys at this time. These travel writers could not be easily separated into discrete categories. Many fell into a number of categories including traveler or tourist, male or female, governmental or nongovernmental, previous or first time authors, first time or return visitors, and those who traveled specifically to the Caribbean or those who toured the region as part of a larger trip. Each of these categories, as well as the tensions between categories, had the potential to influence the ways in which the individuals viewed and represented the landscapes in their travel narratives.

These travel writers discussed a wide variety of topics depending on their particular interests and purposes, but the one aspect that each travel narrative had in common was a focus on the rural landscapes of the islands visited. Beyond the port, towns were few and poorly developed in the British West Indies. The rural landscape dominated these islands, whether in terms of the important agricultural estates or the
undeveloped interior with its dramatic appearance. Travelers’ expectations of the islands often centered on the rural landscape, and travel writers’ emphasis on this aspect of landscape perpetuated this cycle of expectation. The character of the rural landscape was the first thing travelers noticed on approach to the islands from the sea, and in many cases, when the island was described from the view aboard ship but not visited by the travel writer, it was the only thing they noticed. Even those with a less marked interest in nature recognized the significance of the rural landscape by including it in their narratives, although they often used extensive quotations from previous authors.

**Overview**

The following chapters are laid out to support the purpose of this dissertation. Chapter 2 provides a conceptual overview of landscape, postcolonialism, and the blending of the two approaches. I will provide a background for each concept and their respective approaches to the type of data used, the temporal perspective, and the focus on representations. I will bring the two areas together in a discussion of vision, aesthetics, and binarisms, which will be crucial to data interpretation.

Chapter 3 provides the historical context for the project. I will provide an overview of European, and specifically British, colonial development in the Caribbean region. This will establish the background of the Caribbean context prior to and during the period under study. In particular, I will emphasize the types of rural activities and changes in rural landscapes. These activities were fundamental in Caribbean life at the time, and the landscapes were key features of interest to colonial travelers and tourists.
In addition, I will look at the development of travel, tourism, and travel writing in the nineteenth century.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of the type of data used and the methodological approach to this data. I will discuss the use of travel narratives as a source of data, and I will present the selected travel narratives. I will examine the characteristics of the travel writers and develop tentative categories of travelers. I will also present the regional geographies and travel guides that provided supplementary primary data sources. In addition, I will discuss the coding methodology that was used in the analysis of travel narrative landscape descriptions that provided the foundation for interpretation.

Chapter 5 provides a detailed analysis of the travel narrative landscape descriptions broken down by the coding process. Through this process, I determined that these complex verbal pictures were made up of four broad components including features of the landscape, qualification of the landscape features, comparisons to other landscapes or landscape ideals, and reactions to the landscape. Each of these components are further broken down into relevant categories and sub-categories and illustrated by individual codes taken from the narratives. These components and categories are discussed in relation to the concepts of vision and landscape established in Chapter 2.

Chapter 6 provides an interpretation of the binary categories that emerged in the analysis process. This discussion applies the perspectives of landscape and postcolonial studies to understand the complicated nature of binaries as well as the layering of these binaries that make up the culture/nature binary system. Furthermore, I argue that this culture/nature binary should be understood as a form of the colonizer/colonized binary
system, in which the idea of human dominance over the environment is used as the justification for exploitation. In addition, I examine the relationships between tourists and landscapes through landscape experiences and the representations of those experiences. Finally, I discuss the implications of the patterns of tourism and landscape that were established in the early era of Caribbean tourism but maintained well beyond.

Finally, Chapter 7 provides a conclusion to this project. This will highlight the key points of the research as well as the significance of the project. In addition, I will also explore areas of future research.
CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW: LANDSCAPE AND POSTCOLONIALISM

Although interdisciplinary in nature, scholars have argued that landscape and postcolonialism are both inherently geographical (Sluyter 2002; McEwan 2003). The landscape concept has a long tradition as an area of geographical research. This concept has evolved over time to address various natural and cultural concerns. The area of postcolonial studies has entered geographical research much more recently. The focus of such studies has principally concentrated on human populations, but geographers have also encouraged the expansion of postcolonial studies to include the non-human world as well (Willems-Braun 1997; Gregory 2001; Robinson 2003; King 2003). As a result, both landscape and postcolonial studies have the potential to contribute to human-environment interactions and culture-nature issues, the key areas of geography that are crucial to this study.

Authors such as Sluyter (1999, 2002), Seymour (2000), and Cosgrove (2003) have further reflected on the potential for the landscape concept and postcolonial studies to inform each other in geographic research. By combining these two approaches, Sluyter (1999, 2002), for example, examines colonial landscape transformations and works toward a theory for the relationship between colonialism and landscape. A conceptual blend between landscape and postcolonialism was also considered particularly
relevant for this project. Specifically, landscape and postcolonial studies provide compatible approaches to this study in regards to the type of data used (travel narratives), the temporal standpoint (palimpsests in which the past informs the present), and the subject (representations of human-environment interactions and culture-nature issues). Furthermore, each approach contributed a crucial perspective to the project. Landscape studies provided the aesthetic framework within which nineteenth century British travelers and tourists viewed and represented the natural environments of the West Indies. Postcolonial studies provided the analytical framework for investigating the contrasts and contradictions that existed in the ways the travelers and tourists viewed and represented the landscapes.

In this chapter, I will provide a brief overview of the landscape and postcolonial approaches. I will then utilize ideas from both approaches to develop the conceptual foundation that will be used to investigate tourist representations of landscape. First, vision is the key. The visual techniques of landscape art were manipulated to further colonial purposes, such as appropriation. Second, it is important to understand the types of aesthetic and ideal representations that were influential in shaping conceptions of the natural world during the colonial period under study. Finally, these representations based on vision and aesthetics formed the binary systems of colonialism, including science/art, self/other, and culture/nature.
The concept of landscape has a complex history that has resulted in varied meanings and usages for the term (Rowntree 1996; Cosgrove 1998, 2003; Johnston et al. 2000). Landscape has been employed to refer to a range of ideas, including the appearance of an area, the features that make up that appearance, the area itself, and even representations of that area (Johnston et al. 2000; Whyte 2002; Cosgrove 2003). In general, approaches to landscape have fallen into two broad categories that address landscape as a physical entity or address the symbolic qualities of landscape (Seymour 2000). Many differences in definition or approach may be traced back to different traditional uses of the term. One meaning has its roots in medieval times when landscape was used to indicate the land controlled by a lord or inhabited by a group of people. Another is traced back to the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries when Dutch landscape painting gained prominence. At this time, landscape referred to the appearance of an area and the representation of scenery. Finally, the modern common usage of the term is attributed to the late nineteenth century. Landscape generally came to mean an area and its features that can be viewed in its entirety, particularly for its pictorial aspects (Rowntree 1996; Cosgrove 1998, 2003; Johnston et al. 2000; Whyte 2002).

Landscape first entered geography by means of the approach that addresses landscape as a physical entity. Figures like Carl Sauer in the American tradition and H.C. Darby and W.G. Hoskins in the English tradition were influential in this approach (Seymour 2000). Sauer introduced the term landscape into American geography in 1925 as a means of describing the interrelations between humans and the environment. He was
particularly concerned with tracing the human impact on the environment, leading to the transformation from a natural landscape into a cultural one. Under this approach, landscape was seen as an objective area that could be studied scientifically through observation (Rowntree 1996; Johnston et al. 2000; Whyte 2002; Baker 2003). While cultural geographers have critiqued this approach, it has continued to influence understandings of nature and landscape in the area of environmental history. From this perspective, nature is seen as an historical actor, and landscape is seen as the result of the interactions that take place between nature and culture. For this type of examination, however, little attention is given to the differences within cultural categories (Demeritt 1994).

By the 1980s, the critique of this approach began to take landscape interpretation into the second area addressing the symbolic qualities of landscape. Individuals like James Duncan, Stephen Daniels, and Denis Cosgrove were central in applying metaphors of text, iconography, and theater to landscape. These types of metaphors are concerned with the cultural character of landscapes through their social construction, representation, and interpretation (Demeritt 1994). Landscape metaphors have emphasized theorizing about and demonstrating the importance of landscape in various social, cultural, or political systems (Johnston et al. 2000). For example, Cosgrove redefined landscape as a “way of seeing” rather than as an image or an object. In this perspective, landscape indicates “a way in which some Europeans have represented to themselves and to others the world about them and their relationship with it, and through which they have commented on social relations” (Cosgrove 1998, 1). Because of the focus on humans and
culture, these approaches tend to ignore the agency of nature in landscape (Demeritt 1994).

For some, the lack of a precise definition or approach to landscape is considered a liability that prohibits rigorous analysis. For others, flexibility provides the opportunity to explore landscape as the interface between humans and their environments (Rowntree 1996). As such, Whyte (2002, 7) finds landscapes to be important “because they are the product of one of the most enduring sets of linkages: the relationships between the physical environment and human society.” These relationships are complex; they may be investigated in different ways and through different approaches. For instance, although the landscape concept has been seen as central to geography, it has also been investigated in fields such as art history, archeology, and anthropology (Rowntree 1996; Seymour 2000). In addition, geographers have sought to investigate the various meanings of landscapes through different forms and have recently focused on representations such as art and literature (Crang 1998; Johnston et al. 2000; Whyte 2002). “To accept the ambiguity and severally-layered meanings of landscape does not excuse us from careful examination of them and of their origins. Rather it obliges us to pay rather greater attention to them than we have done in the past” (Cosgrove 1998, 15).

The relationship between landscape and time is particularly important in the examination of meanings or values. Landscapes are the product of changes over time, materially and conceptually; they are never fixed or static. As a result, landscapes are multi-layered with past events and meanings stored as a form of memory, like palimpsests (Whyte 2002). The term palimpsest originates from a form of writing blocks
or parchment on which inscriptions were written after earlier ones had been erased.

Traces of previous inscriptions remain and are never fully eliminated, so the palimpsest represents the sum of all the inscriptions erased and overwritten (Crang 1998; Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2000). Landscapes are equally inscribed, and as Schama (1995) notes, those inscriptions are surprisingly powerful. He writes, “To see the ghostly outline of an old landscape beneath the superficial covering of the contemporary is to be made vividly aware of the endurance of core myths” (Schama 1995, 16).

Attitudes and perceptions change over time, but they do so as a result of historical processes. Landscape ideas at any given time have been shaped by those that came before and developed over a long period (Whyte 2002). It is therefore productive to investigate the structures, meanings, and perceptions of landscape in the past as a means of better understanding those of the present. Furthermore, a knowledge of these historical precedents will allow us to better situate landscape studies within practical, relevant current issues (Schama 1995; Cosgrove 1998). For example, past landscape perceptions inform those of the present that in turn affect interactions with the landscape (Schama 1995; Cosgrove 1998; Whyte 2002).

**Postcolonialism**

Although the idea of postcolonialism developed much more recently than landscape, it is no less complicated. Postcolonialism also has different meanings and usages (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2000; Gregory 2001). As a critical approach, postcolonial studies are generally concerned with the impact of colonialism on the
cultures of both the colonizing and colonized peoples in the past. It is further concerned with the ways in which colonial relations, representations, and practices have been reproduced in the present (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2000; Johnston et al. 2000).

Specifically, there is little or no consensus about the appropriate content, aims or scope of postcolonial studies (Gandhi 1998; Sidaway 2000; Clayton 2003). Although postcolonial studies has its origins in literary and cultural studies (Loomba 1998; Johnston et al. 2000; King 2003), it has become a meeting point for constructive engagements, as well as an intellectual battleground of sharp disagreement, between different disciplinary perspectives. Like landscape, this ambiguity may be thought of as both an asset and a liability. On one hand, it has promoted a complex interdisciplinary dialogue not only between scholars in literary and cultural studies but also now in anthropology, history, sociology, and human geography. On the other hand, it brings together competing ideals that prohibit consistency (Gandhi 1998; Loomba 1998; Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2000; Clayton 2003).

Questions of power and the relationship of power to knowledge and culture are central to the idea of postcolonialism. In particular, this is concerned with issues of representation. Postcolonial studies attempt to reveal the ways in which colonial power is diffused, knowledge formed, or culture reproduced through these representations (Sidaway 2000; Gregory 2001, 2004; Clayton 2003; King 2003; McEwan 2003). As such, postcolonialism highlights the situatedness of knowledge (McEwan 2003) and the culturally constructed nature of representations of the colonial world. Culture was transmitted through imperial expansion. It acted as a lens through which other peoples
and places were known, and it privileged certain aspects of these people and places in representations, aspects such as language, religion, or aesthetics. The knowledge that was created in representations was then transferred back to the West in various forms (King 2003). Postcolonial approaches recognize that these other places known through representations are internal, rather than ‘out there’ (McEwan 2003). Such representations—maps, illustrations, narratives or otherwise—reflect the culture that created them rather than the culture, or even the nature, they are trying to represent. It is important in postcolonial studies to investigate the multiple meanings and identities of these representations as well as the material forms they represent (King 2003).

One aspect of this investigation has focused on the asymmetrical or dichotomous nature of colonialism. Through colonial representations, the West viewed the world in terms of binary oppositions (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2000; Clayton 2003; King 2003). Binaries are the most extreme form of difference possible. Binary systems were an important part of imperial ideology because they created extreme difference between categories in which one category was dominant over the other. The fundamental binary of this ideology was that of colonizer/colonized, and it could be rearticulated in any number of ways. The polar structure of such binaries is simple and effective; however, binary systems are more complex than they initially appear. It must be recognized that the categories depend on each other because they are defined by their opposition and that there is much ambiguity between categories (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2000). Postcolonial studies have sought to expose the colonizer/colonized binary in its various forms, as well as its influence in representations. Furthermore, such studies have sought
to break down binary separation and replace such stark representational systems with plural systems that better reflect a complexity of meanings (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2000; Johnston et al. 2000).

Edward Said’s work on Orientalism was considered influential in the development of postcolonial studies. His idea of imaginative geographies was concerned with the invention and construction of geographical spaces that were characterized by a series of binary oppositions (Johnston et al. 2000; Clayton 2003). This work drew upon ideas of discourse and particularly colonial discourse. Where discourse is a system of statements within which the world can be known, colonial discourse is the system of practices that organize colonial relationships. Discourse involves power and knowledge because those who have power can control what is known and the way it is known (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2000). A critical reading of colonial discourse can be used to examine the ways in which power works through language, literature, culture, and other institutions important in daily life (Johnston et al. 2000). In Orientalism, discourse is a sign of the power exerted by the West over the Orient. It is a way of knowing and also a way of maintaining power over the Orient (Said 1978).

As with landscape, time is an important component of postcolonial studies; however, the temporal perspective has also been a complicating factor for postcolonialism. The term postcolonialism is often used to imply the period following the end of colonialism. It is important to note, though, that colonialism and postcolonialism are neither singular nor fixed, and there is no distinct chronological separation between the two (Willems-Braun 1997; Loomba 1998). As a result,
postcoloniality is used less to signify the period after colonialism than the condition that begins with the onset of colonialism (Gandhi 1998; Gregory 2001). When understood in terms of a palimpsest, the meanings, ideas, and institutions of colonialism have been inscribed on a culture or on a landscape. Their traces will continue to be there and to cast a shadow over the present (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2000; Johnston et al. 2000). According to Gregory (2001, 85), “one of the central tasks of postcolonialism is to recover the impress of colonialism: to retrieve its shapes, like the chalk outline at a crime scene…”

Postcolonial studies generally focus on the time period between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries (Johnston et al. 2000) and often concentrate on the nineteenth century. As such, postcolonial studies have had the greatest influence in the area of historical geography (Clayton 2003; McEwan 2003; Robinson 2003). Nonetheless, postcolonial studies recognize the implications of the connections between the colonial past and the present (Young 2001). According to Said (1993), the past can not be quarantined from the present. Because one informs the other, “Neither past nor present…has complete meaning alone” (Said 1993, 4). The traces, impress, or aftermaths of colonialism are persistent, even in the period in which colonialism is supposedly overthrown and the formerly colonized population has the freedom of self-representation (Gikandi 1996; Clayton 2003). The colonial past is so deeply embedded that it influences the organization, development, and power structures of the present. It continues to do so, often quietly and unquestioned (Willems-Braun 1997; Young 2001; McEwan 2003; Robinson 2003; Gregory 2004).
Postcolonial studies revisit, interrogate, and make theoretical sense out of the colonial past (Gandhi 1998; McEwan 2003; Gregory 2004). It critically challenges the ideas and assumptions that are taken for granted (Gregory 2001; Sluyter 2002; McEwan 2003). Taken even a step farther, postcolonial studies encourages the transcendence or transformation of the present away from the legacies of the past (Sidaway 2000; Young 2001; Gregory 2004).

A number of concerns have emerged from the debates surrounding postcolonial studies. First, colonialism is not the only inscription on post-colonial societies. Thus postcolonialism is criticized for placing an emphasis on European perspectives. This has been seen as reorienting the world around the binaries that postcolonialism is intended to overcome, specifically the colonizer/colonized (Johnston et al. 2000; King 2003). On the other hand, post-colonial societies may be considered to have a self-willed historical amnesia, which allows the institutions of the past to continue unquestioned in the present (Gandhi 1998; Clayton 2003). Second, there have also been many different colonialisms (Loomba 1998; King 2003; Gregory 2004). In this regard, postcolonialism is criticized for its implication that the various ‘post-colonial’ places in the world have had the same experiences. Therefore, postcolonial studies need to concentrate on understanding the particular circumstances of colonialism in a place or the differences between places rather than generalizing or universalizing (Loomba 1998; Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2000; Clayton 2003; King 2003; McEwan 2003; Robinson 2003).

Third, colonialism has operated through various cultural, economic, and political institutions. Postcolonial studies are criticized for its focus on cultural concerns at the
expense of the others (Loomba 1998). Consequently, postcolonial studies should be situated within larger colonial contexts. Finally, postcolonial studies are criticized for its historical and theoretical perspectives. It is considered to be too far removed from the material reality of colonialism and the post-colonial condition (Clayton 2003; King 2003; McEwan 2003). Nevertheless, an understanding of the historical precedents is necessary to fully understand the conditions of the present.

**Landscape and Postcolonialism**

As indicated above, landscape and postcolonialism possess a number of similarities that make them compatible approaches. The role of vision plays a particularly important role in this study, and concepts from both landscape and postcolonial studies are used together to address the ways in which travel writers viewed, related to, and represented the natural environments of the islands they visited. This section draws upon both landscape and postcolonial studies to develop a framework which is based on the visual tradition of looking at landscape. Visual techniques and aesthetic concepts became the foundation of the perspectives and representations that reinforced binary relationships and justified colonialism.

**Vision**

The various approaches to landscape have typically privileged a visual means of interpreting landscape, but investigations of symbolic qualities have been particularly concerned with landscape representation. This approach draws upon an idea of landscape
that has its origins in the sixteenth century. At this time, landscape became associated with the artistic and literary representation of the visible world (Cosgrove 1998). For art in particular, the techniques of perspective drawing were employed to give form to natural qualities, values, or ideals. In effect, artists created an image of natural scenery by depicting specific features of the natural world in ways that symbolized classical values of idealized environments (Olwig 1996). Paintings brought about a new way of looking at places, a new way of experiencing them, and a new way of judging them (Baker 2003). Landscape, therefore, became associated with the art of depicting natural scenery and ultimately with nature itself (Olwig 1996).

Landscape became an object for a spectator, intended for contemplation and aesthetic response. The term aesthetic implies the sense of impression as well as the sense of pleasure and beauty (Cosgrove 2003). From the aesthetic response, the development of a landscape sensibility emerged based on the visual experience that promoted a means of engaging with and expressing feelings toward the natural world (Olwig 1996; Cosgrove 1998). As individuals increasingly sought these experiences, landscape, as the visible world, was also increasingly represented graphically in art and maps as well as verbally in texts (Baker 2003).

From this tradition, the visual has long been intertwined with the concept of landscape (Whyte 2002). One of the key reasons the visual remains important in examining interactions with landscape is that vision is typically one of the main sources of information about the environment (Riley 1997). In addition, the visual, tied to the aesthetic, has often been privileged over other ways of understanding the environment
(Duncan 1999). Nonetheless, the relationship between vision and landscape is complex (Riley 1997). First, there are different ways of seeing the world. According to Cosgrove (2003, 253),

In English, viewing implies a more sustained and disinterested use of the sense of sight; while witnessing suggests that the experience of seeing is being recorded with the intention of its verification or subsequent communication. Gazing entails a sustained act of seeing in which emotion is stirred in some way, while staring holds a similar meaning but conveys a sense of query or judgment on the part of the starer.

Second, the material world must be translated into a recognizable visual code that is necessarily selective based on both physical and perceptual factors. Thus, while the visual often dominates landscape experiences, it is never entirely disconnected from other senses, emotions, or the imagination, which also have the ability to transform the raw material of experience into something new (Riley 1997; Cosgrove 2003; Driver 2004b; Lambert 2005).

To illustrate this idea, Riley (1997) identifies three relationships between vision, landscape, and landscape experience. The first relationship, which he terms the visible, involves vision as a source of mental and sensory information about the landscape. The second relationship, the visual, involves vision as a source of pleasure derived from the landscape. The visual goes beyond perception and cognition into the realm of evaluation and meaning. Visual satisfaction based on the sight and the ordering of various features such as texture, form, pattern, color, contrast, or meaning, according to Riley, comprises a significant part of the landscape experience. The final relationship, the vicarious, involves vision as the raw material from which internally experienced landscapes are
created. These vicarious landscapes have the ability to shape the experience of, pleasure in, or preference for external landscapes.

The relationships between vision, landscape, and landscape experience that make up the visible, the visual, and the vicarious are shaped by various intentions and associations, including previous experiences, memories, and images seen in the past. As such, “The artistic use of landscape stresses a personal, private, and essentially visual experience” (Cosgrove 1998, 14). Landscapes are subject to a range of different interpretations based on the individual and the context, so that the same landscape can be interpreted in any number of different ways (Seymour 2000). One of the most evident distinctions of individuals’ visual experiences is between residents and visitors, or insiders and outsiders. The insider’s experience with the landscape is based on the many associations, interactions, and meanings of daily life, whereas the outsider’s experience with the landscape is almost entirely visual, primarily based on preconceptions and first impressions, and detached from deeper meanings (Riley 1997; Whyte 2002; Cosgrove 2003).

In addition, vision is culturally conditioned. The visible, the visual, and the vicarious are shaped by cultural conventions about what is seen, what meanings or values are attached to particular landscapes, and what reaction is appropriate given the landscape’s formal or compositional properties (Whyte 2002; Cosgrove 2003). These types of cultural conventions have the ability to organize and shape the way in which the visual experience of landscape takes place. For example, as a result of the eighteenth and nineteenth century artistic movements,
An appreciation of scenic beauty in reality, as well as in art, was an important social accomplishment, rather like the ability to sing well or compose a polite letter. It required knowledge of the artistic and literary allusions, as well as an educated eye to frame the view from the correct vantage point or prospect, dividing up foreground, middle ground, far distance and sidescreens (Aitchison, MacLeod, and Shaw 2000, 36).

These conventions were not innocent; therefore, they have attracted attention in postcolonial studies. Seymour (2000) notes that landscape representations have often been tied to relationships of power between people. According to Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2000), surveillance or observation was one of the most powerful strategies of imperial dominance because of the position and process it entailed. The viewer typically used a vantage point or prospect that was elevated and at a distance to observe the landscape. This created or perpetuated the relationship of dominance of the viewer over the viewed (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2000; Cosgrove 2003).

In particular, the imperial gaze encouraged viewers to enframe and appropriate the landscape. According to Gregory (2001), enframing indicates both setting the world up and treating the world as a picture. This gives the viewer the power to hold the world, the natural environment, and landscapes at a distance, position them as an object, and define their identity. In addition, appropriation gives the viewer the power to incorporate the landscape surveyed as his or her own (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2000). This appropriation can be literal or figurative, where one place is translated into the cultural framework of another. The meanings and identities that a place holds for its inhabitants are replaced by those of outsiders, such as travelers (Duncan and Gregory 1999). These strategies of power allowed viewers to relate to the landscape in both possessive and prospective ways (Sluyter 2002).
For enframing, land ownership was not a requirement in the process of possession taking (Gillespie 2002). The techniques of art and the experience of colonial travel placed the viewer in an invulnerable position of mastery over the landscape. The “monarch-of-all-I-survey” theme that emerged in the writings of nineteenth century travelers clearly illustrated this position of mastery and the imperial gaze (Pratt 1992; Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2000; Gregory 2001; Sheller 2003). The vantage point places the viewer in a removed position from which he or she has command or dominance over the landscape (Gillespie 2002; Cosgrove 2003). From this position, perspective was used as a visual device in which the viewer could orient the world around him or her. The landscape is rendered static, frozen in a particular view and a particular moment in time. In effect, the landscape becomes the property of the spectator. Its components are entirely directed towards his or her view, as though that is all there is to see, and it would cease to exist once the viewer turned away (Pratt 1992; Cosgrove 1998, 2003).

For appropriation, the ideals of art and the ideology of imperialism also privileged the viewer to see the landscape prospectively. From the possessive perspective, the viewer has the power to evaluate and modify the scene (Pratt 1992; Whyte 2002). When the possession was explicit, this could mean physical modifications of the landscape to make the land productive or to suit particular cultural preferences. When possession was implicit, though, the viewer could select, frame, and compose the scene as he or she saw fit. This was rooted in the tradition of landscape painting, where artists had the ability to eliminate those aspects of the real world that were not pleasing or did not conform to
artistic conventions. Likewise, they had the ability to add features that were thought to enhance the scene (Howett 1997; Aitchison, MacLeod, and Shaw 2000; Lambert 2005).

While movements such as the picturesque encouraged viewers to compare landscapes of nature with those of paintings, they also included an “implicit call for improvement” (Schulenburg 2003, 542). This licensed artists and viewers alike to improve prospects that did not fit the specifications of the picturesque (Duncan 1999; Gregory 2001; Schulenburg 2003, 542).

Colonial travelers relied on these types of vision to relate to and represent foreign landscapes for those at home. As the viewer of these landscapes, such travelers were the judge of the landscapes as well as the painter who then represented it visually or verbally for others to see (Pratt 1992). Representations produce and circulate meanings that have a basis in other representations thereby both reflecting and constituting reality. Representations elevate and privilege certain views that become symbolic of larger cultural movements (Rowntree 1996). As a result, it is important to recognize that representations are not neutral or innocent of power relations. This process typically takes place within a group of people or a culture but can also be imposed on a culture from the outside (Johnston et al. 2000). Representations produced by colonial travelers in particular reinforced colonial possession of the landscapes and further appropriated them in their representations through means such as landscape associationism (Gillespie 2002). They often represented such landscapes not as they were but as they would be. These visions depicted landscapes as they would be once visual order had been installed and they began to resemble ideal and familiar landscapes (Cosgrove 1998, 2003), or once
they had been effectively brought under colonial control and made productive (Pratt 1992; Gregory 2001; Sheller 2004).

Aesthetics and Ideals

Traditionally, the concepts and ideas of art have been influential in the way humans view and interact with landscapes. Landscape art becomes a circular representation when depictions of landscape privilege certain views or ways of seeing and reflect preferences or attitudes towards the natural environment that affect how people respond to both landscapes and pictures of landscapes. This shapes cultural conventions that are then reproduced in subsequent representations (Rowntree 1996; Whyte 2002). Landscape painting emerged as a recognized genre as early as the fifteenth century; it reached a high in the Dutch and Italian schools during the seventeenth century and subsequently in the French and English schools (Cosgrove 1998). By the middle of the nineteenth century, landscape painting was one of the most popular genres in Europe, and the growth at this time was most dramatic in Britain (Chu 2003).

Landscape appreciation was increasingly recognized as an indication of educated sensibility (Cosgrove 1998). Various writers attempted to classify landscapes and instruct others in how to appreciate them. One of the most famous of these attempts was Edmund Burke’s *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origins of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* [1757]. The idea of beauty was relatively straightforward; however, it has long been recognized that not all visual experiences can easily be designated beautiful or ugly. Other experiences could also affect the viewer, hence giving rise to
new categories such as the sublime (Chu 2003). When Burke proposed a descriptive typology for landscapes based on certain physical attributes, he revived the concept of the sublime (Howett 1997; Chu 2003).

Burke based his typology on what he believed were the two strongest human instincts: socialization and self-preservation (Andrews 1989; Whyte 2003). According to him, pleasurable experiences were the source of the beautiful. Beauty attracts, reassures, and inspires love. It is more likely to be associated with society and domestic scenes; therefore, it draws out one’s social instincts (Andrews 1989; Aitchison, MacLeod, and Shaw 2000; Chu 2003). The experience of the beautiful is calm and easy as a result of the softness, smoothness, smallness, and harmoniousness of the objects or scenes (Howett 1997; Whyte 2002; Lambert 2005).

Also according to Burke, terrifying experiences were the source of the sublime. Those things that induced fear, anxiety, or terror appealed to the instinct of self-preservation. It caused a type of “delightful horror” or a “pleasurable pain.” These experiences were far greater in intensity than experiences of beauty, because the most powerful human emotions were evoked by pain, fear, or both. Although these emotions are seemingly unpleasant, they could be thrilling, or sublime, when experienced from a safe distance (Andrews 1989; Cronon 1996b; Whyte 2002; Chu 2003; Lambert 2005). Sublime experiences were most likely to involve encounters with darkness, vastness, emptiness, magnificence, and or perhaps be difficult and threatening (Whyte 2002; Chu 2003). Furthermore, they would be among those places on earth where one would be most likely to “glimpse the face of God” (Cronon 1996b, 73). These landscapes included
mountains, deserts, and the sea, dizzy ravines, awe-inspiring cliffs, thundering waterfalls, and raging storms (Aitchison, MacLeod, and Shaw 2000; Whyte 2002; Chu 2003). The Alps, for example, were traditionally seen as a life-threatening barrier between northern and southern Europe. In the eighteenth century, however, they were redefined and positioned as a sublime experience (Berghoff and Korte 2002).

Burke’s ideas were important in shaping landscape art, appreciation, and subsequent aesthetics. Although the _Philosophical Inquiry_ did not include explicit advice for artists, landscape painters were nonetheless influenced. Their art was positioned within this broader cultural context, and its new role was intended to stir the viewer’s emotions in the appropriate ways (Whyte 2002; Chu 2003; Lambert 2005). However, it was difficult to recreate the experience of the sublime in painting. By the late eighteenth century, the subjects of these paintings were engulfed by the expanding idea of the picturesque. Afterward, in the nineteenth century, the meaning of the sublime began to change. As more and more people sought the spectacle of the wilderness, the terrible awe that once characterized sublime landscapes became more comfortable, sentimental, and domesticated (Cronon 1996b; Lambert 2005).

Inspired by Burke’s categorization, Reverend William Gilpin wrote a series of essays that proved to be influential in the growing cult of the picturesque (Bermingham 1986; Aitchison, MacLeod, and Shaw 2000; Chu 2003). Although the picturesque, meaning “like a picture,” had previously been applied to scenes deemed suitable for painting, Gilpin was considered to be the first to apply the term to landscape scenery in his _Essay on Prints_ [1768] (Roskill 1997; Chu 2003). Gilpin drew upon Burke’s methods
and based his definitions on the combination of physical characteristics and emotions; however, Gilpin distinguished his new category from the sublime and the beautiful. The picturesque clearly lacked the awesomeness of the sublime and was perhaps more akin to the beautiful. The difference, though, was that the picturesque lacked the perfection of the beautiful. Beautiful scenes were pleasing in their natural state by virtue of their smoothness and neatness. Picturesque scenes, in contrast, had a rough, varied, or irregular quality that would allow them to be better illustrated in painting (Bermingham 1986; Andrews 1989; Whyte 2002; Chu 2003). Landscapes could then be praised for looking like a painting, while paintings were praised for resembling nature (Bermingham 1986).

In his writing, Gilpin established a set of guidelines that would help his readers to recognize and appreciate picturesque scenery. He pointed out various painterly aspects of landscapes, including light, composition, form, and texture (Chu 2003). In doing so, he laid the foundation for what would become a highly formalized way of viewing landscapes (Whyte 2002). By the early nineteenth century, there was a well-established, complex set of codes and rules of application that individuals needed to follow in order to determine a landscape picturesque (Gillespie 2002). The picturesque had thus become “a vogue word, mediating between man and nature through the formulaic way of seeing that it imposed” (Roskill 1997, 24). The popularity of this movement that came to be known as the cult of the picturesque was not a single, coherent category. The picturesque could be used to refer to a range of interconnected cultural themes or practices, including landscape, art, architecture, gardening, and tourism (Whyte 2002; Lambert 2005).
In particular, the upper and middle classes were encouraged to travel in search of natural scenes and appreciate them in accordance with the picturesque’s specific framework (Whyte 2002). The picturesque distinctly represented a way of seeing for travelers that helped set the precedent for future tourists (Aitchison, MacLeod, and Shaw 2000). Although the picturesque was initially intended for English landscapes (Bermingham 1986), the idea was quickly transferred and applied to colonial landscapes by explorers and travelers. These landscapes were often far-off, different, even exotic, but they could be translated and represented in the familiar terms of European landscape aesthetics (Gregory 2001; Gillespie 2002; Whyte 2002). In imposing the terms of the picturesque on foreign landscapes, travelers were, in essence, culturally appropriating these landscapes (Gillespie 2002). In addition, the picturesque’s implicit call for improvement encouraged a prospective view of landscape in which strategic changes and omissions were permitted. Consequently, travelers often viewed and represented foreign landscapes in this way. Landscapes could be seen as a picture or spectacle in which they could overlook the everyday features of the destination that they did not want to see (Buzzard 1993).

As the picturesque was gaining mainstream momentum in the early nineteenth century, intellectuals, writers, artists, and others were beginning to react to the rigidity and restrictions of the cult. A new movement, the Romantic Movement, provided a vehicle for this reaction as well as a reaction to the reason and progress of the Enlightenment. In addition, the movement encompassed a rejection of rapid industrialization and urbanization (Arnold 1996; Aitchison, MacLeod, and Shaw 2000;
According to Chu (2003, 157), “Romanticism privileged emotion, faith, and spirituality over intellect and reason. Romantics preferred spontaneity to calculation; individuality to conformity; and the freedom of nature over the constraints of culture.”

One of the key shifts that were initiated under Romanticism concerned the relationship between people and nature. Nature was placed at the heart of cultural interest in Europe. It was credited with having qualities like truth, beauty, independence and democracy, and the Romantics believed that people could reclaim a part of life that had been lost. They sought their identity in nature and landscapes that were seen as unspoiled by the influences of modern society (Cosgrove 1998; Whyte 2002). It was no longer enough to simply observe nature however. Romanticism emphasized direct experiences and immersion in nature that would allow for more personal, emotional responses to the landscape and refresh the mind, body, and soul (Cosgrove 1998; Aitchison, MacLeod, and Shaw 2000; Sheller 2003). Many Romantics displayed a preference for wild landscapes that emphasized the insignificance of the individual as well as humankind. In these powerful landscapes, one would be reminded of his or her own mortality, and God was most likely to show Himself (Arnold 1996; Cronon 1996b; Aitchison, MacLeod, and Shaw 2000; Whyte 2002).

As with the picturesque, Romanticism soon spread through the middle classes, and the movement’s values became increasingly commonplace (Aitchison, MacLeod, and Shaw 2000). Each term, the beautiful, sublime, picturesque and romantic, initially had a specific meaning and referred to a specific type of natural or rural landscape. As the
ideas became more widespread and the terms overused, however, they began to lose these meanings (Bermingham 1986). Essentially, “Along with ‘beautiful’, ‘sublime’ and ‘picturesque’, the adjective ‘romantic’ was becoming indiscriminately applied to any attractive aspect of the natural landscape” (Andrews 1989).

Pastoral was yet another category in the tradition of landscape painting (Lambert 2005) that was supported by the Romantic Movement’s distaste for urban life and desire for historical associations in the landscape (Whyte 2002). Pastoral landscapes are generally thought of as providing an escape from urban life and an opportunity to enter a seemingly simpler world (Andrews 1989; Whyte 2002). Closely associated with the pastoral convention is the ancient idea of Arcadia, a mythical land portrayed in both positive and negative regards. In the first, Arcadia is imagined as a perfect pastoral state. It is smooth, light, and abundant, a place of ease and rustic prosperity where people are thought to have a happy, peaceful, and virtuous existence. This ideal was popularized by the poetry of Virgil and reflects English tastes for a neat and tamed countryside. In the second, less prominent, less romanticized version, Arcadia is a place of primitive panic. The landscape is rough and harsh, while the people are ignorant and backward (Schama 1995; Aitchison, MacLeod, and Shaw 2000; Whyte 2002; Lambert 2005).

The pastoral idyll is also linked to the myth of Eden. Like Arcadia, the Garden of Eden is also subject to interpretation. In one reading, rich, luxurious, tropical vegetation is found inside the garden and a vast, dry desert outside. Perhaps a more common interpretation is similar to the positive version of Arcadia. In this reading, the garden is a neat, orderly landscape characterized by cultivation. The original inhabitants are pure
and are sustained by nature’s bounty without strenuous labor. In contrast, the environment outside of Eden is imagined as a harsh, dark, evil, perhaps densely forested wilderness (Andrews 1989; Arnold 1996; Cronon 1996b; Cosgrove 1998).

Binarisms

As indicated above, binaries also played a key role in the ways in which people make sense of the world around them. Binaries affected the ways in which nineteenth century travelers viewed, as well as they ways in which they represented, the landscape. For example, colonial travelers were influenced by both fashions in landscape aesthetics and debates about science and objectivity. According to Driver (2001, 51), “In the world of nineteenth-century science, the credibility of claims to empirical knowledge was said to depend on accurate observation, above all else. Observation was more than a matter of simply looking: in order to see properly, one had to observe methodically, to follow a rule.” Scientific observation was clearly a different proposition from seeing through the eyes of ordinary travelers. Taking pleasure in viewing the landscape was considered a threat to scientifically valid observation (McEwan 1996). As a result, the Royal Geographical Society produced an instruction manual, *Hints to Travellers* [1854], explicitly designed to direct the vision of travelers and help them conduct scientifically rigorous inquiries (Driver 2001).

These categories, artistic and scientific as well as subjective and objective, are generally positioned as opposites. As Gregory (2001: 93) notes though, “each informs and even depends on the other.” Science’s insistence on distanced and disinterested
observation was not so different from art’s requirement for a vantage point from which a viewer could assess the landscape within a predetermined framework from a safe distance (Howett 1997). Furthermore, both categories served to order nature, represent it, and in effect commodify it for colonial consumption (Gregory 2001), either directly or vicariously through narratives, illustrations and other media.

In addition, both science and aesthetics were used in travel narratives to make foreign landscapes familiar to home audiences. Place names and geographical terminology helped provide crucial details in descriptions of exotic places, while the principles of landscape aesthetics effectively portrayed an image of these places in terms readers would understand (Gillespie 2002). Travelers frequently referred to various aspects of art and literature, as well as more familiar landscapes. Sheller (2003), for example, notes that European travelers in the West Indies drew comparisons with romantic imagery of the East. Other travelers found and represented similarities between colonial landscapes and those of Britain (McEwan 1996). Although this was a means of reassuring travelers and helping them cope with the foreign, it was also a means of reconstructing different landscapes to fit a more European image (Gregory 2001; Döring 2002).

At the same time, the difference between Europe and its colonies was equally, if not more, prominent. Bewilderment was a common theme in travel literature because of the disorientating and unsettling influences that were potentially threatening to travelers in foreign places (Said 1978; Berghoff and Korte 2002; Driver 2004a). Said’s quintessential work on *Orientalism* (1978) explores this geographical distinction in which
the world is made up of two unequal halves—Orient and Occident. It explores this
distinction through the various interests, including science, travel and even landscape
description, that are used to create and maintain the power relationship between them.
Western representations, built on existing agreed upon institutions and conventions, bring
the idea of the Orient into focus more than the Orient itself does. Said (1978, 3) argues
that “so authoritative a position did Orientalism have that I believe no one writing,
thinking, or acting on the Orient could do so without taking account of the limitations on
thought and action imposed by Orientalism.”

Said’s (1978) concept of geographical imagination describes a universal practice
of dividing familiar and unfamiliar space through the binary opposition of self/other. The
other is anyone who is separate from one’s self, which is crucial in locating one’s place in
the world (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2000). This is a practice that both predated and
justified colonial rule, although such a geographical distinction may be completely
arbitrary and the ideas associated with the unfamiliar entirely fictitious. Moreover, it
does not require the other to acknowledge the distinction. Instead, the other’s identity is
defined by its difference; it is the contrasting image, idea, personality, or experience from
what is familiar and deemed one’s own. Thus, both identities are derived negatively, by
means of what they are not (Said 1978; Gikandi 1996; McEwan 1996; Gandhi 1998;
Sluyter 1999, 2002). For example, the Oriental was conceived as irrational, depraved,
childlike, backward, and different, while the European was considered rational, virtuous,
mature, superior, and normal (Said 1978). This difference was created and accentuated to
create distance from the other, which served as a rationalization for colonial
appropriation and transformation to ensure that the other was kept in its designated place (Gregory 2001). Lastly, the institutions established under Orientalism were pervasive and persistent, with effects lasting into the present (Said 1978). Although interpretations of otherness has typically centered on representations of non-Western peoples or culture, such interpretations are as applicable and significant for non-European landscapes (Arnold 1996).

The idea of tropicality has emerged as an extension or parallel to Said’s Orientalism (Arnold 2000; Driver 2004b). Tropicality seeks to understand the historical development of the tropics as a conceptual space in addition to a physical one. Landscapes have, in many cases, been given meanings and importance just like peoples and cultures. Although interpretations of otherness have typically focused on peoples, landscapes should also be included (Arnold 1996, 2000; King 2003) and explored for resulting transformations and lasting effects. The adjective “tropical” generally carries with it a complex range of powerful images and meanings that may be tied to any number of places, things, or experiences (Gregory 2000; Driver 2004b). Thus, as an idea the tropics no longer refer to an actual geographic reality but an imaginative construct (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2000).

The idea of the tropics and tropical islands has been created and recreated in various projects, from philosophy to politics, science, art, and literature such as The Tempest, Robinson Crusoe and Treasure Island (Arnold 2000; Schulenburg 2003; Sheller 2003, 2004; Driver 2004b). Thus “[b]y the middle of the nineteenth century European natural historians and travelers could draw on a deeply sedimented imaginative
geography of ‘the tropics,’ for example, and those who failed to satisfy the expectations of their audience usually met with little popular success” (Gregory 2001, 99). These ideas of the tropics emerged from the differences experienced by northern Europeans from the time of exploration through colonization. As a result, an enduring distinction and key distance developed between temperate and tropical lands. Tropical nature was positioned as the other, the opposite of temperate nature and all that was normal, constant, civilized, and cultivated (Arnold 1996, 2000; Gregory 2001; Driver 2004b).

Images of the tropics as “other” tended to be universalizing, applicable to any location within the broad “tropical” region. This was often perpetuated by colonial economic interests that emphasized a common purpose for the tropical world, namely tropical produce. In particular, the same products, such as sugar, coffee, cotton and rubber, were produced at any number of tropical locations (Arnold 1996; Driver 2004b). Furthermore, tropical islands were also homogenized. Due to their small size, it was generally believed that an entire island could be easily comprehended without thorough investigation (Schulenburg 2003). Similarly, tourists cruising the Caribbean formed an impression of the region as a whole without making much distinction between the individual islands (Sheller 2003).

Two key perspectives of the tropics did emerge in European representations that were clearly pervasive and persistent, not only in the colonial period but in the post-colonial period as well (Driver 2004b). In the first perspective, the one that was romanticized in aesthetic representations, the tropics were imagined as an ideal or paradise, in terms of a mythical place or a previous time. In contrast with the cold,
paucity of northern winters, the tropics were hot, wet and fertile. It was a place of easy, year-round subsistence with minimal labor, of pleasure and escape. Representations of tropics drew upon the myth of Eden and other longstanding European visual and literary themes; they created an image of a beautiful, abundant, and green garden in which people lived in harmony with nature (Arnold 1996, 2000; Sheller 2003, 2004). The type of scenery in the tropics was also interpreted as a return to the pre-modern, where landscapes could be seen that no longer existed in rural England (Döring 2002). These were landscapes of regression, unspoiled by the ravages of modern society as well as undeveloped (Arnold 1996, 2000; Sheller 2003, 2004).

In the second perspective, the tropics were imagined as a type of hell. In Europe, nature was moderate and largely under human control. In the tropics, however, people had little control over a nature that was prone to excess. The heat was extreme, the jungle dangerous, the weather violent, the hazards destructive, and the diseases fatal. The beauty identified above was but a deadly deception with these threats lurking below (Arnold 1996, 2000; Gregory 2001). According to Arnold (1996), these types of representations were increasingly common in travel accounts as well as fiction after the middle of the eighteenth century. By early nineteenth century, European writers were commonly preoccupied with the risk of disease and madness in the tropics. Theories postulated that the tropics were particularly prone to miasmas, or emanations from the ground, which were used to explain the origin and spread of diseases such as malaria (Arnold 1996; Gregory 2001; King 2003). In addition to the detrimental effect on one’s
physical well-being, there was also considerable concern regarding the moral well-being of those exposed to the tropical environment (Arnold 2000; Sheller 2003, 2004).

The creation of the tropics as other explicitly established difference between Europe and its colonies, but it also served to promote the superiority of Europe and create a platform for colonial involvement and transformation. In contrast to Europe, the tropics were primitive and immature. Both perspectives of the tropics, positive and negative, were used as justification for the domination and domestication of nature. As a place of great natural fertility, the tropics needed the knowledge of Europeans to harness that fertility and make it productive for human purposes. As a place of untamed nature, the tropics needed European control to eliminate the barriers to progress and civilization (Arnold 1996, 2000; Gregory 2001; Schulenburg 2003). “The Garden of Eden was not, after all, a wilderness, but the result of an act of creation/cultivation” (Schulenburg 2003, 536).

Modern societies had supposedly triumphed over nature so that people were able to impose their will on nature rather than the other way around. As a result, nature and culture were distinctly separated in the European mind, so much so that the advance of their culture was measured by the distance they put between themselves and nature (Gregory 2001). This imagined separation, however, ignores the extent of human intervention in the landscape as well as the extent of human perception, representations, and symbolic meanings imbued in the landscape (Schama 1995; Sheller 2003). Thus, Whyte (2002, 7) argues,

Landscapes are important because they are the product of one of the most enduring sets of linkages: the relationships between the physical environment and
human society. They are created by people through their engagement with the world around them. They are, then, social constructions, whether intentionally or unintentionally, but they need to be viewed within the context of their own natural and cultural histories in order to be properly understood.

Conclusion

Although landscape and postcolonialism have not been considered together to a large extent, the approaches possess a number of similarities that make them particularly compatible for this study. Both landscape and postcolonial studies have been identified as potential means of addressing the relationships between people and their environments. Given each approach’s attention to representations, especially those in art and literature, both are suitable for the examination of travel narratives, the source of data used in this study and discussed in the subsequent chapters. Landscape and postcolonialism are each equipped to take the role of vision seriously and address the effects of representations based on vision. Finally, both landscape and postcolonial studies recognize the value of understanding the past as a means of informing the present.

This chapter has addressed the conceptual approaches of landscape and postcolonial studies. I provided a brief overview of each approach and highlighted their relevance in terms of the data, temporal framework, and applicability to human-environment interactions. I discussed the convergence of these two approaches in terms of representations based on vision, which will provide the foundation for the analysis discussed in Chapters 5 and 6. I then provided a contextual overview of the aesthetic concepts that influenced the ways in which nineteenth century British travelers viewed and represented the natural environment. Finally, I addressed some of the key
oppositional categories through which colonialism was rationalized and naturalized (Gandhi 1998; Sluyter 1999; Clayton 2003). These binaries, including science/art and self/other, each contribute to the fundamental binaries of culture/nature and colonizer/colonized. The distinctions between these categories are more imagined than real, but they have been influential nonetheless. Both landscape and postcolonial studies have the potential to explore the creation and circulation of these ideas and their consequences.
The history of the Caribbean became irreversibly tied to Europe with Christopher Columbus’s initial voyage to the region in 1492, and the islands have captured the European imagination ever since. These islands were among Europe’s first colonies, and they became a crucial link in the emerging global economy. They were the subject of debates, the focus of politics, and even the cause of wars. For a time, however short, they were considered extremely valuable to their European powers, perhaps even the most valuable overseas imperial possessions (Burns 1954; Richardson 1992). Although the West Indies declined in economic and political importance over the course of the nineteenth century, European interest in the islands as a destination for travel was on the rise.

The changing, and often contradictory, character of the colonies appeared to add to the intrigue. The beauty of such tropical islands was well-reported, yet the risks associated with the region left an undeniable black mark on this beauty in the minds of those from the temperate zones. The islands were vulnerable to numerous hazards including fires, floods, hurricanes, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions (Burns 1954; Ragatz 1963), while their populations were vulnerable to periodic outbreaks of epidemic diseases including smallpox, typhoid, malaria, yellow fever and cholera (Watts 1987). The hospitality of the West Indians was renowned (Ragatz 1963), but reports of
intermittent hostilities and unrest in West Indian society were also present. Riots and rebellions took place on the majority of the islands both before and after the abolition of slavery (Burns 1954; Ragatz 1963; Hart 1998). The well-known prosperity enjoyed in the island colonies was not shared by everyone; there were also many people living in poverty. At the beginning of the twentieth century, British Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain described the region as the “Empire’s darkest slum” (Richardson 1992). Nonetheless, questions about the future of the West Indies were counted among the favorite topics of nineteenth century reviews (Ragatz 1963).

This period between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries was also important in the tradition of exploration and travel, the development of tourism, and the rise of travel writing (Duncan and Gregory 1999). The British upper and middle classes were increasingly traveling at home and abroad, and many left behind a record of their journeys in the form of travel narratives. During the time period under consideration, travel narratives were among the popular works that the British public read (Korte 2000). Travel narratives were influential in the creation of imaginative geographies of empire, and they provided “factual” information used in regional geographies and later travel guidebooks.

In this chapter, I will provide a brief background of the Caribbean region and the British West India islands specifically. I will overview the historical evolution of the region from the point of European intervention through the designated time period for this study. This discussion of the region’s political and economic development will establish the context in which the subjects of this study were traveling as well as the
circumstances to which they were reacting. I will also examine some of the broad changes that took place in the rural landscape as a result of this political and economic development. These changes include agricultural systems, population distributions, and environmental degradation. In addition, I will discuss the development of British travel and tourism as well as the rise in travel writing.

Colonial Development in the Caribbean

A new phase in the history of the Caribbean began with Columbus’s voyage at the end of the fifteenth century. Spain formally claimed the entire Caribbean region, but Spanish interests were primarily oriented to the islands of the Greater Antilles and subsequently mainland America (Richardson 1992). In the first half of the sixteenth century, the northern European nations began to enter into the region via piracy. These “Protestant pirates” began by raiding the Spanish fleets shipping commodities from the New World to the Old. They eventually established base camps throughout the Caribbean, in the areas that were not effectively controlled by Spain. In the latter half of the same century, two distinct classes of pirates began to emerge: privateers and buccaneers. The privateers were sponsored by their home government or business interests; the buccaneers were unsanctioned and acted on their own account. The buccaneers emerged as the dominant force in the region at the end of the sixteenth century and persisted until the early nineteenth century. They attacked both ships and settlements and operated under a ruthless code of ethics known as “the Custom of the
Coast” (Watts 1987). Piracy was thus the basis for trade in the Caribbean as well as settlement (Richardson 1992).

As the British became more active in the Caribbean region, there was greater interest in establishing permanent settlements in the islands for the purpose of growing and exporting tropical produce. This process took place slowly at first with small investments. Land was considered to be readily available, and labor was provided by the settlers (Hart 1998). The first permanent settlement occurred in 1624 on the island of St. Kitts, a former pirate base. Two small groups of colonists, one English and the other French, established separate settlements and slowly built up their populations. There were tensions between these competing groups, though there were occasions when cooperation was necessary. For example, they collaborated to remove the indigenous Carib population and to resist Spanish attacks on the island. A second English settlement occurred in 1627 on the island of Barbados, which was attractive for its outlying position, effectively beyond Spanish or Carib control (Watts 1987; Richardson 1992). Several other colonies were attempted during this early period, such as on St. Lucia and Grenada, but attacks by the Caribs forced the settlements to be abandoned (Burns 1954).

Agriculture in these early European settlements was initially a combination of subsistence and commercial. The initial cash-crops of importance included tobacco, cotton, and indigo (Richardson 1992). The sugarcane plant had been brought to the Caribbean by Columbus on his second voyage to the region; however, sugar production for export to Europe was not effectively developed until the seventeenth century. The techniques to produce good quality sugar were developed on Portugal’s São Tomé sugar
plantations. These techniques were transported to Brazil and then to the Lesser Antilles by Dutch settlers forced to flee Brazil in the 1640s. Barbados was the initial recipient of the improved methods, after which cane cultivation rapidly spread to St. Kitts, Nevis, Antigua, and Jamaica. The semi-refined sugar coming out of the Caribbean emerged as a valuable product of high demand in Europe (Richardson 1992; Hart 1998). By the eighteenth century, the colonies were being urged by their home governments to produce primarily sugar (Williams 1970).

The emphasis placed on sugarcane cultivation brought about a number of changes in the Caribbean. The new techniques for higher quality sugar production required machinery that would extract, boil, and clarify the juice from the canes. In order to justify the expense of such equipment, producers required a large supply of canes. More and more acreage was devoted to the increased cultivation of sugarcane, which typically necessitated forest clearance on a large scale. Furthermore, the cane fields had to be located in close proximity to the milling facilities. The canes had to be milled shortly after they were cut, otherwise they would lose their sugar content and ferment, and there were no viable transportation systems at that time to rapidly transport the freshly-cut canes over long distances. This had two consequences: large-scale plantations were required rather than small farms and a large, readily-available labor supply was required instead of colonist farmers (Richardson 1992; Hart 1998).

At first, the English islands attempted to fill the demand for labor with indentured servants. These included convicts, debtors, and those wishing to emigrate; however, this was not a permanent solution. The supply of indentured laborers did not meet the
demand, their contracts only lasted three to seven years, and they were unaccustomed to working in such hot conditions. Slavery came to be seen as a viable alternative, and West Africa emerged as the optimal source of slaves. The region’s proximity to the Caribbean facilitated transportation, and the similar climates ensured a labor supply that was accustomed to tropical agriculture. The growth in sugarcane cultivation, then, was accompanied by a parallel growth in African slaves. At the beginning of the sugar period in 1643, there were approximately 18,600 Europeans compared to 6,400 Africans in Barbados. By 1812, after the slave trade had ended, there were approximately 13,800 Europeans compared to 71,700 Africans (Hart 1998). Both the sugar and slave trades became extremely profitable and helped fuel economic growth in Britain. The result was a “triangular trade” between Europe, Africa, and the Americas. Manufactured goods from Europe were shipped to West Africa to be exchanged for slaves. The slaves were shipped to the Caribbean to be exchanged for tropical staples, such as sugar and rum, and these products were then returned to Europe (Ragatz 1963; Richardson 1992; Hart 1998).

Trade was extremely competitive, and the northern European nations that colonized the Caribbean were commercial rivals. This rivalry manifested itself from the seventeenth century on not only in trade laws but also wars. England, France, Holland, and Spain were the primary participants, but the competition between England and France became the most important (Watts 1987; Richardson 1992). These countries fought for control of territory as well as control of the sugar trade. For the latter, it was necessary to damage or destroy rival property and plantations in order to gain a short-term advantage in European markets (Watts 1987). For the former, it was crucial to
target the islands with developed or developing sugarcane industries. Many of the territorial changes that took place were temporary. Some islands shifted back and forth between colonizers, while most islands changed hands at least once. Barbados was one of the few exceptions. The island’s somewhat isolated location from the other islands and its strong defenses allowed it to remain in British control (Watts 1987; Richardson 1992; Hart 1998).

War, along with the fear of war, was a central part of life in the Caribbean until the early nineteenth century. This ended with the defeat of Napoleon. The Treaty of Paris was confirmed at the Congress of Vienna in 1815, and the Napoleonic Wars were formally brought to a close. Britain had emerged as the dominant naval power in the region, and the territorial ownership of the islands (Map 3) was finally stabilized (Burns 1954; Hart 1998). According to Burns (1954, 611), “the West Indies were entering a long period of peace, and for a century the British colonies were to be free from any direct impact of war.”

Other events were also taking place in the Caribbean at this time that affected the stability of the islands. The United States and France provided revolutionary examples in the late eighteenth century, while many of the Spanish-American colonies gained their independence in the early nineteenth century. Furthermore, Haiti’s establishment of an independent republic at the turn of the century grew out of a slave rebellion, which was considered to be an ever-increasing threat (Watts 1987; Hart 1998). Resistance to slavery had long taken place in the region in a variety of forms. On a daily basis, slaves could refuse to work, refuse to work properly, pretend to be dim-witted, pretend to be ill,
Map 3: Political map of the Caribbean after 1815 (from Watts 1987, 2)
induce illness, or inflict wounds on themselves. Some even chose to commit suicide as a means of escape and withholding labor from their masters. More drastic means of resistance, and less common, included conspiracies and open rebellions where slaves would set fire to cane fields or attack the planters. Many slaves, particularly those that had recently been brought to the islands from Africa, chose escape. This option was most viable in islands with steep slopes and heavy forests or other areas that provided concealment and defense. Slaves that successfully escaped and established their own settlements were known as Maroons. They led an African-style subsistence life where they were not only able to survive but also provide everything they needed from their environment (Watts 1987; Richardson 1992; Hart 1998).

Both groups, slaves and Maroons, staged rebellions against colonial authority in many islands with varying degrees of intensity. For example, Barbados experienced a slave revolt in 1816. One person of European descent was killed before the troops and militia intervened and several hundred slaves were killed (Burns 1954; Hart 1998). Although the threat was in each case managed and the organizers of rebellions did not seek to overthrow colonial rule, the memory of the Haitian revolution was still fresh. Therefore the slave rebellions in the nineteenth century that occurred with greater intensity as the abolition movement grew, culminating in Jamaica’s 1831-32 Emancipation Rebellion, helped apply the pressure that was needed to end the institution of slavery (Richardson 1992; Hart 1998). For the British West Indies, the slave trade was abolished in 1808, and slavery was formally ended in 1834 (Burns 1954; Richardson 1992; Hart 1998).
The British Emancipation Act of 1833 dictated the terms of abolishment. First, the legislation did not immediately free slaves but instead called for an apprenticeship period intended to ensure that former slaves did not abandon the plantations en masse. The newly-freed slaves therefore became “apprentices” that worked for their former owners without pay for 40.5 hours per week, and if they were required to work beyond that limit, they would be paid an agreed rate. Only Antigua chose not to use the apprenticeship system and granted island slaves unconditional freedom. In the remaining British West Indies, apprenticeship was officially ended in 1838 (Burns 1954; Richardson 1992; Hart 1998). Second, the British Emancipation Act ordered £20 million to be paid to the slave owners in the British Caribbean colonies. This payment was intended to compensate for the loss of slaves and help plantations make the transition to wage payment. However, the money was paid directly to the planters to be used as they saw fit. In many cases it was used to pay British creditors for plantation debt; in others it was pocketed by planters who then sold off their land (Williams 1970; Richardson 1992; Hart 1998).

Changes came slowly after emancipation in most islands. For the most part, former slaves did not leave plantations on a large scale as predicted. In the more developed islands, such as Barbados and St. Kitts, planters continued to occupy or control the majority of land. With little to no land available for freed slaves to establish their own settlements, they had little choice but to continue working on the plantations for wages (Richardson 1992). In other islands, planters attempted to control the newly-created working class in other ways. These landowners made it difficult for the freed
people to have access to their own land through squatting or purchasing. Often the land that was available was mountainous, forested, and otherwise considered less desirable. Planters eventually began to rent or sell small pieces of land typically unsuited for sugarcane cultivation to the former slaves for provision grounds. It was generally difficult to wholly support a family on these plots, so they often supplemented their incomes with part-time labor. Thus, the planters had a ready supply of laborers close to their estates (Watts 1987; Hart 1998).

There were frequent conflicts between plantation owners and former slaves over wages. In many cases, the freed laborers began to organize and collectively demand higher wages. The planters, with the support of the colonial government, addressed this situation by importing thousands of laborers to drive wages down. Initially, colonialists opted for a strategy of European migration that would help increase white land ownership. This would also limit the amount of land available to those of African descent, who would then become full-time wage laborers on the plantations. Various groups of Scots, Irish, and Germans were imported; however, most died due to an inability to adjust to labor in a tropical climate and intolerance to tropical diseases. Furthermore, those who lived sought to return home. The second strategy was to import Asian indentured servants, primarily from India but also from China (Burns 1954; Richardson 1992; Hart 1998).

The decline of sugar occurred in coincidence with the movements for abolition and emancipation. At the turn of the nineteenth century, the price of sugar rose markedly. Prior to the Haitian revolution, the French colony was one of the most
productive and profitable in the region. After the revolution, however, Haiti was no longer a competitor in the sugar market, and there was a minor shortage of tropical produce. Additionally, the war with Napoleon had taken its toll on sugar crops and market availability; therefore, the years after the war also contributed to higher sugar prices. This was only a temporary increase, though, and prices subsequently took a downward turn that would last the remainder of the century (Burns 1954; Ragatz 1963; Watts 1987; Hart 1998). The cost associated with growing sugar grew with apprenticeship and emancipation, and the British West Indies saw increasing competition. The French West Indies recovered from the war, Cuba became a major sugar producer, and cheaper East Indian cane sugar was produced in large quantities. The Sugar Duties Act reduced and finally abolished duty preference on British West Indian cane sugar, and subsidized beet sugar developed in Europe was placed on the market (Burns 1954; Watts 1987; Hart 1998).

Nonetheless, sugarcane continued to be an important crop in the British West Indies, perhaps as important an export as it had ever been. By the end of the nineteenth century, sugarcane products represented approximately 75 percent of the total exports for the British West Indies colonies. In some colonies, such as Barbados, the amount was as high as 97 percent (Burns 1954). Indeed, several islands were able to increase their sugar exports in the nineteenth century after 1815; however, this must be kept in perspective. Utilizing modern and more efficient methods, the average yield per factory in Cuba in 1894 was more than ten times the average in the British West Indies (Williams 1970). The amount of sugar produced in the British Caribbean colonies needed to be
significantly increased in order to compensate for significantly lower prices, but few were willing to make the investment in improved technologies. Furthermore, because there was no major industry that could replace sugar in the region, a British Royal Commission determined that the economic condition would continue to decline (Burns 1954).

Unemployment and underemployment were common in the British West Indies as a result of the sugar depression in the second half of the nineteenth century. Living conditions were seriously low, while dissatisfaction and unrest grew more prominent. Workers often petitioned and protested in the hope of higher wages and improving their position, and these protests often turned violent. Riots took place in almost all of the British Caribbean colonies, and in some islands they took place on a frequent basis. Looting and destruction of property occasionally occurred and also loss of life (Burns 1954; Richardson 1992; Hart 1998). The most widely publicized riot, the Morant Bay Rebellion, took place in 1865 on the island of Jamaica. The situation in the colony was reportedly desperate: sugarcane cultivation had been widely abandoned, the number of plantations cut in half, and the continued importation of indentured laborers despite drastically rising unemployment. The riot was largely a class conflict with racial undertones where the poor felt that the upper class and colonial administrators were not making any effort to ease their situation. When several hundred peasants and laborers armed with cutlasses and sticks marched on the police station and court house, many feared that the Haitian revolution would be repeated. Much property was damaged and several people were killed during the rioting, and hundreds more were killed once troops were deployed and martial law was declared (Burns 1954; Williams 1970; Hart 1998).
The Rural Landscape in the Caribbean

Over time, European involvement in the Caribbean has brought about many changes to the rural landscape, from transforming the traditional agricultural systems to transforming the environment (see, for example, Map 4). Early in the colonial period, a few large land grants were made to prominent individuals; however, the original colonization plan for the region was to settle the islands with small farmers who would work their own land (Hart 1998). Once sugar gained favor following the introduction of new processing methods by the Dutch, it became less and less feasible for peasant farmers to compete. Sugarcane cultivation required large-scale production, and the smaller farms were not able to support the high overhead costs involved in buying and maintaining slaves and machinery. According to Ragatz (1963, 38), “Man, not Nature, bound the Caribbean planter to monoculture.” The British West India islands could have produced any number of tropical crops, but sugarcane was seen as the quickest way to wealth.

The colonial agricultural system was eventually characterized by large monocultural estates, using static techniques, and operated by an overseer in place of an absentee landowner (Ragatz 1963). As late as 1894, absentee landowners continued to control nearly 40 percent of plantations in the main sugar-producing colonies, such as Barbados and St. Kitts, that were responsible for a majority of exports from the British West Indies (Williams 1970). Towns were located on the coast for shipping purposes. Wherever possible, residents who could afford to do so lived in the cooler, higher parts of the island (Ragatz 1963). As a result, “The plantation, not the town or village, was the
Map 4: Cultivation on Barbados, 1673

(Ashmole 1910, 66)
basic socioeconomic unit of the colonial countryside in the Caribbean” (Richardson 1992, 41).

This system was not necessarily inherent in the Caribbean landscape. Many crops, including the initial tropical staples, cacao, coffee and various spices, were grown on small estates; however, by the latter half of the eighteenth century, these products were rapidly disappearing. The small farmers were losing their land to wealthy planters who were expanding their plantations for the express purpose of raising more sugar. Furthermore, the French West India islands had maintained greater diversity. There were more small landholdings in these islands that produced less sugar than the British islands and more cacao, coffee, and cotton. As soon as these islands passed into British hands, the new colonists set about transforming the landscape once again. In the more developed islands, such as Grenada, British immigrants purchased coffee plantations from French settlers and converted them to sugar. In the less developed islands, such as Tobago, new sugar estates were created out of the indigenous vegetation (Ragatz 1963).

The motivations behind deforestation in the British West Indies were both cultural and practical. Land clearance for cultivation was associated with ideas of progress and improvement, while the formation of pastoral landscapes was the recreation of English parks (Whyte 2002). Forest clearance was a necessary part of establishing sugar plantations as well as maintaining them. As plantations grew in size, they not only took over smaller estates but also forested land and land generally less suited for sugarcane cultivation. In the seventeenth century, the majority of Barbados and other flat islands were cleared, eventually followed by the more rugged volcanic islands of the Lesser
Antilles. The islands experienced resulting environmental problems to varying degrees. For example, as early at the 1760s, Barbados had no land left to be converted, and the land that had been under cultivation for over 100 years was exhausted (Richardson 1992). Other islands that had been cultivated for a shorter period of time also experienced problems with soil deterioration and erosion, particularly the hilly volcanic Caribbees (Watts 1987). New islands that were acquired by the British Empire were attractive to new settlers because the land was cheap and typically fertile in comparison with the more established and exploited colonies (Ragatz 1963). As returns on sugarcane diminished throughout the nineteenth century; however, estates were frequently abandoned, especially those in the less accessible, less suitable parts of the islands. In some of these areas, natural land recovery was allowed to take place at this time (Watts 1987).

Following emancipation, the rural landscape underwent another transformation as the population shifted to accommodate its new circumstances. Although the planters tried to make it difficult for freed peoples to gain access to land, by the end of the late nineteenth century, a British Royal Commission recommended that the working class population needed greater access to the land as small-scale proprietors rather than existing solely as wage laborers (Richardson 1992). Of the former slaves that stayed nearby the estates for part-time work, many began to create house plots for their own subsistence. On some of the larger islands, such as Jamaica, the new peasant class purchased land or squatted on unused Crown and plantation land. The land available to them was generally less desirable, but they nonetheless established new hillside plots and small mountain farms, built houses and created free village settlements. They began to
grow new crops that were available to them and well-suited for the particular type of environment. While the plantation staples, such as sugarcane, declined then, the islands were still able to continue to increase exports based on agricultural diversification (Williams 1970).

Despite the preference for sugarcane, there had been previous attempts to encourage the cultivation of new crops in the British West Indies. The Society Instituted at London for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, known as the Society of Arts, offered awards for agricultural extension in the region. For example, a £100 prize was offered for the presentation of nutmegs produced in the colonial Caribbean (Ragatz 1963). The Society of Arts, along with the London West India merchants, also encouraged the importation and cultivation of breadfruit. It was hoped that breadfruit flour would decrease wheat flour consumption in the West Indies and thereby ease some of the islanders’ dependence on food imports. Initially slaves refused to eat it as they preferred plantains, maize, yams and other traditional food items. Breadfruit was gradually added to the diet of laborers, particularly in the post-emancipation period (Ragatz 1963; Watts 1987).

Other crops were grown at different times depending on a variety of conditions. Cotton was one of the initial crops grown in the Caribbean, and it received a boost during the American Civil War (Burns 1954; Watts 1987; Richardson 1992). Coffee was a significant cash crop for several islands in the region. It was secondary to sugar, although, because it was grown in the highlands, it did not directly compete with sugar (Watts 1987; Richardson 1992). Bananas grew in importance in the post-emancipation
period. It was initially grown by the peasants but was increasingly cultivated on plantations as a cash crop, particularly in Jamaica where the United Fruit Company became involved late in the nineteenth century (Burns 1954; Watts 1987). Cacao was also a hill crop that did not compete spatially with sugarcane. It was grown in Trinidad before the British took possession of the island and was expanded after. Grenada, Dominica, and Jamaica were also among the producers in the nineteenth century British West Indies (Burns 1954; Watts 1987; Richardson 1992). Finally, spice plants also received some attention in the British colonies. In the early nineteenth century, ships carrying indentured servants from Asia also brought nutmeg trees to Trinidad. At the same time, cinnamon and other spice trees were distributed from the botanical garden in St. Vincent. Ginger and pimento, or all-spice, were also cultivated on various islands throughout the region. Nonetheless, spice trees were viewed more as a curiosity than a staple product by many planters (Williams 1970).

Travel and Tourism

Travel is a longstanding human activity, but the concept of tourism is much more recent. According to Berghoff and Korte (2002, 2), “The very term ‘tourism’ was coined in the British Isles, emerging in the English language early in the nineteenth century.” For the most part, this new term addressed motivation. Travelers are often classified based upon their primary motivations for travel, although they are likely to have a range of secondary motivations that are also influential in their choice of destinations and activities. As a result, the lines between categories of travel are often blurred. For
example, in his work on travel in the nineteenth century, Driver (2004a, 75) notes, “The business of the scientific explorer was not always, or easily, distinguished from that of the literary flaneur, the missionary, the trader or the imperial pioneer.”

Furthermore, the distinctions between explorers, travelers, and tourists that evolved over the course of the nineteenth century were also tentative. Explorers traditionally traveled uncharted territory, while travelers traveled for a specific purpose. Tourists, however, were thought to seek pleasure through the act of travel itself (Duncan and Gregory 1999). In a more disparaging use of the term, tourists were considered to be those travelers who simply repeated the itineraries, experiences, and reactions of those who came before them (Gregory 2000). The number of explicit ‘tourists’ increased over the course of the nineteenth century as well as the number of travelers acting in a tourist capacity at various stages of their journey. Consequently, Johnston et al. (2000, 858) emphasizes that “any (conventional) distinction between ‘exploration’, ‘travel’ and ‘tourism’ is far from stable or secure.”

Several factors, from intellectual movements to economic and political influences, created an environment suitable for the emergence of this class of tourists (Buzzard 1993). First, the artistic movements that emerged in the eighteenth century and spilled over into the nineteenth century were influential in the development of British tourism. Aitchison, MacLeod, and Shaw (2000, 72), note that “[a]rtistic representations and tourism have always enjoyed a symbiotic relationship.” William Gilpin promoted this relationship through the development of picturesque tourism in Britain. His writings on the subject were used as a guide for how landscapes should be viewed and understood,
which expanded the practice of landscape appreciation beyond the upper classes and
allowed more people to participate (Whyte 2002). When traveling in foreign territories,
British tourists actively sought picturesque landscapes (Gillespie 2002).

Romantic concepts in art helped redefine nature, which in turn helped redefine
tourist destinations and the tourist experience in ways that may be traced to contemporary
tourism (Duncan and Gregory 1999; Berghoff and Korte 2000; Sheller 2003). As visual
scenery became an essential part of the tourism experience (Korte 2000), landscape and
nature became a fundamental component of a tourist destination. In fact, a key
component of picturesque tourism was the comparison of nature with art (Andrews
1989). Travel was shifted away from the cultural places formerly associated with the
Grand Tour to less explored places of natural beauty (Chu 2003). Furthermore, Edmund
Burke’s concept of the sublime created a demand for new destinations throughout
Britain, Europe, and various colonial territories. Places that previously might have been
experienced with emotions of danger, fear, or pain could now be interpreted with awe and
delight, although such scenes were still typically observed from a safe distance. In the
context of overseas travel, a few more obstacles had to be overcome—“enemies had to be
subdued, pirates eliminated and peaceful networks had to be established”—before the
principles of the sublime could be applied (Stilz 2002, 86).

Additionally, economic conditions in Britain in the eighteenth and nineteenth
centuries allowed greater opportunities for travel and tourism (Berghoff and Korte 2002).
The popularity of both travel and scenic tourism intended for the enjoyment of landscape
increased throughout the nineteenth century, initially with the upper class and gradually
becoming more open to the middle class as well (Duncan and Gregory 1999; Gregory 2000; Korte 2000). During the Napoleonic Wars, Europe had been effectively closed to British travelers, and the pent-up demand exploded in the post-war period (Buzzard 1993; Duncan and Gregory 1999; Gregory 2000). Modern forms of transportation and other types of tourist infrastructure greatly improved the prospect for travel. The steamship, for example, allowed people to travel to distant places in less time, in greater comfort, and at less expense (Korte 2000; Aitchison, MacLeod, and Shaw 2000). For instance, the first steamship arrived in the West Indies in 1826 (Burns 1954). Although initially developed for other purposes, such as the fruit trade, these fast steam lines allowed new networks of tourism throughout the remainder of the century (Sheller 2003, 2004).

Finally, economic development acted as a further catalyst for the rise of scenic or aesthetic tourism. Reactions against rapidly increasing urbanization and industrialization caused travel experiences with the natural world to be romanticized as authentic, spiritual, and healthful (Berghoff and Korte 2002). Travel came to be seen as a means of escaping one’s own society (Korte 2000; Berghoff and Korte 2002). “Tourism is…a social and cultural phenomenon, centred—not exclusively but essentially—around dreams of alternatives to everyday life” (Berghoff and Korte 2002, 3). For example, a journey to the Caribbean was promoted as not only a picturesque experience but also a healthful escape from daily life and winter weather in northern countries (Sheller 2003, 2004).
Travel Writing

The practice of travel writing has long accompanied travel, particularly in the eras of exploration and scientific travel. To some extent, the authority of these explorers, adventurers, and naturalists depended on their written account of their journey (Driver 2004a). The primary purpose of these texts was to convey information and descriptions about the new places and entities explored. With the rise of travel and tourism, however, narratives were increasingly written by tourists for the tourist market (Sheller 2003). It is important to note that many of these tourists were established authors who were known for both their fiction and travel works (Korte 2000; Driver 2001). Nonetheless, nineteenth century tourists increasingly carried travel journals or sketchbooks, and they often made extensive notes or wrote detailed letters of their travels. All of these practices would allow them to later produce narratives of their own (Andrews 1989; Gregory 1999). In fact, “That tourists had toured solely in order to write tour-memoirs was a familiar charge” (Buzzard 1993, 158).

This shift in authorship also brought about a shift in the purpose of travel books. Different regions of the colonial world were increasingly explored and documented, while recorded data about the natural environment in these regions was becoming redundant. As a result, the focus of the travel book shifted to the presentation of foreign locations, and the visual experience. Narratives emphasized the accounts of those who had experienced particular places or events (Urry 1995; Roskill 1997; Dann 1999; Gregory 1999; Naylor 2001). In spite of the rise in published volumes, such accounts were theoretically endless because they highlighted the novelty of the experience
(Andrews 1989; Roskill 1997). Where the actual voyage or itinerary was similar to earlier accounts, travel writers increasingly strove to interpret and present their experience in a new or unique way (Buzzard 1993; Duncan and Gregory 1999; Gregory 2000).

Victorian travel accounts contained numerous components. They were, of course, primarily structured around the story of a journey, and they were clearly meant to entertain. They had the ability to fulfill their readers’ need for adventure, satisfy their curiosity about foreign places, and provide a vicarious encounter with something they might not have the opportunity to experience firsthand (Roskill 1997; Korte 2000). In addition, these narratives continued to retain much of the description and factual information about both natural and anthropological phenomenon that earlier scientific works were based on; however, this type of information was often relegated to the appendices of popular travel books. Such accounts also increasingly included guidebook elements. Writers highlighted relevant sights and provided explicit advice to potential future travelers (Korte 2000). Finally, because travel writing is defined by the interaction of the human subject with the world, the personal experience was also an important feature. The individual’s observations, impressions, and reflections were included along with highly detailed descriptions of the actual encounter (Korte 2000; Driver 2001).

The places and experiences described in a travel book are never objective or innocent. Travel experiences were necessarily reconstructed and translated into text. Accounts were likely recorded in the form of diaries and letters during the journey or written after the journey’s end (Korte 2000). Essentially, “what is experienced by the
traveler or tourist as unbounded and limitless—such as the enveloping mist, or changing tides along the coast—is rendered in a condensed and summarizing fashion, which conforms to a deferring of consciousness, from the experience itself to its recollective embodiment” (Roskill 1997, 122). Individual perceptions and personal attitudes shade experiences (Korte 2000; Gillespie 2002), and the cultural contexts of the time period in which travel accounts were written must also be taken into consideration (McEwan 1996; Naylor 2001).

In particular, the writers of this time period could not be disconnected from empire, although, in general, the earlier narratives written by explorers were more explicitly devoted to imperialism than those written by tourists (Said 1978; Korte 2000). Explicit intentions or not, travel writings and their attempts to make foreign places knowable were used for colonial purposes (Sachs 2003) and reaffirmed British order. These works typically followed a progressive narrative and emphasized various aspects of triumph, conquest, or achievement (Pratt 1992; Said 1993; Gillespie 2002). Tourists may not have been conquering kingdoms, armies, or territories, but they were conquering destinations and overcoming challenges such as illness, bad weather, or poor roads (Pratt 1992).

The implications of this type of travel writing were reflected in both the colonial destination and the home country. The knowledge produced by travel and travel representations of colonial destinations became a means of controlling those places (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2000). This knowledge also helped maintain ideas about the home country. Descriptions of foreign places also framed the home country through
binary oppositions. Ideas about the home country were reaffirmed by a sense of differences from places of travel (Loomba 1998; Duncan and Gregory 1999; Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2000). “Encounters with what lies outside its own boundaries are central to the formation of any culture: the line that separates inside and outside, the ‘self’ and the ‘other’ is not fixed but always shifting” (Loomba 1998, 71).

Travel writing became a popular genre with a potentially large audience in the nineteenth century (McEwan 1996). Between 1830 and 1860, the popular publishing industry in England grew substantially as a result of improvements in printing technologies as well as reductions in taxes and paper costs. Books became more accessible to fill the demand by a reading public that was increasingly literate (Anderson 1991). Travel narratives were one type of book that was readily available and provided exciting, adventurous, and informative stories about far-off, colonial, exotic locations that a reader might one day visit or at least imagine visiting. Combined with colonial fiction, travel narratives created an image of distant places in the minds of their readers. These types of literature were important in the production of popular geographies outside of academic and scientific discourse (McEwan 1996).

Travelers were conditioned to see places through various representations of them before they arrived. They prepared for a journey by reading travel narratives or travel guidebooks and took such books with them (Duncan 1999; Duncan and Gregory 1999; Gregory 1999). A circular relationship evolved between travel and literature. Literature created preconceived images of a place, and travel tested those preconceptions. Then literature subsequently allowed individuals to relive past travel experiences (Buzzard
1993; Crang 1998; Loomba 1998; Gregory 2000; Berghoff and Korte 2002; Sheller 2004). Consequently, travel writers had the ability to substantially influence future travelers in terms of what they did, saw, and expected. According to Gregory (2000, 315), “Many travellers and tourists were highly conscious of following in the footsteps of distinguished predecessors, and they made use of canonical texts—some professedly ‘literary’ in ambition, others purportedly mere ‘sketches’ or ‘letters’—to illuminate and authenticate their own travels.”

As a result of this circular relationship, the actual experience of travel and tourism became a means of encountering the places that travelers had already known in their imagination. In some cases, the experience may be a reflection of what was expected (Sheller 2004). In others, there may be a discontinuity between the experience and the image created by representations. Under this scenario, the representation is instilled with greater authority than the actuality that it described (Said 1978). Because of this power, travel literature was in the past, and continues to be today, an effective promotional device (Dann 1999; Berghoff and Korte 2002).

**Conclusion**

The story of European involvement in the Caribbean is one of change. Over the first three centuries of conquest and colonization, many of these changes took place, but, as noted by Hart (1998, 31), “At the beginning of the nineteenth century momentous events were unfolding in the Caribbean.” The colonial possessions were finally stabilized, and the rural landscape of these newly established British colonies
subsequently underwent transformation towards the creation of a sugar economy similar
to that of the existing colonies. The abolition of the slave trade and slavery also had a
significant effect on the rural landscape of many of these islands. The traditional
plantation system of agriculture was weakened, and more small holdings began to emerge
from former estates and unused hill lands. Wage labor raised the cost of producing the
region’s staple crop, sugar, the value of which was declining with increased competition
from larger and cheaper producers as well as subsidized alternatives such as sugar beets.
The combination of these factors helped push for increased agricultural diversification in
several of the islands. Trinidad began to produce greater quantities of cacao; Dominica
experimented with lime cultivation. Grenada introduced nutmeg, and Jamaica became
one of the United Fruit Company’s banana providers.

In this chapter, I have discussed the historical precedents of this project. The
nineteenth century was an important period of change for the Caribbean region as well as
an important era in the development of travel and tourism. Whether the changes were
beneficial or detrimental to the British colonies in the West Indies, they continued to fuel
interest in the region. This interest allowed the region to come to be seen as a new
destination for travel and tourism. Many individuals touring the Caribbean in official
capacities or for personal reasons wrote about the things that they saw and the events that
were taking place in travel narratives. These changes were reflected in all facets of life in
the islands, but due to the structure laid out in the early colonial period, they were
especially reflected in the rural landscape. As a result, this was a topic of particular
interest to those who traveled and wrote about their experiences in the British West Indies during the nineteenth century.
CHAPTER 4
DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The Caribbean has long been an appealing destination for travel. This began with some of the earliest voyages of discovery and continued through various expeditions of scientific exploration and colonial investigation; it continued with the development of tourism for pleasure. These new tourists traveled to the region seeking health, relaxation, and pleasant rural scenery. Regardless of the differences between types of travelers, many left behind a record of their journeys in the form of essays, letters, diaries, novels, and published travel narratives. The authors of these narratives discussed a wide range of topics in their works, including political, economic, social and environmental matters, depending on their particular interests and motivations. Many also attempted to combine objective information with subjective ideas and impressions about the islands they visited, the people they encountered, and the landscapes they observed. As indicated by Sheller (2003), travel writing was a key factor in the circulation of representations and information for the Caribbean.

In the past, geographers have used travel narratives as sources of information about places in distant regions or earlier times (Guelke and Guelke 2004). More recently, travel narratives have provided a written record for geographic studies, such as this one, in which the patterns and relationships of travel for a particular time and place have been critically analyzed. In this research, I examined twenty published travel narratives as
well as ten complementary regional sources, including geographies and travel guides, that were produced between 1815 and 1914. The narratives were written by British travelers and tourists who each visited two or more of the British islands of the Caribbean. Although the travel writers may be classified in a number of different ways based on their varying interests and motivations, all paid considerable attention to the rural landscapes of the islands they experienced. The rural landscape dominated the character of these islands and became a feature of interest through both agricultural lands and undeveloped scenery.

In this chapter, I will examine travel narratives as the principal source of data for this research. First, I will provide a brief overview of the ways in which travel writing has been used as a source of data. Second, I will examine the two sets of primary sources used in this study: travel narratives published during the specified time period and the contemporary informative texts that drew upon travel narratives. Finally, I will illustrate the coding methodology and approach used during the analysis of the data gathered from these sources.

**Primary Data Sources**

Various authors have argued for the interpretation of travel writing in geography as well as other disciplines, including literary and cultural studies, history, anthropology, and sociology (McEwan 1996; Johnston et al. 2000). Studies of past travel writings can help reveal patterns of travel and tourism during the given time period. For example, Stilz (2002, 85) writes,
the modes, attitudes, concepts and aims of travelling in past centuries, as reflected in art and literature, do not only create the charms of nostalgia, but they must be seen as the groundwork and basic conditions of tourism as a generally accepted individual and social activity. They need to be reflected upon in order to reveal why we travel, and where to.

Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2000) further argue that contemporary tourism is, in many ways, an extension of early tourism. Tourists have long sought various types of new, authentic, and exotic experiences by entering the realm of the ‘other.’ In reality, these experiences have been packaged and stereotyped by the host of explorers, travelers, and even tourists that came before them. It is important to illuminate these early precedents and trace the legacies of the colonial past in the practices and representations of contemporary tourism. In addition, studies of travel writing can help reveal ideas about the authors’ circumstances, the production of knowledge, or the relations of power.

The relationship between travel, travel writing, and imperialism has gained an increasing amount of attention in recent years (McEwan 1996; Duncan and Gregory 1999; Johnston et al. 2000; Clayton 2003; Khan 2003; Sachs 2003). Postcolonialism has been employed in studies of travel writing to reflect critically on the production of knowledge, creation of imaginative geographies and representations of colonial power (Aitchison, MacLeod, and Shaw 2000; Johnston et al. 2000; King 2003; Sachs 2003). Specifically, Pratt’s 1992 work is considered to be particularly influential in the area of travel writing. A number of recent studies have focused on narratives describing travel to various destinations within and formerly part of the British Empire (see, for example, McEwan 1996; Guelke and Morin 2001; Schulenburg 2003; Guelke and Guelke 2004). Döring (2002), Khan (2003), and Sheller (2003, 2004) are examples of studies
specifically addressing the Caribbean region by examining travel narratives by the most prominent nineteenth century British travelers to the region, including Charles Kingsley, James Anthony Froude, and Lady Annie Allnutt Brassey, among other American travel writers.

This investigation of travel writing was developed with both similarities and differences to previous studies. As with those studies, the principal source of primary data used was published travel narratives. Hoggart, Lees, and Davies (2002) argue that such published sources should be approached critically because they may be unreliable due to their motivations of commercial production, their selectivity, and their subjectivity. Crang (1998, 44), however, argues that “[l]iterature is not flawed by its subjectivity; instead that subjectivity speaks about the social meanings of places and spaces.”

I feel that narrative sources were appropriate for this study, which was intended to investigate personal experiences that were necessarily subjective and selective. These sources provided a detailed account of the visual experience travelers and tourists had with the rural landscapes of the British West Indies, and they illustrated the early patterns of travel and tourism to the region established during the colonial period. Because they were published, these sources were readily available to their contemporary readers and potential future travelers; therefore, they contributed to the body of literature that created a vivid image of the region in the mind of the reading public. This helped me examine the cycle of knowledge and expectation about the islands and their landscapes.
Similarly, as with previous studies, my analysis was based on a selected component within the travel narrative sources. The examples of studies provided above have concentrated on a particular aspect of the travel narrative, such as the authors’ descriptions of landscapes, natural history, or race relations (see, for example, Gikandi 1996; McEwan 1996; Guelke and Morin 2001). The specific content of travel narratives depended on the motivations and interests of their particular author; however, travel writers provided an enormous amount of information and discussed nearly every aspect of their voyage. They included sights, scenes, infrastructure, facilities, economic activities, political circumstances, cultural characteristics, racial concerns, gender issues, class distinctions, and more.

For this study, I chose to focus on travel narrative descriptions of rural landscapes in the British West Indies. Rural areas are those that are dominated by undeveloped land or widespread land uses such as agriculture, and any buildings or settlements that exist are embedded in the extensive countryside (Johnston et al. 2000). During the time period under consideration, 1815 to 1914, the islands of the British West Indies were almost entirely rural. The principal towns that had developed were oriented around an island’s chief port. They were often considered to be undesirable places, though, and anyone who could afford to live or spend their time outside of these areas did so. Thus, descriptions of the character of the islands were centered on the rural landscape.

I chose to use a larger number of sources than other, similar studies. Many studies of travel writing take a narrow approach. They typically employ a small number of sources, often ranging from one to four. They also concentrate on a particular
demographic of traveler such as women, naturalists, or big game hunters (see, for example, McEwan 1996; Guelke and Morin 2001; Naylor 2001; Gillespie 2002; Khan 2003). Given the scope of this project, however, I wanted to take a broader perspective. I selected twenty published travel narratives (see Table 1) that were produced within the set time frame of 1815 to 1914, as established previously. Among those selected, the earliest traveler visited the region in 1821 and the latest in 1908. Furthermore, I selected sources written by a diverse group of travelers and tourists. This would allow me to take into consideration narratives that might have been read by different target audiences and to gain a better understanding of the ideas created for these islands. It would also allow me to examine any similarities or differences that might exist in the ways certain categories of travel writers viewed the rural landscape. Finally, I thought it was appropriate to use a large number of sources in order to appropriately span the ninety-nine year time period chosen. This would allow me to examine the ways in which the patterns of tourism and tourism representations evolved over the time period.

There were both similarities and differences between the writers of the travel narratives used. It is important to note that there are many variables, factors, and motivations associated with travel that makes classification difficult. Any distinctions made between travelers are tenuous since there are so many overlapping factors involved, and all of the travel writers used in this study can be characterized in multiple ways. Each of the different influences for a particular travel writer had the potential to shape the ways in which he or she viewed and represented the landscape, although there was often one individual factor that played a greater role than the others. In addition, tensions
between conflicting influences could also play a part in the traveler’s landscape experiences.

Among the commonalities between travel writers were that they were all British, they all visited British islands in the Caribbean, and they all published narratives of their travels. As discussed above, these travel writers can not be disconnected from empire. The colonial connection was more explicit for some than others, but they all held a colonial perspective. Each was aware of and familiar with the colonial circumstances of the islands. This was reflected in their writings in a number of forms, from the glorification of past conquests and victories in the battles over colonial possession to the projection of the place and value of the colonies in the future of the Empire. Moreover, all of the travel writers reaffirmed colonial control over the islands. They assumed possession by the techniques of viewing, and they attributed possession to their countrymen and to the Empire. Their associations of the islands, with sugarcane and other tropical staples consumed at home for example, justified continued colonial activities. Their representations of the islands created knowledge about them that reflected their values.

In addition, all of the writers traveled by ship, toured at least part of the Caribbean Sea (see, for example, Map 5), and spent a minimum of two weeks on one or more of the British islands. All of the travel writers felt it was important to describe the character, and therefore the rural landscapes, of the islands they saw. Although the level of attention devoted to the rural landscape varied depending on the travel writers’ particular interests, these descriptions were present in all of the narratives. This landscape was the
Map 5: The Caribbean tour of Sir Frederick Treves
(Treves 1908, 375)
first thing that travelers noticed as they approached the islands from the sea. In many cases, travel writers would describe islands on which they did not actually land. Thus, these descriptions were primarily composed of their view of the rural landscape from the perspective of the ship at sea. When described from an island, the rural landscape was given consideration for its scenery, natural phenomenon, features of interest such as a reportedly healthy hot spring, or agriculture. Even when landscape was a feature of interest secondary to other concerns, travel writers nonetheless included such descriptions, occasionally substituting other authors’ descriptions in place of their own.

Finally, all of the travel writers drew upon the dominant artistic frameworks of the time and saw beauty in some aspect of the rural landscape. They used the tools and the terminology of landscape painting to view and describe their landscape experiences in the region. All of the travelers applied one or more of the popular aesthetic categories outlined in Chapter 2, including the sublime, beautiful, picturesque, and romantic.

Personal preference certainly played a role in which aspect or features, as well as what type of view, travel writers favored in the rural landscape; however, even the harshest critics characterized the islands of the British West Indies in terms of their scenes of beauty.

Among the differences between travel writers was the variety of primary purposes for traveling to the Caribbean region. One of the most basic distinctions that have typically been made in this regard is that of travelers and tourists. Of the twenty travel writers, eight broadly fell under the category of traveler with an explicitly stated purpose for travel. The remaining twelve travel writers would be considered tourists. There are
further distinctions within these overarching categories. For example, the travelers had business, government functions, or military posts that brought them to the region. Once they were there, they also acted in a variety of tourists capacities, such as taking a tour of an island or making an excursion to a particular attraction. The tourist category is somewhat more definitive, because each acted in a tourist capacity throughout the course of their voyage. Nonetheless, they still had very distinct motivations ranging from pleasure in the act of travel to sightseeing, adventure, health, education, and the visitation of family or friends in the islands.

The majority of the travel writers were English, although Ireland and Scotland were also represented. The majority of the writers were also male. Travel narratives produced by female travelers were increasingly common over the time period studied, though still in the minority. Other authors have specifically examined the implications of this category of travel writers (see, for example, McEwan 1996; Guelke and Morin 2001; Khan 2003). For this study, I included narratives produced by three female travel writers, two of which traveled late in the nineteenth century.

The authority of the travel writers was asserted in various ways, including titles, education, professions, and associations. Three of the twenty travel writers possessed titles of nobility. Four of the writers explicitly stated their levels of education. Of these four, two indicated Bachelor of Arts degrees and two noted Master of Arts degrees. Half of the travelers provided information on their current or previous professions. One of the travel writers indicated that he was a businessman. Two had held university positions, and three were in the medical profession. Five had held or held military posts at the time
of their travels, and two more travel writers were acting in official government capacities.

Four of the travel writers had connections to various societies, including the Royal Geographical Society, the Royal Archaeological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, the Royal Commonwealth Society, and the Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in Ireland. Finally, one travel writer was sponsored by the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company.

One half of the travel writers indicated that they were previous authors of fiction, histories, biographies, and other travel narratives. Of these ten previous authors, four were considered to be prominent literary figures. James Anthony Froude was known for his histories and biographies as well as his interest in empire. This led him on several journeys, particularly to parts of the British Empire, such as the West Indies. The books that resulted combined the adventure elements of travel with commentary on the state of the colonies (McCrank 1994). Charles Kingsley and Anthony Trollope were both considered to be prolific Victorian authors who were perhaps better known for their works of fiction (Scott 1983; Evans 1987; Cooksey 1996). Trollope’s first non-fiction book, and also his first travel book, was based on his travels in the West Indies (Evans 1987). Finally, Brassey was known specifically as a travel writer. Her first travel book, published in 1878, was composed of letters written to family and friends. After the success of this book, she produced several more based on her travels, including a Caribbean cruise (Leonard 1996). Most of the narratives were based on travel journals and letters. Many of these previous authors indicated that their narratives were intended
for publication. Only one of the travel writers explicitly made the claim that the narrative was not written for publication.

Seven of the travel writers indicated that they had previously traveled in different parts of the world, including Europe, the Americas, the South Pacific region, and Southwest Asia. The majority of the travel writers were first-time visitors to the Caribbean region, although two writers were describing return visits to the islands in their narratives. These travel writers arrived at and toured the region by naval vessels, commercial steamships, and private yachts. The specific method of sailing often determined which islands were seen and visited. The travelers and tourists visited different islands depending on the purpose of their travels or the intended destination island. Of the British West Indies, Barbados and Jamaica were the most frequently visited islands. In the process of their tour, though, many travel writers still commented on each of the islands that they encountered, even if only observed from the ship. For half of the travel writers, the Caribbean was the destination of their travels. The remaining travel writers combined this tour of the region with a journey to parts of North, Central, and South America.

Table 1: Authors of selected travel narratives

**Alexander, James Edward**, Sir (1803-1885)—Captain, 42d Royal Highlanders; author of *Travels in Ava, Persia, etc.*; traveled in the West Indies, North and South America on break from his regiment; in cooperation with the Royal Geographical Society and other literary and scientific individuals; 1831
Baird, Robert, A.M. (1798-1863)—traveled to the West Indies and North America for health reasons; narrative was written both for those visiting the region on medical advice and to provide an up-to-date “domestic portraiture” of the colonies; 1849

Boddam-Whetham, John—author of Pearls of the Pacific and Across Central America; etc.; traveled to the West Indies, Central America and British Guiana for the purposes of climbing Roraima

Brassey, Annie Allnutt, Lady (1839-1887)—author of various travel narratives; traveled with her husband, children, and servants to the West Indies; 1883

Bullen, Frank Thomas, F.R.G.S (1857-1915)—author of The Cruise of the ‘Cachalot’ and The Log of a Sea-Waif; traveled to the West Indies; had traveled the region over 30 years earlier; traveled as the guest of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company but endeavored to “subdue” this bias

Coleridge, Henry Nelson, M.A. (1798-1843)—late fellow of King’s College; traveled to and spent 6 months in the West Indies for health purposes; 1825

Dennys, Nicholas Belfield—assistant paymaster, R.N.; traveled to and spent 2 years in the West Indies and North America; accompanied His Royal Highness Prince Alfred; 1861

Froude, James Anthony (1818-1894)—author of various histories, biographies, and fiction; traveled to the West Indies; primarily interested in population; narrative was written to relate his general impressions on the condition of the colonies; 1887

Greville, John Chester, B.A. (1830-1892)—member of the Royal Archaeological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland; traveled in the West Indies, North and South America; narrative written due to the lack of reliable travel books for the region; 1867

Henderson, John—author of a history of the West Indies; traveled to the West Indies; spent the majority of time in Jamaica

Houstoun, Matilda Charlotte, Mrs. (1815-1892)—traveled to the West Indies and North America

Kingsley, Charles (1819-1875)—author of various fiction; traveled to the West Indies where his mother’s family was from; spent the majority of time in Trinidad; wished to compare reality with books; 1869
Madden, Richard Robert, M.D. (1798-1886)—Special Commissioner, Jamaica; author of *Travels in the East*, etc.; traveled with his wife and 5 other commissioners; toured the West Indies; spent 12 months in Jamaica; narrative written in the form of letters; 1833

Newton, Margaret—traveled to the West Indies; primarily interested in sketching island scenes; indicates that the narrative was not written for publication and was only done so upon the urgings of her friends; hoped readers would also want to visit the region

Philips, George—businessman; traveled to and spent 2 years in the West Indies and North America; narrative was prepared for and published by the Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in Ireland; republished by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge; 1821

Rolph, Thomas, Esq. (1820-1883)—visited the plantation of a West Indian friend and traveled to North America; 1832

Tait, William, M.B.—staff surgeon, R.N.; traveled to and spent 3 years in the West Indies, North and South America; primarily interested in sports; 1892

Treves, Frederick, Sir, Bart. (1853-1923)—sergeant surgeon to H.M. the King; Lord Rector of the University of Aberdeen; author of *The Other Side of the Lantern* and *The Tale of a Field Hospital*; traveled to the West Indies; primarily interested in history

Trollope, Anthony (1815-1882)—civil servant; author of various fiction and travel narratives; traveled to the West Indies and Central America to negotiate postal treaties; narrative was published as part of the Colonial History Series, Royal Commonwealth Society; 1858

Wilson, Thomas, B.A.—visited the plantation of his brother, Robert Wilson, Esq., in Trinidad and traveled to North America; spent the majority of time in Trinidad

In addition to these narrative sources, I also examined ten supplementary primary sources composed of six regional geographies and four guides produced within the designated time period. These sources provided a contextual understanding of the region’s physical, political, and economic conditions over the time period (Map 6), as well as the region’s developing tourism industry and travel infrastructure. Furthermore,
Map 6: Regional Geography

(Keane 1901, 468)
these sources provided the type of literature a traveler might encounter, along with travel narratives, prior to visiting the West Indies. They would have contributed to the imaginary geographies of the region and the expectations of future travelers. The authors or editors of these sources, however, had not necessarily traveled to the Caribbean themselves. In order to provide the detailed descriptions necessary for each island in the region, they often relied on descriptions of those who had spent time at that particular location. As a result, the authors of travel narratives had contributed entire chapters or were quoted at length in these supplementary sources.

**Methodology**

The primary method of data analysis used in this study was coding. Coding provides a systematic methodology as well as a measure of flexibility for the research. It offers a means of conceptually organizing and making sense of the data collected, as well as drawing together and exploring materials from a number of different sources. The process of coding is ongoing, even iterative, immersing the research in the data and involving the identification of meaningful categories, patterns, and recurring topics, becoming more complex and ultimately developing into themes (Crang 1997; Hoggart, Lees, and Davies 2002; Cope 2003; Hall and Hall 2004).

The interactions, associations, and relationships between these categories or themes also become important in data analysis, particularly in the investigation of multiple layers of meaning (Kitchin and Tate 2000; Hoggart, Lees, and Davies 2002). As a result, the coding process also requires constant comparison, theoretical questioning,
and reevaluating assumptions (Strauss and Corbin 1998; Hoggart, Lees, and Davies 2002). This progression of comparison lends robustness to the codes, categories, and ideas that evolve (Crang 1997).

A grounded theory approach emphasizes such strategies of coding (Kitchin and Tate 2000) as a general methodology for thinking about and conceptualizing data. Taken a step farther, grounded theory is also a methodology to promote the development of effective theory that is grounded in the data. “Theory evolves during actual research, and it does this through continuous interplay between analysis and data collection” (Strauss and Corbin 1998, 158).

The strategy of coding data allowed me to break down the detailed landscape descriptions that appear in the travel narratives. This is important because, as noted by Naylor (2001, 244), “to different travellers the landscapes…meant different things.” These general landscape descriptions could be separated into four main categories, including discussions of the landscape’s features, qualification of these landscape features, comparisons to other landscapes or landscape ideals, and reactions to the landscape. Each of these categories were further broken down into subcategories and supporting codes taken from the narratives. The codes were also cross-referenced in order to determine any potential relationships between categories (see Table 2).

This iterative process allowed me to understand how travelers viewed and represented the landscape and to establish general patterns in landscape descriptions between the different travelers over the given time period. Coding provided the foundation from which I was able to interpret the travel narrative data. There are
multiple potential interpretations for this data; however, my interpretation is based on the landscape and postcolonial conceptual frameworks developed in Chapter 3. This interpretation allowed me to develop grounded theory from the data to explain the contrasts and contradictions that became apparent in travel narrative landscape descriptions and ultimately the relationships between travelers and the rural landscapes of the British West Indies. Finally, this methodology helped to provide insight into the ways these definitions have shaped and affected tourism in the region during the colonial period as well as the lasting effects in the post-colonial period.

Conclusion

Over time, travel writing has served many functions, from offering entertainment and information on different places in the world to providing a source of historical data to be interpreted. In this study, I selected a set of travel narrative sources produced by a range of authors with different circumstances. Each narrative includes a wide variety of content that could potentially be investigated; however, I focused specifically on the authors’ treatment of the rural landscape in the British West Indies. The method of coding allowed me to manage the large volume of data collected from each of the twenty sources and systematically make sense of it based on the theoretical frameworks of landscape and postcolonialism. Finally, this methodology allowed the development of theory grounded in the data that will be discussed in the following chapter.
### Table 2: Sample coding schema

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Comparisons

Ideals

British Isles

Regions

Mythical

Fantastic

Art

Districts

Rural

Produce

Europe

Asia

Pacific

Paradise

Dreamland

Beautiful

England

Parks

Flowers

Italy

Persia

Australia

Eden

Fairyland

Sublime

Scotland

Lawns

Fruits

Switzerland

Syria

New Zealand

Heaven

Picturesque

Ireland

Gardens

Vegetables

Alps

Turkey

S. Pacific Islands

Arcadia

Romantic

Fields

Riviera
CHAPTER 5
VISION AND LANDSCAPE DESCRIPTIONS

The rural landscape, including features of both the physical and built environment, was a distinct component of travel narratives produced in the century following 1815 for the British West Indies. Prior to and during this period, the primary economic activity in the islands was agriculture. The development of agricultural estates had been given greater priority than the development of town centers, with the exception of an island’s capital and port. When travelers passed or approached an island from sea, they formed an impression of the harbor as well as the island’s character and overall rural landscape. Travelers who explored the island then had an opportunity to revise these initial impressions as necessary and refine them, giving them ever greater detail. In both of these cases, the travelers provided in-depth descriptions that essentially painted a verbal picture of the landscape in their narrative.

In this chapter, I will examine the role of vision and the relationships between vision, landscape and landscape experience through the descriptions that appear in travel narratives. Specifically, I will discuss the various categories developed in the data analysis process and the supporting codes found in travel narrative landscape descriptions. In the data analysis process, I determined that travelers’ descriptions of the rural landscape in the British West Indies were made up of four broad components: features of the landscape, qualification of the landscape features, comparisons to other
landscapes or landscape ideals, and reactions to the landscape. I will discuss each of these four components, their categories, any additional sub-categories, and the codes that came from the twenty narrative sources examined. In addition, I will provide textual support from the narratives to illustrate how the travelers used these codes and demonstrate how they fit each devised category level. I have separated these components for the purpose of discussion, but it is important to note that they are interlaced in landscape descriptions and each component has bearing on the others.

**Vision**

As indicated earlier, vision is an important factor in human interactions with landscape. Essentially, vision is one of the main sources of information about our surroundings, but vision is neither simple nor objective. Riley’s (1997) explores the relationships between vision, landscape, and landscape experience through the categories of the visible, the visual, and the vicarious. These categories are useful in understanding how vision is connected to the imagination, other senses, emotions, memories, personal preferences, and cultural conventions, but first it is important to understand how vision functions. Vision functions in specific and often selective ways, privileging some sights over others.

In particular, the role of vision in travel and tourism holds an interesting, and sometimes controversial position. Travelers and tourists are necessarily outsiders in relation to the landscape. They do not have the many associations and meanings that the landscape holds for those who interact with it in their daily life. Outsiders have a
different relationship with landscape. They are likely to have an idea of the landscape in their head, based on preconceptions from representations and ideals, but their first impressions are almost entirely based on vision. If travelers spend time at a destination and have greater interaction with the landscape, this outsider relationship will slowly begin to change. The travelers will start to make their own memories and form their own connections with the landscape. Regardless, these “outside” individuals will continue to experience the landscape in different ways than insiders (Riley 1997; Whyte 2002; Cosgrove 2003).

Further distinctions have been made between the role of vision for travelers and for tourists. In the emergence of tourism, vision was given outright primacy. Seeing sights became one of the primary motivations for travel and one of the principal means of experiencing a destination. As a result, tourists were criticized for the way vision was used. This type of traveler did not abide by the strict rules of observation followed by “scientific” travelers, thus their way of seeing was thought to lack precision and detail. It was characterized as a mere glance or gaze (Korte 2000). At the same time, tourists were criticized for relying on vision in their encounters with the peoples and places visited. Using vision as a source of knowledge and means of experience, they were thought to gain only a superficial knowledge of and an insubstantial relationship with the destination (Buzzard 1993).

Apart from their primary motivations for travel, the writers used in this study viewed the landscape as tourists. They were influenced by landscape aesthetics and instructed in the practice of gazing at landscapes for contemplation and emotional
response. As such, they were also acquainted with the techniques of perspective that allowed them to select, frame, and compose the landscape from their particular point of view. They oriented the landscape around this point of view and captured it there in their memories, in their sketchbooks, and in their narratives. It is this specific vision of the landscape, then, that is represented to the readers of their travel narratives at home.

Additionally, tourists were encouraged to use these techniques of vision from a vantage point or prospect, which was typically at a distance from and elevated over the landscape. From this perspective, the landscape was at their command, and they could enframe it to achieve the most desirable view. There was a range of vantage points in the British West Indies from which tourists could enjoy any number of rural landscapes. Few journeyed to high places such as mountain tops or volcanic cones just to gain a superior vantage point over the island landscape. Anthony Trollope [1858] was one such traveler that explicitly hiked into the Blue Mountains of Jamaica to witness the sunrise from that prospect. He determined that the benefit of the vantage point did not outweigh the trial of getting there. He wrote, “as for the true ascent—the nasty, damp, dirty, slippery, boot-destroying, shin-breaking, veritable mountain! Let me recommend my friends to let it alone” (Trollope 1968, 50).

Many of the travel writers used in this study that cruised the Caribbean Sea, however, did not spend time at every island (Maps 7 and 8). Consequently, these individuals did not have the opportunity to experience the landscape in any other way than through vision. Many used their position on the deck of their ship as a vantage point
Map 7: Islands described by travel writers based on visitation (from Watts 1987, 2)

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<tr>
<th>Number of Island Visits</th>
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Map 8: Islands described by novel writers based on the view from the ship

(from Watts 1987, 2)

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<th>Number of Observations</th>
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<th>4-5</th>
<th>6-8</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean Sea</td>
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Map showing islands described by novel writers based on the view from the ship.
for viewing the landscape. For example, those tourists traveling by means of a private vessel and sailing on their own itinerary may have had no reason to stop at particular islands. Nonetheless, they observed each of the islands that they passed and described their landscapes from the perspective of the ship.

Those tourists traveling by mail steamships could potentially disembark at an island’s port while the mail was exchanged. Time was generally restricted, though, so many chose to remain on board. John Boddam-Whetham noted that his ship stopped at several islands but spent only an hour in each port. He lamented, “How pleasant it would be to spend a few days on each of these West Indian islands! to visit their souffrières, their mountain forests, their wild hills, and their cultivated estates! but, at present, to set one’s foot on land necessitates a two weeks’ sojourn” (Boddam-Whetham 1879, 53). Still, while the ship was at port he sat on deck, gazed upon the island landscape, and assessed island life based on the activity he saw in the harbor. The scene depicted in the photograph below (Figure 1) provides an example of this type of view.

![Figure 1: Laborie, St. Lucia](Aspinall 1910, 174)
Finally, individuals such as Nicholas Belfield Dennys [1861] traveled aboard naval vessels. These ships often stopped at the various island stations but the crew maintained their cabins on the ship. Dennys (1862) typically did not go ashore except for arranged excursions and social events. For these travelers, their only experience with landscape was their view of an island’s overall landscape. These different perspectives often shaped the ways in which the landscape was viewed. Cosgrove (1998, 170) describes this as a “conflict of landscape images.” Typically, when viewed from a distance, landscapes were more likely to be seen ideally. From a closer perspective, especially when an individual has to physically engage with the landscape to some extent, they were more likely to be seen less idealistically (Cosgrove 1998). This is evidenced in Trollope’s (1968) mountain hiking experienced described earlier.

**Landscape Features**

It is important to understand how travelers and tourists used vision in order to examine the relationships between this vision, the landscape of the British West Indies, and the travelers’ landscape experiences. In the first type of relationship, the visible, vision is a source of mental and sensory information about the landscape (Riley 1997). This particular relationship becomes important at the most basic level of travel narrative landscape descriptions. The travel writers needed to access and process information about what exactly they saw in the landscape from various vantage points and prospects. Then they provided this information to their readers. In order to do this, travel writers had to recognize specific landscape features. Beyond this recognition, the writers began
to associate these features with various meanings and imaginings that would move them into the realm of the visual and the vicarious.

In this component of landscape description, vision continues to play a key role. Depending on the particular perspective, an island as a whole could be viewed as a landscape or a particular scene on an island could be framed as a landscape. In the case of the former, the largest, most distinctive characteristics, such as mountain ranges or extensive sugar cane plantations, became the centerpiece of the landscape. For the latter, these characteristics were exchanged for finer details, for example the rocky surface of mountain slopes or individual sugar cane plants, that became the focus of the landscape. In addition, a landscape could be an environment in which the traveler is surrounded. In this circumstance, the traveler has a much more direct experience with the landscape. As a result, different senses and emotions will have a greater part to play along with vision. Overall, the types of landscape features most commonly identified in the narratives could be divided into three broad categories: landforms, water, and vegetation.

Landforms

The first category of landscape features was landforms. In general, this category included the larger, distinctive landscape features. These features primarily appeared as a key element in descriptions of an island as a landscape. When travelers and tourists viewed an island as a whole, often from their ship, these were the features that were most likely to catch their gaze. With this view, travel writers gained information on the character of a particular island’s physical environment. To a lesser extent, these
prominent features were also included in landscape descriptions as the background for a specific panorama and positioned as an obstacle to be overcome as the traveler moved through an island landscape. As the background in a landscape scene, landforms helped the traveler frame the view in a manner suitable for contemplation or aesthetic response more closely associated with the visual. As a barrier to progress, travel writers found themselves inside the landscape. They used vision to assess what they needed to do to move through or triumph over the landscape. In so doing, the relationship became more visual and vicarious. Specifically, the landform category may be further divided into the following sub-categories: highlands, lowlands, and flatlands.

Of these three sub-categories, the travel writers collectively found highlands to be the most interesting type of landform in the British West Indies. In landscape descriptions, references to hills and mountains more than doubled references to any other single landscape feature. Essentially, these were the types of landforms that were most likely to attract the travelers’ or tourists’ vision because they were large, imposing, and impressive, such as the “typical” view depicted in Figure 2. This was particularly true when they were viewed from a distance, whether they were an integral part of an island as a whole or the contextual background of a specific island scene. When Thomas Rolph [1832] looked inland, mountains dominated the landscape. “We rode along the sea-coast several miles, enjoying on the one side the prospect of a rude, romantic chain of mountains, wild and intimidating, of the most fantastic shapes and forms, and linked in stern confederacy, exhibiting a noble elevation” (Rolph 1841, 23).
Most of the travel writers employed in this study viewed the highlands of the region only from a distance. Typically, travelers and tourists spent an extended period of time on just a few islands. Only those who had a longer stay on a particular island really had the opportunity to make the journey into the mountainous interior of Jamaica or the volcanic islands of the Lesser Antilles. Among those who traveled into the highlands, most had a specific purpose. On various excursions, these individuals intended to, for example, visit upland estates such as Trinidad’s cacao plantations or experience the reported healthfulness of the highland environment in Jamaica. As indicated earlier, they were less likely to make the trip for expressly scenic reasons.

Volcanic mountains presented a similar circumstance, yet they should still be considered a distinct code. Both travelers and tourists were intrigued by this natural phenomenon. The notion of the Caribbean volcano was extremely powerful, particularly at both ends of the time period under study when eruptions took place in the region. St. Vincent’s Soufrière erupted in 1812 and again in 1902, and the latter event took place
within hours of an eruption on the French island of Martinique. Travel writers were often aware of these events and referred to them even many years after they took place. For instance, George Philips [1821] traveled ten years after the 1812 eruption. While visiting St. Vincent, he made inquiries about the event and chose to include a witness’s account in his narrative (Philips 1831).

While vision allowed travel writers to access information about the volcanic character of the relevant islands, it was perhaps the vicarious that allowed them to imagine the landscape in times of an eruption. Like mountains, travel writers viewed and described the appearance of volcanoes from distant prospects, whether from a ship or another point on the island. In addition, travelers and tourists were more likely to make an expedition to a volcanic mountain specifically to experience these unique features than an ordinary mountain landscape. They were able to gain further information from this close perspective by examining the scarring, the rocks, the soil, and other physical remnants of past volcanic eruptions.

In landscape descriptions, lowlands were clearly associated with highlands. Viewed from a distance, valleys and ravines were seen as the natural complement to mountains and hills in the island landscape. In describing Tobago, Sir James Edward Alexander [1831] (1833, 183) wrote, “We had a view of the melancholy island in its whole extent, the high central ridge of basalt with separate hills rising from it, and below it, and forming deep and narrow ravines, through which streams were seen to pour.” Additionally, areas of lowlands provided a unique framing device for more specific landscape scenes. Alexander (1833, 291) also wrote, “Beyond this the valley becomes
wider, and forms a basin, shut round by the mountains; and here, in different directions are observed some small houses and plantations delightfully situated on the slope of the hills.”

Highlands and lowlands were further connected in regard to the landscape as an obstacle to be overcome. Many individuals wrote about the hardships they faced when traveling through the highlands. The harrowing conditions of mountain roads and paths prompted many travelers and tourists to give greater attention to what lay below. In one example, Dennys made the trip up Soufrière by mule. He duly noted that “a false step would have capsized the two of us down a declivity of about 150 feet. One of our officers did go over, but, fortunately for himself, parted company from his horse before reaching the bottom, where the shrubs and vegetation broke his fall” (Dennys 1862, 30).

The last landform type, flatlands, appeared to be the least remarkable. From a distance, these plains, glades, and meadows were primarily noted for their contrast with the previous two types of landforms. Overall, travelers and tourists were interested in flatlands to determine their current agricultural production or their future agricultural potential. James Anthony Froude [1887] assessed this type of landform in Jamaica. He found that “[i]n the alluvial meadows on the river-side were tobacco fields, cleanly and carefully kept, belonging to my Spanish friend in Kingston, and only too rich in leaves. There were sago too, and ginger and tamarinds, and cocoa, and coffee, and cocoa-nut palms” (Froude 1909, 210).
Water

The second category of landscape features was water. This category was simply broken down into two sub-categories: salt water and fresh water. Travel writers included coastal scenes in landscape descriptions, including salt water features. These scenes were viewed from one of two vantage points. First, from the perspective of a ship, travel writers looked across the sea to a landscape composed of the island as a whole and framed by particular aspects of salt water features. Second, from a place on an island, often a suitable prospect in the interior highlands, travelers and tourists looked across the island to a landscape featuring the juxtaposition of land and salt water features.

In contrast, fresh water features were typically viewed from a closer perspective, when travel writers were more immersed in the landscape. Features such as lakes, waterfalls, rivers, streams, and springs figured prominently into landscape descriptions. They could provide a source of information about the natural environment as well as the agricultural capacities of an island. More often, however, travel writers were interested in these landscape features for other purposes. Travelers who explored the interior of islands were attracted to landscapes with fresh water features that would be apt aesthetic experiences. For example, many tourists visited scenic waterfalls like Trinidad’s Blue Basin. In addition, health travelers sought to experience a variety of reportedly salubrious hot, mineral, and sulphur springs.

Both sub-categories of water could also be seen as an obstacle in traversing the landscape. Travel writers frequently complained about their salt water encounters as they passed through coastal landscapes in the process of moving between ship and land. Other
writers considered certain categories of fresh water, such as rivers and streams like the one depicted in Figure 3, to be just as much of a barrier to exploring interior landscapes. According to Trollope (1968, 32), for example, “Crossing the same river four-and-twenty times is tedious; especially if this be done in heavy rain, when the road is a narrow track through thickly-wooded ravines, and when an open umbrella is absolutely necessary. But so often had we to cross the Waag-water in our route from Kingston to the northern shore.”

![Figure 3: A jungle stream in Trinidad (Treves 1908, 68)](image)

**Vegetation**

The third category of landscape features was vegetation. Of the three categories of landscape features, this was perhaps the most complex. Over half of all rural landscape features described in travel narratives consisted of some type of vegetation. Travel writers viewed vegetation from both distant and close perspectives as well as on both large and small scales. At the larger scale, the types of features described broadly fell into two sub-categories: *forests* and *fields*. The forests included both *wet* and *dry*
forests, and the fields ranged from large plantations to small provision grounds and garden plots. At the smaller scale, landscape features were narrowed down to specific types of trees, such as hardwoods or palms, in addition to various shrubs, bamboo, ferns, and flowers. In this respect, vision provided ample information for travelers interested in identifying and cataloging individual types of plants. Many were particularly interested in recognizing and subsequently comparing those flowers or other plants that they might have seen grown under artificial conditions at home.

In particular, the types of produce from the different classifications of fields generated considerable interest among both travelers and tourists. The visible also played a significant role for these features. Most were interested in the extent and productivity of agriculture, and many based their assessment of colonial agriculture on the information obtained through their view of the landscape. The larger estates produced commercial crops that travelers were familiar with to some extent. These travel writers were, however, typically only familiar with the final form of a specific product. As a result, they were particularly interested in gathering information about these products in the cultivating and processing stages. These products included fruits like oranges, limes, pineapples, or bananas and spices like cacao, nutmeg, cinnamon, or ginger. The travel literature also frequently depicted tropical produce, both as it was grown and in the form that would be better recognized by foreign consumers, such as the still-life shown in Figure 4. These images supported ideas of tropical fertility, abundance, and riches.
In addition, the other staple crops of the islands were a primary feature of interest. *Coffee, tobacco, and sugarcane* were features that all travel writers viewed and described. Döring (2002) finds sugar to be a particularly important symbol in travel writing for the Caribbean. He considers it to be “a natural representative of the cultural landscape of the Caribbean and, at the same time, of the social power in which it is materially grounded” (Döring 2002, 51). Consequently, illustrations such as Figure 5 were common in travel literature. Sugar had a long history in the region, even at the time in which the writers used in this study traveled. These travel writers viewed sugarcane plants and plantations as an interesting tropical product, a sign of prosperity, and an indication of culture and civilization. For example, even as late as the start of the twentieth century, the sight of extensive sugar cane fields figures prominently into Sir Frederick Treves’s description of the condition of St. Kitts. He wrote,

> St. Kitts will impress the visitor as being not only well-to-do but comfortable. Almost every available part of it is cultivated, for fields of sugar-cane climb far up the mountain sides. The island possesses excellent roads; its villages are neat,
while there is about them little of that squalor or air of dejection which is conspicuous in neighbouring settlements (Treves 1909, 177).

**Figure 5:** A West Indian sugar plantation  
(Bates 1882, 183)

In contrast to the large estates, the smaller fields were more likely to grow *subsistence crops*. Travel writers may have been less familiar with these particular crops, such as *plantains*, *breadfruit*, *arrowroot*, or *sweet potatoes*, but they were interested in them nonetheless. For example, Charles Kingsley [1869] (1871, 432) wrote the following about an experience in Trinidad: “The ‘provision-grounds’ of the negroes were very interesting. I had longed to behold, alive and growing, fruits and plants which I had heard so often named, and seen so often figured, that I had expected to recognize many of them at first sight, and found, in nine cases out of ten, that I could not.” Travel writers gained information about such unfamiliar plants through the visible; however, more often they considered these provision grounds another element of the picturesque island landscape. They had a sufficiently natural appearance and were visually interesting enough to attract the attention of travelers and tourists; however, these individuals rarely gave provision grounds anything more than a glance. The scene photographed in Figure
6 presents the picturesque image of peasant grounds. The small “trash huts” made with natural materials become part of the jungle-like surroundings.

![Image of a small hut]

**Figure 6:** “Trash huts” on the edge of the High Woods, Trinidad (Treves 1908, 79)

Finally, when travel writers were inside the landscape, vegetation could also present an obstacle. Particularly in forests or other areas of dense foliage, vegetation was a barrier to travelers’ and tourists’ progress through the landscape. Some felt threatened by it, and all attempted to overcome it so that they could pass. In Trinidad, Treves (1909, 79) found that “[t]he world-old jungle is almost impenetrable. Those who would traverse its perplexing depths must follow the method of the early explorer, and hack a way through with a cutlass.”

**Landscape Qualification**

In the second type of relationship between vision, landscape, and landscape experience, vision becomes a source of pleasure from the landscape. The visual is primarily concerned with the cognitive ordering of the landscape features identified above for visual satisfaction (Riley 1997). According to Gregory (2001), unfamiliar
landscapes often appeared undifferentiated. As a result, viewers have to organize and distinguish the landscape through the elevations, planes, colors, and more. This relationship becomes important in the transition from the basic identification of landscape features to the processing of them. In the second component of landscape descriptions then, the features identified above are qualified. These qualifications indicate the appearance and arrangement of the features as seen by the viewer. As they were transferred to the travel narratives, they functioned as details that created a more in-depth image of West Indian landscapes in the minds of readers back home. This component primarily addresses the order of landscape features, while the associated meanings will be dealt with in the vicarious.

In this component, one of the key themes of this study began to emerge, that of contrast. This theme will become increasingly apparent through the discussion of each of the remaining components and will be discussed in greater depth in the following chapter. Overall, the qualifications of landscape found in travel narratives could be separated into five broad categories: color, size, terrain, climate, and time.

Color

The first category of landscape qualification was color. Color is a particularly visual aspect of landscape, and it was the most widely used landscape qualifier. Travel writers saw color in nearly all of the landscape features identified above, and the entire spectrum of color was represented in a range of shade variations. For example, travel writers often saw the color blue in landscape features ranging from water, sky,
mountains, vegetation, and wildlife. To define this blue more specifically and to indicate
the richness of color, travelers and tourists equally used variations including *azure*,
*indigo*, *sapphire*, *turquoise*, and *ultramarine*. Overall, *green* was the most important
color used by travel writers. Green, together with greenery, greenly and greenness, were
used more frequently than any other single landscape qualification, color or otherwise.
This was primarily in reference to vegetation, and the greenness of this vegetation
seemed to be one of the most striking aspects of the visual landscape for travelers in the
British West Indies.

The range of colors and their vividness attracted the travelers’ gaze, and most
were clearly impressed. They then used descriptive variations in their narratives in an
attempt to add depth to the features and create a clearer image of the landscape in the
readers’ minds. The arrangement of these colors, however, did not always have the
expected effect. The most pleasing ordering of colors was when a variety of similar
shades were blended together harmoniously in the landscape. For instance, according to
Lady Annie Brassey [1883], Jamaica’s range of Blue Mountains was aptly named. “The
shades of blue on the mountains this morning, varying from the darkest violet and purple
to palest azure, and including china, indigo, turquoise, Japanese, dark, light, and pale
blue, were exquisite” (Brassey 1885, 223).

Regardless of how pleasing colors might be individually, the arrangement or
combination of colors could also have an adverse effect on travelers. In some cases, one
particular color, typically green, dominated the landscape. As a result, travel writers
often found it overwhelming or monotonous, in spite of shade variations. In other cases,
the boldness of different colors had the potential to appear in sharp contrast with each other when combined in a landscape or landscape feature. Frank Bullen, for example, found the latter to be true when he encountered a flamboyant tree in Jamaica. He wrote, “Imagine an immense tree, with spreading branches shading an area of say two thousand square feet, the dark green of its foliage almost concealed beneath a veritable mass of blazing crimson blossoms. They are so bright and pure in their intense colour that they strike upon the eye almost as does the sudden blast of a trumpet upon the ear (Bullen 1905, 59).

Size

The second category of landscape qualification was size. Travel writers used vision to assess the dimensions of the landscapes and landscape features they encountered. They then used the terminology of size to impress upon their readers the scope of the scenes they experienced. Clearly travelers and tourists were more likely to be impressed by the magnitude of features, for example, the largeness of a mountain or the thickness of a forest. These characteristics would be more likely to produce the reaction of awe or even fear that was associated with the sublime and were frequently depicted in illustrations such as Figure 7. Many codes were employed in this regard, including immense, massive, extensive, vast, dense, and ample. Henry Nelson Coleridge [1825], for example, was awed at the sight of Trinidad upon approach. In his narrative he noted, “on the left the immense precipices of Trinidad covered to the extremest height
with gigantic trees…” (Coleridge 1862, 59). Terms such as these were used most strongly and most frequently.

![Figure 7: Jamaica’s Blue Mountains](Froude 1909, 194)

At the same time, contrasting indicators of size were also employed in landscape descriptions, including *small, little, thin, and bare*. These characterizations were not used to the same extent as their counterparts, but they were present nonetheless. Some differences are easily explained. Most basically, there are differences in the dimensions of landscape features. Mountains, forests, trees, and plantations were more likely to be viewed as large, whereas rocks, plants, leaves, and gardens were more likely to be viewed as small. In some cases though, the classification scheme was reversed for landscape features. When travelers or tourists characterized islands, mountains, or plantations as
small, they typically did so by means of comparison with other islands or other features on a particular island or in the region.

Travel writers most frequently contrasted the dimensions of large features like mountains and forests between islands that presented sharply different appearances. Both of these features could be found on islands such as Dominica and Barbados but to a different extent. Boddam-Whetham commented upon the visual aspect of Mount Hillaby on Barbados. He noted that “the scenery is bold and mountainous, though of course on a small scale” (Boddam-Whetham 1879, 87). Likewise, some travel writers viewed the forests of Barbados as bare, particularly when experienced after the less developed islands of the Antilles.

Finally, the case of Dominica is more difficult to explain. Travel writers used the adjective bare to describe Dominica as often as Barbados. The vicarious landscape that travel writers paint of Dominica in their narratives, however, is anything but bare. In this context, the term is generally employed to characterize the island’s rocky landscapes that are devoid of vegetation. Boddam-Whetham (1879) provides one exception to this description. He specifically employs the term ‘bare’ in illustrating Dominica to refer to a landscape that is largely uncultivated. The bare hills he describes are explicitly contrasted with those that are entirely cultivated.

**Terrain**

The third category of landscape qualification was terrain. In this category, travel writers visually assessed the pattern and texture of the landscape features identified
above. Specifically, these qualifiers referred to the broader landscape perspective, including an island as a landscape or the larger landform categories. Travelers and tourists should have been especially conscious of these patterns as a result of the predominant landscape aesthetic classifications. The picturesque in particular was characterized by rough, irregular, or varied qualities that would allow a scene to be effectively represented in painting. By way of contrast, the beautiful was characterized by smooth and neat qualities that rendered such scenes visually pleasing in their natural state.

As with size, travel writers were more likely to give consideration to the dramatic visual landscape patterns, in particular, those that were uneven. A range of codes were employed for this effect, including irregular, sharp, rugged, jagged, and craggy. By characterizing landscape features in this way, travel writers created the image of visually interesting, varied, and essentially picturesque island landscapes. For instance, Robert Baird [1849] made the connection in his description of St. Lucia. He wrote, “The island of St. Lucia is volcanic and mountainous, and, as seen from the sea, the aspect of its craggy summits is exceedingly picturesque” (Baird 1850, 27). At the same time, travelers and tourists also encountered landscapes that contrasted in appearance and had a more even texture. These landscapes were characterized as regular, smooth, flat, and soft. They were perhaps less interesting than the others, but for many, they were more visually pleasing as a result of their order and beauty. The island of Nevis, shown in Figure 8, was often cited as one such example.
The differences between these patterns became important as travel writers compared and contrasted landscape features. First, the difference may be partially accounted for by taking into consideration the type of landscape features. Mountains were more likely to be viewed as uneven than meadows, while untended vegetation also had the potential to be seen as uneven in contrast with cultivated fields. Rolph was one tourist who visually organized the landscape by means of this contrast. After he viewed the landscape of Barbados from a vantage point on Barbados, he wrote, “I saw all the fine views in the island, but this appeared to me the most interesting by far, as the bold, varied, and rugged features of Scotland are seen to much greater advantage when contrasted with the soft, richly cultivated swells, and more polished country in the opposite direction” (Rolph 1841, 29).

Travel writers also contrasted the landscapes of islands as a whole. Islands such as St. Lucia, as indicated in the example above, that had a more mountainous appearance were more likely to be characterized as irregular than those that were flatter, such as Antigua (Maps 9 and 10). At the same time, islands like the former generally had less

**Figure 8:** The “soft” hills of Nevis (Henderson 1905, 252)
agriculture, while islands like the latter had a more developed, cultivated landscape. This visual aspect of the landscape would reinforce the classifications already given. In addition to contrasting islands with dissimilar landscapes and land uses, this category was also used to make distinctions between islands that were more similar in appearance. For example, when Alexander (1833, 269) sought to distinguish between the nearby islands of Grenada and St. Vincent, he wrote, “the hills of the former are rounded in their outline, while those of the latter are sharp and abrupt…”

Map 9: St. Lucia—a “mountainous” island (Nelles Verlag 1989)
Time

The fourth category of landscape qualification was time. Travel writers attempted to assess the age or time scale of the landscape features they identified. This is an interesting category because travelers had distinctly different standards and means of measuring time. For some travel writers, age or time could be clearly seen in the landscape itself. Overall, it may be surprising to note that travel writers more frequently classified the landscape features in this region of the New World in historic terms, such as old, ancient, and primeval. Both infrastructural and natural aspects of the landscape, from roads to buildings, sugar mills, volcanoes, and forests, in these terms. In addition, Barbados itself was described by several travel writers as an ancient colony.

Some tourists measured time in a more philosophical manner, which then had a bearing on the ways in which they viewed the landscape. John Chester Greville [1867], for example, felt that the British West Indies had no history or at least no great depth of
history in comparison with places in Europe and Asia. Consequently, he found that “there is something cloying and mawkish in the scenery of countries, howsoever beautiful they be, which have no history” (Greville 1869, 18). Likewise, Boddam-Whetham also connected landscape and history. In Barbados, he wrote, “But if the island is devoid of great physical beauty, it is interesting, as being the most ancient colony in the British empire, one also that has never changed hands” (1879, 84).

Other travel writers took a more moderate position on the relationship between landscape and time. In contrast to the writers cited above, John Henderson (1905) thought that the history of the region was rich and played a significant role in the wider history of Britain. He admitted that in vicarious landscapes, in the “dreams of Empire,” the West Indies were often overlooked but that they should be given consideration for what they were in the past and what they could potentially be in the future. Finally, in Froude’s (1909, 236) assessment of the conditions of colonial Jamaica, he wrote, “The time had not been long as we count time in the history of nations, but there had been enough for the arches to fall in, the stream to return to its native bed, the tropical vegetation to spring up in its wild luxuriance and bury in shade the ruins of a past civilization.”

Climate

The final category of landscape qualification was climate. Unlike the previous four categories, climate was not assessed visually in the landscape but sensually. Nonetheless, this category was still an important factor in the ways travelers and tourists
related to, interacted with, and represented island environments. For the most part, the
codes employed under this category were applied to islands as a whole. The exception to
this was when travel writers encountered a particular landscape in which they found the
climatic factors to be different from the rest of the island.

As would be expected, travel writers were most likely to consider the
environments of the British West Indies to be hot. This was especially true when the
tropical islands were held in comparison with their home environments. Surprisingly,
however, codes to describe heat were used only slightly more often than codes to
describe coldness. This contrast is best explained in concurrence with the presence of
other landscape codes, specifically landscape features. Typically, interior highlands and
forested landscapes were considered surprisingly cool. During his stay in Jamaica, Dr.
Richard Robert Madden [1833] (1970, 111) found that “[w]hen a gentleman of Kingston
wants to banquet on cool air, and give his pores a holiday, he mounts his horse and rides
into the mountains of Port-Royal or Liguanea. A distance of half a dozen miles makes a
difference of a dozen degrees in temperature…”

Similarly, travel writers expected these tropical islands to have a moist or damp
environment. In agreement with the theme of contrast, though, some landscapes or
islands were described as dry. In this respect, the landscape could be visually assessed in
the qualification of this category. For landscapes, travel writers referred to those with dry
water features, such as a dry stream, or the character of the landscape in what was
considered to be the dry season for the islands. For islands as a whole, Antigua in
particular had the reputation of a ‘dry’ island, especially in comparison with many of the other Lesser Antilles that received greater rainfall.

**Landscape Comparisons**

In the third type of relationship between vision, landscape, and landscape experience, this relationship allows for the composition of internal landscapes. For the vicarious, the real, observed landscape provides the source material for the internal landscapes that are often more personal and detailed (Riley 1997). This relationship is important in the travel narratives in two ways. First, the vicarious involves the personal preferences, cultural conventions, and preconceived ideas of landscape that travelers and tourists transport to the region with them. When they viewed the landscapes of the British West Indies, they compared the visible and the visual with the vicarious.

In the third component of landscape descriptions then, the features identified above are compared to internal landscapes based on other landscapes previously experienced, those experienced through art and literature, and those experienced through others’ representations of them, for example, earlier travelers. Readers of travel narratives were also likely to be familiar with these landscapes or landscape types through the same means. This is an important category because, as Duncan (1999, 151) notes, “travellers’ accounts operated through a set of exoticizing and familiarizing gestures. Victorian writers, men and women alike, were shocked simultaneously by the uncanny familiarity of the place, and by its alterity.” The landscape comparisons in travel narratives to the British West Indies could be broken down into four primary
Landscape Aesthetics

The first category of landscape comparisons was aesthetics. As indicated earlier, the sublime, the beautiful, the picturesque, and the romantic were aesthetic concepts that emerged in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. By the beginning of the time period under study, each of these concepts would have been widely circulated in popular usage. As a result, travelers and tourists would have been familiar with them, and nearly all of the travel writers reflected on one or more of them in their narratives. This widespread popular usage, however, had caused the concepts to begin to lose the precise meanings and characterizations laid out by Edmund Burke and William Gilpin. While the travel writers may have been aware of these authors’ initial intentions for the sublime, beautiful, and picturesque, few attempted to adhere to the specific conventions that they had established.

Among these four sub-categories of landscape aesthetics, travel writers drew upon the sublime least in their narratives. It was referenced by only five of the twenty writers who were predominantly tourists: Coleridge (1862), Alexander (1833), Madden (1970), Baird (1850), and Margaret Newton (1897). At the same time, the sublime was also the concept that these individuals most closely associated with its original meaning. For these tourists, the sublime was a sharp, awe-inspiring vicarious landscape with unusual and impressive features. This landscape was then compared with the landscapes of the
islands as a whole, often from the vantage point of their ship. As such, they found that the landscapes of Dominica, Jamaica, Trinidad, and especially the volcanic landscape of St. Vincent, corresponded with this particular idea. Newton remained awed by the sight of Dominica. She found that “[a]s we came nearer, the forms grew grander, and ever more and more wild and rugged—more sublime and varied in shape” (Newton 1897, 50).

In contrast with the sublime, the beautiful was frequently used in the narratives. Beauty, beautiful, beautifully, and beauteous together ranked among the most widely used adjectives in landscape descriptions. All of the travel writers applied one or all of these forms liberally to landscape scenery as well as specific landscape features, including everything from flowers to trees, fields to forests, hills to volcanoes, and mountains to caves. The travel writers did not adhere to the strict guidelines for the beautiful that Burke established. In addition, they did not appear to hold a particular vicarious landscape that was associated with the idea of the beautiful. Coleridge, one of the earliest tourists used in this study, was the exception. He held a specific vicarious landscape for the beautiful based on Burke’s terms. In his travel throughout the region, he found the landscape of Grenada to best match this landscape. He wrote, “Grenada is perhaps the most beautiful of the Antilles, meaning by this that her features are soft and noble without being great and awful” (Coleridge 1862, 96).

Although Burke established the sublime and the beautiful in contrast with one another, travel writers did not necessarily make this connection. Few travel writers made direct comparisons between two such landscapes, and those that did elected the term
‘lovely’ to oppose the sublime. In regards to island landscapes, Alexander (1833, 269) wrote, “If Grenada is lovely, St. Vincent’s is sublime in character.”

The majority of travel writers also drew upon the concept of the picturesque. As with the beautiful, writers did not appear to have a specific vicarious landscape for the concept of the picturesque. Likewise, they did not adhere to the Gilpin’s guidelines for the picturesque. Instead, the picturesque was typically used in the strictest sense of the word, to refer to landscapes that looked like a picture. Under this idea, travelers and tourists employed the picturesque in the landscape descriptions of most of the British West Indies. The only islands that travel writers determined did not fit their vague notion of the picturesque were the flatter, highly cultivated islands of Antigua and Barbados, excluding Barbados’s Scottish Highlands.

Several travel writers reflected on Barbados’s relationship to picturesque landscapes. Madden’s vicarious picturesque landscape possessed clear landscape features. He wrote, “If rivers, mountains, and forests are necessary ingredients in the composition of a beautiful landscape, Barbadian scenery has no claim to picturesque attractions” (1970, 23). Similarly, Trollope (1868, 192) determined that “‘Barbados is a very respectable little island, and it makes a great deal of sugar. It is not picturesquely beautiful, as are almost all the other Antilles, and therefore has but few attractions for strangers.”

Travel writers used the concept of the romantic to a slightly lesser extent than the beautiful and the picturesque. These individuals generally used the term in ways that were consistent with the initial sensibility. This concept, however, was not defined as
rigidly as the other terms. There was greater freedom in the formation of vicarious romantic landscapes and the comparison with real landscapes. Often similar to the picturesque, travel writers found the landscapes in the British West Indies that best matched their vicarious romantic landscapes were wild and rude. They possessed astonishing features like mountains, cliffs, valleys, and forests.

More specifically, these romantic landscapes were places that seemed to exert some sort of visual and sensual influence over the travelers. In Trinidad, Brassey (1885, 117) noted, “We would willingly have lingered to enjoy the attractions of this delightfully romantic scene: but daylight now began to fade, and we were warned that it would be prudent to retrace our steps before it became absolutely dark.” Likewise, in Dominica Newton (1897, 143) found “a spot to dream in. A scene so romantic and so exquisite, so replete with the charm of serenity and balmy influence that one returns there again and again at the sunset hour…”

Overall, these aesthetic landscape concepts were employed in the description of the landscapes that travelers deemed visually interesting, unique, or attractive. Most travelers did not have a specific vicarious landscape for each of the concepts. Rather, they were often used interchangeably and even concurrently, in spite of their apparent differences. For example, Madden used three of the four concepts in the description of one Jamaican landscape. He informs his readers that “terror is an ingredient that must always enter into the composition of the sublime and beautiful. Well, the sublime and beautiful were indeed mingled with the prospect we had before us, when we reached the delightful spot that bears the romantic name of Dolly Moon’s Gap” (Madden 1970, 113-
114). Also in Jamaica, Baird (1850, 94) noted that “the eye is delighted by a succession of romantic scenes of singular formation and exceedingly picturesque beauty.”

Landscape Ideals

The second category of landscape comparisons was ideals. Many of these idyllic landscapes were based on longstanding mythical places. These myths have been influenced by projects in religion, art, and literature. They have been interpreted in a number of different ways over time and represented in multiple forms. The travel writers would have been exposed to these various interpretations and representations and created their vicarious landscapes accordingly. In addition, early explorers and travelers had established the idea of the Caribbean islands as a paradisiacal place by the time the writers included in this study traveled. These travel writers would have been aware of and perhaps drew upon these existing representations. Thus, not all of the writers held the same vicarious landscapes when they compared the landscapes of the British West Indies to these mythical places.

Travel writers compared various island landscapes, typically islands as a whole, to paradise, heaven, Eden, and Elysium. Some writers used this idea of a paradise in a manner similar to the aesthetic concepts discussed above. Kingsley, who enthusiastically used the concept of paradise, employed it in this way. From the opening pages of his travel narrative, he exclaimed that he was finally going to have the opportunity to see “the reported wonders of the Earthly Paradise” (Kingsley 1871, 13). Later in the text, he more fully explained his use and meaning of the term, thereby indicating the type of
vicarious landscape he held for paradise. He wrote, “I must be excused for using this word (paradise) so often; but I use it in the original Persian sense, as a place in which natural beauty has been helped by art” (Kingsley 1871, 292). Bullen (1905) also linked nature and art in his concept of paradise. He determined that a particular scene he experienced in Jamaica was a paradise, thus it was a place of nature suited for artistic study.

When the concept of Eden was specifically employed, traveler writers’ vicarious landscapes reflected the different interpretations of the myth. Tourists such as Froude (1909) imagined the Garden of Eden as a place of cultivation. When he viewed the landscapes of the British West Indies then, he saw the natural fertility of a potential paradise. As such, the islands could become the Garden of Eden if this fertility were exploited and the islands turned into a garden of agricultural productivity. In contrast, tourists such as Henderson imagined the Garden as a place of natural vegetation. When he viewed the landscapes of the islands, he believed that they were paradise when left in their natural state. To use the land for commercial purposes would be, in a sense, a violation of this paradise. “Jamaica was created by Providence to show mankind something of the meaning of beauty. It was to stand as an explanation of Eden—a glimpse of Paradise. Nature never intended that it should become a rum garden, or even a field for speculative agriculture” (Henderson 1905, 141).

*Arcadia* was another ideal that had frequently been applied to parts of the tropics by the time these writers traveled. Like the paradise myths, Arcadia could also be interpreted in different ways; however, the travel writers who employed the concept in
this study uniformly drew upon the positive version. Three tourists referenced Arcadia: Coleridge (1862), Newton (1897), and Henderson (1905). Coleridge (1862, 95) found the landscape of Grenada to embody “a poet’s Arcadia.” Amidst a landscape described as beautiful and fertile, Newton (1897) imagined that life on Trinidad would be Arcadian. Likewise, Henderson (1905, 261) viewed the rural landscape of Jamaica as “Arcadian in its simplicity and great beauty.”

Lastly, tourists also drew upon ideas of non-specific fanciful places. Kingsley (1871), Brassey (1885), and Henderson (1905) each encountered landscapes where they felt they could have stepped out of reality and into the vicarious landscapes of fiction and the imagination. These landscapes were characterized as dreamlands or fairylands. In the case of Henderson, for example, he and his traveling companions were awed by a landscape that they did not imagine could be real. He wrote, “We remained quietly still and gazed at a scene as glorious as a young child’s dream-fairyland. A dream of wood and rock and water, shaded and shrouded by the wildest mass of luxuriant tropical foliage” (Henderson 1905, 141).

Landscapes of the British Isles

The third category of landscape comparisons involved the landscapes of the British Isles. This was the travelers’ home environment. The writers were insiders in these landscapes, and they provided the source material for the individuals’ most vivid vicarious landscapes. These vicarious landscapes were the most familiar to the travelers and most likely familiar to the readers of the travel narratives. They were frequently
drawn upon as a means of comparing, contrasting, and making sense of the unfamiliar landscapes of the West Indies. Travel writers were able to make comparisons between the landscapes of the British West Indies and those of the British Isles in nearly every regard, from the islands themselves to specific places within the islands and individual landscape features.

The travel writers included in this study found a number of similarities between the British West Indies and the British Isles. The more developed islands, like Barbados, Antigua and St. Kitts, as a whole were thought to be most like England in culture and cultivation. For many of the other islands, specific areas were thought to bear a resemblance. In particular, several tourists recognized a similarity in between Mandeville, Jamaica and England. According to Newton (1897, 178), “The lovely winding road, five miles in length which lies between Mandeville and Williamsfield, the nearest station, led through scenes so peaceful and lovely, so verdant and well cultivated, that one was constantly reminded of England, and indeed sometimes one could scarcely realise one was in the tropics!” Furthermore, she recognized many flowers, fruits, and vegetables in the area and noted that these typical English plants flourished in the area just as they did at home. In addition to English plants in the West Indies, tropical plants could also present a familiar appearance in the mind of the traveler. In Barbados, Treves (1908, 22) described a thicket of trees “which call to mind the orchard trees in England.”

At the same time, travel writers also contrasted the two regions. Generally, when the landscapes and landscape features of the British West Indies were held up against those of the British Isles, the colonies measured favorably. At the largest scale, Kingsley
compared the landscapes of islands as a whole, specifically Barbados and Ireland. He argued that Barbados “deserves, and has deserved for now two hundred years, far more than poor old Ireland, the name of ‘The Emerald Gem of the Western World’” (Kingsley 1871, 454). At a smaller scale, Froude compared the appearance of plants found in the tropics and those raised in England. He was markedly impressed with what he saw at Trinidad’s Botanical Gardens. He wrote, “The reality went beyond description. Plants with which I was familiar as shrubs in English conservatories were here expanded into forest giants, with hundreds of others of which we cannot raise even Lilliputian imitations. Let man be what he will, nature in the tropics is always grand” (Froude 1909, 61). In the case of Figure 9, a human figure is shown next to some examples of bamboo plants to give the reader an adequate means of comparison.

Figure 9: Giant Bamboos, Trinidad
(Aspinall 1910, 138)
Regional Landscapes

The final category of landscape comparisons involved other world regional landscapes. Many writers had previously traveled in other parts of the British Empire as well as elsewhere in the world. The landscapes experienced in these travels provided the source material for vicarious landscapes. Travel writers then made comparisons between the landscapes of the British West Indies and these vicarious landscapes based on previous experiences. While some readers may have had similar travel experiences, many would have also been familiar with such foreign landscapes through other representations. Travel writers saw both similarities and differences in the landscapes, and they typically compared specific landscapes rather than island landscapes as a whole or individual landscape features.

Some travelers and tourists compared the landscapes of the British West Indies to other parts of the world, mainly Europe. Several travel writers commented on the resemblance between scenes in the Caribbean and those they had formerly seen in Naples or the Riviera. When traveling through the mountains in Dominica, Froude (1909) was reminded of experiences in the Alps. Similarly, Trollope (1968) found scenery in Jamaica that reminded him of scenes experienced in Switzerland. Duncan (1999) finds that this was a popular comparison made by British travelers in various parts of the world at this time. Perhaps the most unusual comparison, however, was between St. Vincent and Norway.

Even now when I saw it, Kingston, the principal town, looked pretty and well to do, reminding me, strange to say, of towns in Norway, the houses stretching along the shore painted in the same tints of blue or yellow or pink, with the same red-tiled roofs, the trees coming down the hill sides to the water’s edge, villas of
modest pretensions shining through the foliage, with the patches of cane fields, the equivalent in the landscape of the brilliant Norwegian grass (Froude 1909, 44).

Travel writers also contrasted the different regions. In some cases, the British West Indies measured favorably. Bullen (1905), for instance, determined that Montserrat would be a suitable substitute for the *islands of the South Pacific*. In his opinion, Montserrat possessed the requisite attractions as a travel destination and was much more accessible from England.

In other cases, however, contrasts were unfavorable for the West Indies. Greville was one writer who had previous travel experiences and made several unfavorable comparisons. In terms of landscape scenery, his experiences elsewhere had set high standards. He wrote, “I felt that I could grow fond of Trinidad, a sensation I had never till then felt anywhere in the West Indies, which, to be enjoyed, ought to be seen before, and not after the glorious classic shores of the Mediterranean” (Greville 1869, 141).

Furthermore, he felt that the landscapes of the British West Indies would never equal that of other places because, in his mind, they lacked a necessary quality, that of history. Early in his narrative he determined that “scenes far less lovely, such as the white steeps of Dover, or the sand-hills of Lindisfarn or Perranzabulor, acquire a far more exceeding interest, and exercise a far greater fascination over the mind, because they are viewed by the sunset lights of the times of old” (Greville 1869, 18).
Landscape Reaction

The landscape held in an individual’s mind prior to traveling is the first way in which the vicarious is important in travel narratives. In the second way, discussed in this section, it is the real, observed landscapes of the British West Indies that provided the source material for internal landscapes. These vicarious landscapes were the ones recalled as the travel writers wrote their narratives. They were also the ones that would shape the vicarious landscapes for the islands in the minds of their readers.

In this final component of landscape descriptions, the travel writers reflect on all of the relationships between vision, landscape, and landscape experience. Then they reproduce, not the landscapes of the West Indies, but the vicarious landscapes based on them. This component is strongly influenced by personal preferences as the landscape is transformed to appear as it does through each traveler’s or tourist’s eyes. As a result, this is the most complex and contradictory category. For each category or sub-category, the reaction codes taken directly from the travel narratives could be divided into two or more oppositional classifications. In general, landscape reactions could be broken down into four broad categories: wellbeing, accessibility, appraisal, and intangible impressions.

Wellbeing

The first category of landscape reaction was wellbeing. Travel writers gave considerable attention to this topic. In particular, writers were primarily concerned with their personal wellbeing, but once this had been secured, they began to consider the wellbeing of the places they visited. They took an interest in the health of the islands’
natural environments, which was largely measured by vegetation. They also assessed the health of the islands as British colonies, which, as it related to the travelers’ view of landscape, was measured in terms of agricultural produce.

In terms of personal wellbeing, the travel writers’ view of the landscape was often influenced by how it would affect their health and safety. As discussed earlier, a number of improvements over the time period facilitated travel and tourism; however, travel in the nineteenth century was still a tenuous enterprise. This is clearly evidenced by the prevalence of prologues and opening passages in travel narratives discussing the possibility that the travelers would never return home. Thomas Wilson reflected on this uncertainty in the early pages of his narrative. He wrote, “What feelings of sorrow or joy does not this word ‘Southampton’ engender in the bosom of hundreds of families, whether we look upon it as the outlet whence many have passed never, never, to return, or as the meeting place, where, after years of separation, families have once again become united” (Wilson 1860, 12). Hazards ranged from lost ships on the transatlantic journey to peasant uprisings in the colonies. Specifically in regard to the West Indian landscape, travel writers were concerned with disease and natural disasters.

The effect of the Caribbean island environment on the health of Europeans had already been a long debated issue. Travel writers in the nineteenth century contributed to this ongoing debate on both sides of the argument. Based on the perspective that the tropical environment of the Caribbean had a beneficial effect on one’s constitution, individuals such as Coleridge (1862) and Baird (1850) explicitly traveled to the region for that purpose. Baird was advised by a medical professional to make the trip, while
Coleridge elected to go because no other medical remedies had cured his ailments. These health tourists, among others, believed in the *healthful, reviving, refreshing,* and *invigorating* nature of the West Indies, from the environment as a whole to specific landscape features like hot springs. Baird strongly believed in the healing capabilities of the islands. At the same time, however, he was emphatic that the particular island and location on an island needed to be carefully matched to the patient’s individual disorder. According to him, “there is not only far too great ignorance prevalent as to the superior advantages of these islands as places of sanitary retreat, but there is often much ignorance displayed in the selection of the particular island to which the patient goes or is sent” (Baird 1850, 44).

Other writers believed that sick people would not get well in the region, and there was also a chance that healthy people would get sick. These writers often traveled to the region in spite of their fears of the harmful effects the Caribbean environment would have on their health. Madden (1970), who was a medical doctor, was preoccupied by the occurrences of disease and death. He discussed the prevalence among islanders, and he informed readers whenever one of his traveling companions fell ill or died. Matilda Houstoun was perhaps the most outspoken of the writers included in this study in regards to health. She constantly made note of those who fell “victim” to the climate during the voyage. There was a clear connection between the environment and health in her vicarious landscape. In one example, she summarized her interpretation of Jamaica as the following: “in short, it is a dreadful place, and you can hardly go through the streets
without being assailed by visions, or ideas of plague, pestilence, and sudden death” (Houstoun 1844, 94).

Similar to the issue of health, the tropics as a whole had acquired a reputation prone to conflict and violent excesses of nature. Some of the earliest travelers, including Philips (1831), Alexander (1833), and Madden (1970), were particularly concerned with violent and destructive natural hazards such as volcanic eruptions and hurricanes. Specifically, Alexander experienced a hurricane during his stay on Barbados. He described the occurrence in his narrative.

One night whilst I was ruminating on my intended route in bed, the wind, which had shifted suddenly from one point of the compass to another, at last set in to blow with fearful violence from the southeast; it roared among the trees, bent them, and tore off branches, injured the roof, and seemed to sweep with resistless violence across the island, which it drenched with heavy rain. This was the first hurricane of the season (Alexander 1833, 164).

In many cases, however, the travel writers simply viewed the damage to the landscape following an event. Nonetheless, the potential for these events often became deeply embedded in their vicarious landscapes for the region.

Later travelers, and increasingly tourists, to the region were more likely to describe the region in contrasting terms. The vicarious landscapes of tourists such as Henderson (1905), Bullen (1905), and Newton (1897) were colored with ideas of peace, calm, serenity, and tranquility. For example, Henderson (1905, 173) declared on more than one occasion that “Jamaica is a land of perpetual peace and sunshine.” Only Coleridge (1862), who was one of the earliest tourists used in this study, provided a clear exception to this temporal pattern. He made very few negative comments about the Caribbean environment. This case may be understood by his circumstances; Coleridge
believed that his disorders had been cured by his presence in the region and his interaction with various curative landscape features.

The perspectives of the later tourists are clearly aligned with more modern representations of the Caribbean region. This indicates a shift in perception initiated over the course of the time period under study. Such a shift might be traceable to the cultural conventions discussion above. In particular, the Romantic Movement involved a reaction to urbanization and industrialization. Travelers and tourists influenced by these ideas might have reacted more favorably to nature that existed outside of human activity and operated beyond human control. This pattern is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 7.

Beyond their own wellbeing, travel writers also addressed the environmental and colonial wellbeing of the islands. Some of the travel writers discussed issues of soil erosion and lost soil fertility in the islands they visited. When the environmental and colonial wellbeing entered the travelers’ vicarious landscapes, however, they were ultimately associated with the quantity, quality, and type of vegetation.

Overall, these vicarious landscapes were consistent with typical representations of the tropics. Because of the vegetation landscape feature, island landscapes as a whole were seen as **fertile, luxuriant, verdant, fresh, bountiful, and copious**. For example, in Trinidad Wilson (1860, 65) wrote that

> the succulent and luxuriant vegetation with which the earth every abounds, studded, here and there, with wild flowers, varying in colour, from the most gorgeous gorgeous scarlet to the most delicate shade of blue, forms a carpet which Nature with her never-ceasing bounty has spread for those who delight to wander in pursuit of her charms.
Landslapes on each of the islands included in this study were described in one or more of these terms. Even Barbados, the longest cultivated island and considered to have the most depleted soil was often considered fertile. Rolph (1841, 52) declared that “[p]erhaps in the globe there is not another spot so well cultivated and so astonishingly fertile as the island of Barbados.”

At the same time, however, nearly all of the islands in the region were also seen as bare, desolate, deficient, or only moderately productive in some way. There are several potential explanations for this contradiction. First, some of the mountainous islands, though heavily forested, could be described as bare because of places where sheer rock faces were exposed. Second, despite high rates of cultivation, some travel writers considered the more developed islands sparsely vegetated because they lacked significant forest cover. Conversely, the less developed islands were also considered sparsely vegetated by some writers because they lacked extensive areas of cultivated land. Third, particularly in the post-emancipation period, islands that were formerly cultivated had many plantations abandoned and left to re-grow naturally. In their vicarious landscapes, travel writers often viewed these landscapes, regardless of their current vegetation, in terms of ruins, devastation, and desolation.

Travel writers often thought of the value of the islands as colonies in these terms. Based on existing or potential fertility, for cultivation or natural landscape scenery, many writers viewed the islands as valuable, treasures, gems, and rich. Other travelers judged the state of the colonies through landscape much more harshly. Among these travelers were those that had more explicit imperial interests or connections. Trollope traveled in
1858 for the accomplishment of “affairs of State.” He was incredulous at the state of vegetation in Jamaica. In his narrative he wrote,

> Are Englishmen in general aware that half the sugar estates in Jamaica, and I believe more than half the coffee plantations, have gone back into a state of bush? —that all this land, rich with the richest produce only some thirty years since, has now fallen back into wilderness? —that the world has hereabouts so retrograded? —that chaos and darkness have reswallowed so vast an extent of the most bountiful land that civilization had ever mastered, and that too beneath the British government? (Trollope 1968, 102)

Similarly, Froude traveled in 1887 to examine the condition of the British colonies. He experienced a similar reaction in Dominica. In his estimation, “[a] state of things more helplessly provoking was never seen” (Froude 1909, 140). Thus, despite the current state of vegetation or the future possibilities for cultivation, travelers such as these only saw the islands as **poor, desolate, and poverty-stricken**.

**Accessibility**

The second category of landscape reaction was accessibility. This category implies a higher level of interaction with the landscape as opposed to viewing it from afar. As is often the case, travelers and tourists were not always comfortable being in and moving through the foreign landscapes of the islands. For example, Houstoun (1844, 94) informed her readers that “it is by no means safe to trust yourself in the forests without a guide.” In this regard, the vicarious landscapes represented in travel narratives have their base in the landscape features and qualifications identified above but specifically reflect the writers’ level of comfort. As before, the codes in this category could be divided into
contrasting groups; however, for each of the sub-categories, the range of negative codes exceeded the positive ones.

Initially upon arriving in the tropics, the travel writers determined that the islands were generally hot and humid. When the writers subsequently spent greater time in the region and expected to undergo daily activities, this aspect of the environment became a vivid dimension of the vicarious landscape. The islands were not simply hot; they were balmy, steaming, scorching, burning, broiling, and stifling. Many travel writers felt that these factors were a hindrance in their normal life and a barrier to exploration of the islands. Even basic physical activity, such as walking, could be detrimental to their health under such conditions. According to Trollope (1968, 14), the entire day in the tropics so hot that “there is no time at which exercise can be taken with comfort.” Others admitted that the tropical climate discouraged activity in foreigners, but these writers felt that exercise was nonetheless necessary, if undertaken with care. Greville (1869, 54) wrote, “I have no doubt that the great thing for an Englishman to do is to live well and to persist in doing that which the climate indisposes him to do,—take plenty of active exercise. This prevents the stagnation of mind and blood.”

As noted above, cooler landscapes were experienced in the higher, interior parts of many islands. After the initial stage of an excursion, environmental conditions became much more favorable for tourists to experience, enjoy, and move through the landscape. The contrast was so great that several writers decided, were they to live on a Caribbean island, they would only want to live on an inland estate. Trollope decided that if he were to take up residence in Jamaica, he would live in the countryside like the other Europeans
he encountered. He found that in the interior of the island “there is also, which is more essential, a temperature among the mountains in which a European can live comfortably” (Trollope 1968, 28).

Beyond the climatic conditions, travelers turned to the more logistical aspects of moving through the landscape. First, they characterized the level of organization in the landscape. This helped them to determine whether or not they wished to explore it more fully. Some islands were considered to be civilized, ordered, neat, and polished. These ideas were used almost exclusively in reference to the highly cultivated islands or at least the cultivated areas of islands. In particular, Barbados, the “ordered” island shown in Figure 10, as well as St. Kitts, and Nevis were perceived in this way. Treves (1908, 193), for example, found Nevis to be “prim and neat, a dapper little island.”

![Figure 10: View from St. John’s Church, Barbados (Treves 1908, 10)](image)

In contrast, some islands were seen as jungles that were overgrown, tangled, and characterized by confusion. These ideas were specifically employed in reference to the less developed islands and the uncultivated areas of islands. In particular, Dominica, Jamaica, and Trinidad were perceived in this way, typically in reference to their forests. For example, Kingsley had eagerly awaited the opportunity to explore Trinidad’s “high
woods.” When the time came, however, his feelings were not as anticipated. He wrote, “My first feeling on entering the high woods was helplessness, confusion, awe, all but terror. One is afraid to venture in fifty yards. Without a compass, or the landmark of some opening to or from which he can look, a man must be lost in the first ten minutes, such a sameness is there in the infinite variety” (Kingsley 1871, 187). Kingsley’s narrative further illustrated this setting in Figure 11.

![Figure 11: The High Woods, Trinidad (Kingsley 1871, 158)](image)

It should also be noted that variations of the word *wild* were applied to nearly all of the islands and ranked among the most frequently used adjectives. This code is generally associated with the sub-category for low organization; however, wild held both negative and positive connotations in the travel narratives. In one use of the word, Boddam-Whetham (1879, 89) wrote that he, “then came in sight of a pretty estate on the main-land, which greatly brightens the wild and gloomy scenery.” Newton had a different intention when she described an excursion through Jamaica’s “tree-clad hills.”
She wrote, “On through scenes so wild and beautiful, that one felt a sense of awe” (Newton 1897, 179).

Travel writers also clearly perceived a number of barriers to exploration and interaction with island landscapes. While mountains and forests were pleasing landscape features from a distant perspective, few writers considered such features inviting. Instead, travelers’ vicarious landscapes strongly reflected the barriers that they felt prevented them from exploring or depicted those that they had to overcome in order to explore. For example, Madden (1970, 111) was only one of the travel writers who complained about the condition of island roads.

The path was impassable for any vehicle on wheels; but my friend Mr. H. called it ‘an excellent road.’ It verged in many places on frightful precipices, yawning chasms of perhaps hundreds of feet on craggy lime-stone, that it was any thing but agreeable to contemplate the possibility of toppling over the verge of. Nevertheless, as it was ‘an excellent road,’ I was ashamed to say any thing on the subject of the nature of the limit of the single footstep, that made the trifling difference between life and death.

As a result of the various barriers that were positioned in the landscape then, island landscapes or specific landscape features were typically characterized as remote, isolated, secluded, impassable, or simply inaccessible.

Appraisal

The third category of landscape reaction was appraisal. As writers of personal narratives, the travelers freely expressed their opinions about a number of different factors in the landscape. In this category, their personal opinions colored both the visible and visual aspects of landscape discussed above. This was then reflected in the vicarious
landscape that was depicted in the travel narratives. These personal opinions clearly differed between writers, and in many cases, the opinions of one directly contradicted those of others.

Travel writers first reacted to the character of the landscape features discussed above. They built upon the qualifications of landscape features and added greater depth to their descriptions by indicating their personal preferences for the type of landscape scenery or experience. Landscape features that were qualified as small or smooth could be further characterized as soft, gentle, subtle, and delicate. Landforms that were qualified as large or sharp could be further characterized as abrupt, rude, striking, sheer, and imposing. By way of example, William Tait’s [1892] description of St. Kitt’s Mount Misery is far different from Coleridge’s description of the same feature. Tait (1895, 68) wrote, “The interior of the island is occupied by a mountain range, crowned by Mount Misery, 4,100 feet above the sea.” Coleridge (1862, 195), on the other hand, wrote, “The apex of this rude pyramid is the awful crag of Mount Misery, which shoots slantingly forwards over the mouth of a volcanic chasm like a huge peninsula in the air.”

Likewise, landscapes that were qualified as light or dark could be further characterized as shining, sparkling, dazzling, and brilliant as well as gloomy, bleak, dreary, and melancholy. An example in this case is the description of the cocoa tree by Houstoun (1844) and Greville (1869). Houstoun encountered the trees in Jamaica. She wrote, “There are several cocoa trees in and about the burial-ground; their tops wave about, not at all unlike the plumes of a hearse, and add greatly to the gloom of the place” (Houstoun 1844, 102). Greville experienced the trees in Dominica and had a
substantially different reaction. He wrote of “the beautiful dark glossy green cocoa-tree, whose young leaves assume almost the colour of flames” (Greville 1869, 14).

Second, travel writers reacted to the visual aspects of landscape features. In the landscape qualifications discussed above, travelers reflected on the visual and the ordering of landscape features. They further refined these qualifications by using their personal preferences to react to those particular orderings. The travel writers determined the extent to which they found the landscape of the British West Indies visually pleasing, the extent to which the landscape exerted an influence over them, and the extent to which they derived pleasure from viewing and experiencing the landscape.

In terms of the visually pleasing aspect of the landscape, all of the travel writers found one or more of the islands visually pleasing. In addition, all of the islands of the region were considered to be visually pleasing by one or more travelers. This attribute was described in such expressions as pretty, lovely, gorgeous, and exquisite. Specifically, lovely, loveliest, and loveliness were among the most frequently used adjectives. Generally these terms were applied to the landscape of islands as a whole, but they were also applied to specific landscape features like plants and flowers. To a lesser extent, travel writers also encountered landscapes that they thought to be visually displeasing. This was typically the case for specific landscape features that appeared startling within the scene or landscapes in which the traveler had a particularly unpleasant experience. These features and landscapes were described as homely, grotesque, nasty, and dirty.

In terms of the influence of the landscape, most writers found that at least one of the islands exerted a significant influence on their attention. Likewise, certain features
gained a prominent position in the minds of the travelers and tourists. For this attribute, landscapes and landscape features were deemed *interesting, captivating, entrancing*, and *fascinating*. As with the previous sub-category, travel writers also found aspects of landscapes that exerted little influence on their minds. These landscapes were described as *uninteresting* and *monotonous*, and travelers were *indifferent* to them. For Greville, among others, the landscape of Barbados as a whole could be thought of in such terms. He wrote, “It is hard to give a readable description of a place which in great measure is physically so tame and uninteresting as is Barbados, but the attempt shall nevertheless be made” (Greville 1869, 36). In addition, large, unvaried landscape features such as plantations and forests were also positioned in this way. Brassey (1885, 101), for example, decided that “[b]eautiful as they are at first, with their brilliant green foliage and feathery tufts like pampas-grass, there is something monotonous about fields of sugar-cane, when unrelieved by other vegetation.”

In terms of pleasure derived from the landscape, most travel writers enjoyed the landscapes in the British West Indies. This was particularly true in the evaluation of landscape scenery viewed from a safe distance. This attribute was characterized through emotions such as *delight* and *wonder*. When Alexander viewed Trinidad from his ship, for instance, he wrote, “As I stood on the deck and gazed on the glorious scene, I felt grateful that I had been permitted to see this favoured land” (Alexander 1833, 237). In other cases, though, travel writers were unable to enjoy the landscape scenery. This was most likely the case when the traveler or tourist had a more direct experience with the landscape, where the landscape was a barrier or imposition. In this case, travel writers
indicated that they felt fearful, sad, lonely, or helpless. Kingsley, for example, had wanted to explore Trinidad’s primary forest. As he did, he found that “[s]o passed many hours, till I began to be tired of—I may almost say, pained by—the appalling silence and loneliness, and I was glad to get back to a point where I could hear the click of the axes in the clearing” (Kingsley 1871, 349).

Intangible Impressions

The final category of landscape reaction was intangible impressions. The vicarious landscapes of travel writers were often influenced by certain qualities in the landscapes of the British West Indies that were not always readily apparent. These were thoughts and feelings were a distinct part of the vicarious landscapes that travel writers held in their heads. These feelings, though hard to pin down to a specific feature or aspect of the landscape, gave greater meanings to these vicarious landscapes. They also clearly shaped the tone of their descriptions of the particular landscapes that evoked such feelings that were included in the travel narratives. Often these impressions marked the extent of familiarity with the landscapes in the region or the degree of reality.

As indicated in the Landscape Comparisons section above, travel writers found a profusion of landscapes that they could compare and contrast to other landscapes they had experienced. The region was clearly positioned in contrast with the landscapes of the British Isles or even Europe. As a result, travel writers found a far greater range of expression for their impressions of the region as different than they did the same. Nonetheless, there were a few features of the landscape, including tropical plants grown
in English conservatories, English plants grown in the British West Indies and commercial produce, that appeared *familiar* to travelers. Islands as a whole were generally not seen as familiar except when a writer felt acquainted with an island as a result of reputation or previously experienced representations.

More often, landscapes were characterized as *unfamiliar, foreign, exotic, rare, novel, strange, curious*, or even *mysterious*. Islands as a whole were often considered ‘foreign,’ while some travel writers encountered landscapes that they felt were curious or mysterious. Overall, landscapes features were most likely to be characterized in this manner, particularly in reference to types of vegetation such as trees, plants, flowers, and produce. For many writers, however, this feeling was less tied to one feature or another. The entire experience was new to them. For Rolph (1841, 19), “The various plantations we passed, the collection of negro habitations, the number of windmills, and sugar houses, the extreme richness and splendour of the flowers and trees, were all novel and delightful objects.” Similarly, according to Brassey (1885, 115), “there was so much that was strange and new to see, in whichever direction one looked, that one’s mind was actively occupied all the time.”

Travel writers also conceived of the landscapes of the region in terms of their reality. To some extent, this category was also positioned in opposition with Europe. Where daily scenes at home had a reality to them, the landscapes of the British West Indies were more commonly characterized by their unreality. Ideas of *real, veritable, and truth* did have a small presence in the narratives. These expressions were typically assertions of authenticity or honesty. For example, Brassey emphasized the authenticity
of her experience. “Truly a real tropical night is one of the things which makes life worth living, whatever may be the state of the liver” (Brassey 1885, 119). In addition, Bullen (1905) drew upon these ideas to assure his readers that he was not exaggerating in his description of the flamboyant tree.

In another example, Newton assures her readers, as well as herself, that a landscape scene in Jamaica is real. First, however, she paints the landscape in terms of the unreal:

one gazes with longing eyes upon such entrancing beauty—beauty that seems almost too perfect for this earth. It is like a dream that one fears to awaken from. Like some bewitching scene of imagination that one must shortly find a delusion. And yet, one is assured that it is real, and that all this passionate loveliness or grand sublimity has been permitted to be enjoyed by man (Newton 1897, 216).

Like Newton, many travel writers attributed spiritual or magical qualities to their vicarious landscapes of the islands.

In addition to the ideas of paradise or Eden discussed above, writers also placed religious values on the landscape. They were considered sacred, virtuous, worshipful, or miraculous. Treves (1908, 163), for example, asserted that the landscape of Dominica was “a worshipful place; ‘a tabernacle for the sun’; a shrine of a thousand spires, rising tier above tier, in one exquisite fabric of green, purple and grey.” Newton believed in the religious qualities of the landscape in Trinidad, so she brought religion into the landscape. “It was a Sunday and our worship that day was in the temple of Nature and one felt indeed that it was a service of praise so spiritual and perfect that although there was no temple there of man’s erection, yet one’s worship was none the less real, and one’s realisation of God’s goodness and mercy was intensified.”
Other travel writers also felt a mystical or ethereal quality about the landscapes of the British West Indies. For these individuals, the landscape possessed a charming, enchanting, bewitching, or tempting influence over the eyes and over the mind. For instance, in Barbados, Rolph (1841, 23) found that “[i]t is in the recesses of this woodland solitude in which the witching charms of this romantic region operate most forcibly on the mind.” Similarly, in his recollection of a landscape experience on St. Lucia, Coleridge (1862, 116) wrote, “I remember staring without breath or motion as if I had been really enchanted.”

**Conclusion**

The travel narratives examined in this study are rich in description of the rural landscape. These descriptions are instrumental in creating detailed images of West Indian landscapes in the minds of readers as well as conveying a range of meanings. The coding methodology allowed me to break down these descriptions and to begin identifying key patterns. At the highest level of organization, I determined that these landscape descriptions were made up of four primary components, including the identification of landscape features, the qualification of these features, comparisons with other well-known landscape types, and individual reactions to and impressions of the landscapes. Each of these components was narrowed down into the necessary categories and sub-categories, which were then supported by the applicable codes found in landscape descriptions.
This chapter has discussed and interpreted the results of this coding process through Riley’s (1997) three types of relationships between vision, landscape, and landscape experience: the visible, the visual, and the vicarious. In this discussion, I have shown how travel writers used vision to access information about the landscape and transmitted that information about the rural landscapes and landscape features of the British West Indies in travel narratives. I have demonstrated how writers organized the landscape by qualifying particular features. I have illustrated how cultural conventions or previous experiences have shaped travelers’ landscapes of the mind and helped travelers make sense of the rural landscape in the British West Indies. Finally, I have shown how travel writers formed new internal landscapes based upon the landscapes of the islands in the region and represented those landscapes to readers at home. In addition, I have also highlighted the key theme of contrast that emerged in the coding process and will be examined in greater depth in the following chapter.
CHAPTER 6

COLONIAL/POSTCOLONIAL PATTERNS OF TOURISM AND LANDSCAPE

Postcolonialism addresses issues of representation and the ways in which knowledge is formed through representations such as texts and images. Such representations of the colonial world are seen as the means of situating and transmitting knowledge back to the West. Postcolonial studies investigate the meanings, identities, and contradictory nature of colonial representations. Often these investigations focus on the binary relationship between colonizer and colonized (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2000).

The Caribbean has long been characterized in terms of contradictions. Travel writers to the region qualified the features of the landscape through contrasting categories, such as sharp or smooth, hot or cold, and old or new. They compared and contrasted the landscapes and landscape features of the British West Indies with a range of different ideal and actual landscapes across the globe. Travel writers also reacted to the landscape in often highly contradictory ways, employing terms such as peaceful and violent, fertile and barren, or ordered and chaotic, often for the same settings. Furthermore, the visual character of tourists’ landscape experiences highlighted and reinforced the division between people and nature. Consequently, the culture/nature binary, expressed through the interactions between travelers and landscape, must be examined as a colonizer/colonized relationship.
Many of the patterns established during the formative period of tourism in the Caribbean have been extremely pervasive. Postcolonial studies provides the means of revisiting the colonial past in order to uncover the ways in which the meanings and patterns of this past have become so deeply embedded that they influence the present. Although binary categories shift over time, tourists have consistently held a dominant perspective over the landscapes of the British West Indies. This perspective shaped the ways in which travelers perceived and interacted with the landscape, which shaped the vicarious landscapes that were represented in travel narratives. These representations constituted a form of knowledge, creating a certain idea of the British West Indies in the minds of the readers who consumed travel narratives. In some cases, these readers carried this idea with them as they, too, traveled to the region. Many then reaffirmed the idea and re-presented it in narratives of their own, thereby creating a cycle of expectation that was perpetuated well beyond this era of early tourism.

In this chapter, I will review the concept of binarisms in postcolonial studies and discuss the complex nature of meanings associated with binary categories. These meanings shift based on a range of temporal, spatial, cultural, and personal contexts. I will examine two examples of binaries in landscape that were common to the region in the colonial era: paradisiacal/pestilential and cultivated/wild. I will demonstrate that the various categories discussed contribute to a layering of binaries that comprise the culture/nature binary. I will argue that this binary should be examined in terms of the fundamental colonizer/colonized binary system, specifically through the relationship between the viewer in the form of a traveler or tourist and the rural landscapes of the
British West Indies. It is important to understand the meanings and implications of this binary, as well as the ways in which it has shifted over time, before moving forward and trying to overcome the binary. Then I will address the nature of this relationship based on vision and its effect on landscape experiences and subsequent representations in travel narratives. I will highlight the impression of this colonial past as it exists in the present, and I will discuss the maintenance of these colonial patterns through the creation of vicarious landscapes and the cycle of expectation established by travel narratives and perpetuated by narratives as well as other representations. Finally, I will address the implications of these postcolonial patterns.

**Binaries in Landscape**

Binaries are based on a simplistic structure that often conceals a range of complex meanings and interrelationships (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2000; Johnston et al. 2000). As such, they can be examined on many levels and from many perspectives. On one level, a binary system is a means of organization. On another, it is vehicle for the dissemination of ideological meanings and the justification for the domination of one actor by another. One term of binary opposition is always dominant over the other, and postcolonial studies typically focus on the domination of the colonizer over the colonized. Those who employ binaries may or may not explicitly intend for the various ideological meanings to be conveyed, but these meanings become embedded in the binary categories themselves (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2000).
For travelers and tourists experiencing new places and writing about them in narratives, binaries served a number of purposes. Foreign landscapes were unfamiliar, and they could be threatening or frightening at times. Comparisons and the creation of oppositional categories were a means of ordering the landscape. Within this structure, travel writers were better able to make sense of the foreign. In addition, they were able to make it more familiar by fitting it into categories that had been created in the context of their home environment. Thus, binary categories helped travelers and tourists consume foreign landscapes and subsequently reconstruct them into a more reassuring vicarious landscape. The writers could then represent this ordered, packaged, and readily-identifiable landscape in their narratives for their readers at home to consume.

As demonstrated in Chapter 5, travel writers frequently employed contrasts in landscape descriptions of the British West Indies. Many of the contrasts were plain and primarily framed the landscape and landscape features in certain ways: large versus small, rough versus smooth. At the same time, these simple contrasts took on increasing meanings and associations with other contrasts. For example, identifying a landscape as hot or cold could be a basic indication of temperature in the scene described. The same binary system could also be an indication of difference between tropical and temperate regions. Furthermore, it could be an indication of healthfulness, where hot landscapes were associated with disease and pestilence and cooler landscapes with rejuvenation and paradise.

These types of binary categories in landscape may be explored to more fully understand their purposes, meanings, and interrelationships; however, it is ultimately
difficult to break them down. As indicated in Chapter 2, binary categories depend on and inform each other. The meanings associated with one category are created negatively through the existence of the other and vice versa. This can be seen in the layering of binaries discussed in the previous paragraph. For example, the tropics were characterized by heat, fertility and year-round subsistence, unfamiliarity, primitiveness, immorality, and the dominance of nature. The opposing category for the temperate region was characterized by a further series of contrasts including cold, seasonal scarcity, familiarity, modernization, morality, and the dominance of culture. For the simple binary systems, such as familiar/unfamiliar, the definition of one category collapses when the other is removed. For a complex binary system made up of layers of additional binaries, the meanings embedded in the system begin to erode when the underlying categories are eliminated. Because the categories of a system are defined by their differences, they can not be separated from each other.

At the same time, there are no universally accepted meanings or definitional standards attributed to binary categories. As illustrated in Chapter 5, there are a range of factors that have to be considered when investigating the meanings and usages of contrasts. Even the seemingly simple categories are subject to relativity. Thus, meanings can be shaped by the temporal context in which the categories are used, for example, whether the writers traveled in the early nineteenth century or the early twentieth century. Meanings can be shaped by the spatial context in which the contrasts are applied, for example, the specific island that a category was employed to describe. They can be shaped by the cultural context in which the categories are created and utilized, for
example the types of landscape scenery appreciated changed with the different aesthetic movements that emerged in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They can also be shaped by the personal context in which the individual draws upon the categories, for example, the assessment of a landscape’s spiritual qualities depended on the religion and the elements of religion to which the individual subscribed. Furthermore, the representations of categories, such as those in travel narratives, may have multiple potential interpretations.

Clearly the meanings of binary categories are ultimately not fixed or static. As a result, they can not be separated into definitive categories. Binaries are generally positioned in this type of a definitive framework at the expense of any ambiguous space in between. This examination, however, shows that the categories maintain a loose consistency while the specific meanings attributed to them under different circumstances actually allow the categories to shift and even shift in dominance. This shifting begins to reveal the ambiguous space often neglected between the two polar categories. Furthermore, because of this constant process of shifting, binary categories can not be tied to distinct time periods. A specific factor may cause the categories to generally shift in some way at a particular time, but other factors should also be considered in addition to any further shifting that might take place.

These ideas will be illustrated in the following examination of two binary systems relating to the landscapes of the region that were common in the colonial era: paradisiacal/pestilential and cultivated/wild. I will first review the discussions of these binaries in previous works by Arnold (1996, 2000) and Sheller (2003, 2004). I will then
contribute to these discussions by using the data derived from British West Indies travel narratives.

Paradisiacal and Pestilential

According to Arnold (2000, 7), “it is first necessary to understand the historical emergence of the tropics as a conceptual, and not merely physical, space.” European ideas about the tropics emerged and developed throughout the process of exploration, conquest, and colonization. Many of these ideas first arose within the context of the Caribbean. From the early nineteenth century onward, however, these ideas increasingly spread to other parts of the tropics, regardless of differences between places. As a result, ‘the tropics’ became a definable and homogenized place (Arnold 2000).

Arnold (1996, 2000) recognizes that there are always different potential meanings for landscapes and that ideas of the tropics were necessarily varied. He uses a variety of writings from scientists and travelers, primarily in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In this study, he finds that, while many writers recognized the diversity that existed within the tropics, they found it useful or meaningful to generalize about the tropics as a whole. Thus he divides European ideas about the tropics into two categories: paradisiacal and pestilential. The author notes that this duality existed for the tropics almost from the beginning of European involvement in the region. He considers the symbolism for tropical landscapes to be deeply ambivalent, a paradox (Arnold 1996, 2000).

On one hand, the tropics were paradisiacal. They were viewed as places of great natural fertility and abundance. The landscapes were characterized by luxuriant
vegetation, typically rainforests. The climate was free from the cold, harsh winters of the north. Instead, they were perennially warm, and they promoted easy, year-round subsistence in return for minimal labor. In short, they were the vision of an earthly paradise or a true Garden of Eden. European ideas were more inclined to this paradisiacal category, which Arnold (1996, 2000) considers to be a powerful perception. This was particularly true for the islands of the Caribbean (Arnold 2000; Gregory 2001).

On the other hand, the tropics were pestilential. They were viewed as places of primitiveness and poverty. Many writers holding this perspective felt that the myth of tropical abundance had been exaggerated. The landscapes were marked by the prevalence of diseases, such as yellow fever and malaria. They were also known for the destructive capacities of nature and violent tropical storms, like hurricanes. The climate was excessively hot and humid; therefore it was considered unfit for European habitation. The easy subsistence of the tropics had a detrimental effect on the physical and moral character of people living in those parts of the world. There were dangers of indolence and even “‘intemperate’ conduct” (Arnold 2000, 9). Essentially, the tropics were also characterized as anything but paradise.

Although Arnold (2000) notes that these ideas generally coexisted throughout the region’s history, he indicates a temporal break between the two. For the Caribbean region specifically, he indicates that early perspectives fell into the paradisiacal category. These explorers and travelers viewed the islands and subsequently represented them as an earthly paradise. With time and increasing activities in the region, however, more negative images began to emerge. Writers then began to focus on the disease, mortality,
and general failure of European operations. “Early European writers on the West Indies saw little that was intrinsically unhealthy about the region, but by the second half of the eighteenth century…a growing body of English and French medical treatises described the many dangerous diseases prevailing there and their greater virulence compared to those of Europe” (Arnold 2000, 9).

Gregory (2001) also discusses the paradisiacal and pestilential categories for the tropics. He contributes to the temporal separation of the categories. He finds that the notion of the tropics as paradise was overwritten in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as the tropical environment was increasingly linked to disease. After this time, the pestilential idea of the tropics became dominant. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, he finds that the two categories had become entangled with each other.

The spatial distinction between the paradisiacal and pestilential categories was less clear. This is perhaps a result of the wide area based on different criteria to which the idea of the tropics was applied. In general, the paradisiacal category was linked to fertility and tropical vegetation, while the pestilential category was associated with miasmas that could be generated from a range of sources from heat to humidity, from marshes to forests (Arnold 1996, 2000).

As indicated by Arnold (1996, 2000), both the paradisiacal and the pestilential categories can be identified in landscape descriptions for the British West Indies occurring in travel narratives written between 1815 and 1914. The tropical islands of the region were characterized by natural abundance and fertility, and they were also
characterized by disease and death. Each of these categories and characteristics were present in the travel narratives examined, and the data set broadly supports the patterns established by Arnold and discussed above. At the same time, various factors were at work in the narratives, including the temporal, spatial, cultural, and personal contexts of the travel experience into the Caribbean. Because of the combinations of these factors, the binary categories can not easily be untangled or separated into discrete typologies.

Arnold (2000) and Gregory (2001) establish a loose temporal framework for the paradisiacal and pestilential categories. They indicate that the paradisiacal category was dominant in the initial European encounters with the tropics. With greater interaction in the region, though, ideas falling into the pestilential category began to overwrite the earlier, positive category. This particularly took place during the eighteenth century, so that by the early nineteenth century, the dominant discourse of the tropics was connected to ideas of pestilence and disease. The paradisiacal category continued to exist but only as a secondary category. Finally, Gregory (2001) considers the two categories to be entangled by the end of the nineteenth century.

In the travel narratives examined for the British West Indies, writers supported both the paradisiacal and the pestilential categories. However, the instances of this support do not dictate a clear temporal divide. Rather, the temporal perspective indicates a shifting dominance of categories. Instead of separating the paradisiacal/pestilential binary into distinct periods of time, the categories should be considered together with respect for which category was dominant during that particular time.
All of the travel writers examined in this study viewed the islands of the British West Indies in terms that characterized the paradisiacal category. These writers indicated the fertility, the abundance, and the luxuriance of the tropical islands in accordance with ideas of the paradisiacal. This demonstrates that the paradisiacal category existed throughout the time period regardless of dominance. In addition, seven of the travel writers—Henry Nelson Coleridge [1825], Anthony Trollope [1858], John Chester Greville [1867], Charles Kingsley [1869], James Anthony Froude [1887], Frank Bullen (1905), and John Henderson (1905)—predominantly tourists, explicitly linked the islands to the concept of an earthly paradise. Coleridge was the earliest of these writers, and Trollope also traveled during the first half of the time period. The remaining five traveled in the latter half of the time period, up to Bullen and Henderson who traveled in the twentieth century.

Only five of the twenty travel writers—Sir James Edward Alexander [1831], Dr. Richard Robert Madden [1833], Matilda Houstoun (1844), Froude (1909), and William Tait [1892]—marked a clear concern for the conditions of disease and death in the islands. The first three of these writers traveled in the first half of the time period, while the remaining two were among the later travelers in the data set. In addition, several tourists in the second half of the time period under study indicated that they traveled with the expectation of disease in the islands. For example, Henderson noted in his 1905 narrative that he had also visited the region thirty years prior. On this previous journey, he had imagined that the West Indies would be comparable to or worse than West Africa
in terms of diseases such as yellow fever and malaria. Instead, he remarked that he had been pleasantly surprised to encounter a seemingly healthful environment.

These later writers, such as Henderson as well as Margaret Newton (1897) and Bullen (1905), also gave attention to the conditions of disease in the course of their travels through the region. In contrast to the writers discussed above, however, these individuals determined that the region was much improved with respect to the presence of disease. Henderson, in particular, attempted to dispel the myths of pestilence in islands such as Jamaica. In his narrative he wrote,

Really, for all practical purposes, Jamaica is free of yellow fever; the disease has been stamped out. People die of it even to this date; but even England is not entirely free from smallpox. Yet one cannot describe smallpox as one of the characteristics of our little island. In the same way it would be foolish to associate Jamaica with yellow fever (Henderson 1905, 24).

Clearly both categories, paradiasical and pestilential, are present throughout the travel narratives examined. The broad temporal patterns seen here indicate that, in accordance with Arnold (1996, 2000), the category of pestilence was the more dominant category throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. Arnold’s work also shows that the idea of pestilence persisted through the first half of the twentieth century, although it is plain that the dominance of the binary system reversed once more. The paradiasical is the dominant category in the modern tourism industry. The patterns identified here, however, might indicate that this dominance was starting to shift as early as the end of the nineteenth century. This particular pattern towards overwhelmingly positive representations of the region will be discussed further later in this chapter.
As noted above, the paradisiacal and the pestilential concepts were not as clearly linked to discrete spatial patterns. The paradisiacal category was generally connected to tropical vegetation, while the pestilential category was most often associated with miasmas generated from heat and humidity along with swamps and marshes. The characteristics attributed to each category present in travel narrative landscape descriptions for the British West Indies largely supported these patterns. For some writers, though, the specific landscape types or features were seen as an indication of the opposing category.

As illustrated above, several travelers imagined the islands as an earthly paradise, and all emphasized the characteristics of islands’ landscapes that were associated with the paradisiacal concept. In particular, vegetation in various forms of trees, crops, and foliage, was a key component of these paradisiacal landscapes, typically in association with highlands. This was true whether the category was used in reference to fertility and productive capacity or to beautiful landscape scenery. Froude, for example, emphasized the forest as he drew upon, if somewhat reluctantly, both perspectives. “Below, above, around us, it was forest everywhere; forest, and only forest, a land fertile as Adam’s paradise, still waiting for the day when ‘the barren woman shall bear children.’ Of course it was beautiful, if that be of any consequence—mountain peaks and crags with falling water, and the dark green of the trees in the foreground…” (Froude 1909, 151). Additional environmental factors included warm temperatures, pleasant or fresh air, and a breeze. For instance, Henderson (1905, 23) found “[t]he climate of the island is as nearly
perfect as any climate can hope to be… The heat of the day is tropical, but it is always tempered by cool sea breezes.”

Travelers that imagined the islands in terms of disease were equally detailed in the types of landscape associated with pestilence, poison, or fatality. These landscapes were most typically associated with lowlands, valleys, plains, swamps, and marshes. Alexander was explicit in his connection of disease to swamps. He referred to the “poisonous malaria exhales” coming from un-drained swamps and insisted that “[t]he fault rests with ourselves only: if no pains are taken to drain salt marshes, we must expect yellow fever” (Alexander 1833, 227 and 208). At the same time, travelers also connected disease to vegetation. Tait (1895, 17) determined that “[o]wing to the great humidity and rank vegetation, the island [Dominica] is extremely unhealthy, malignant malarial fevers being very prevalent.” Likewise, Madden (1970) found malaria to be as prevalent in the jungle as it was in marshes on Jamaica. Additional environmental factors included heat, humidity, and wind.

As indicated here, the paradisiacal and pestilential categories are linked to the physical environment of the islands in a number of ways. These ways differed among travelers however. In general, highlands were seen as healthier than lowlands, although typically there was not one specific landscape type that symbolized either category. The clearest link to a particular landscape type could be seen in the connection between swamps or marshes and disease. The other landscape characteristics were variable and depended on shifts in the various layered binary systems. For example, temperature was considered to be a factor in both categories. The temperature binary is typically fixed as
hot and cold, but the factors indicated here are hot and warm. This leads to a complicated interrelationship of systems and comparisons. When compared to the cold winters of the temperate regions, the consistent warm temperatures of the tropics are pleasant and contribute to ideas of health and paradise. The same comparison between temperate and tropical regions results in a category shift when temperatures shift from warm to hot. The tropical heat becomes extreme, even dangerous and deadly.

Often these types of shifts are based on cultural or personal contexts. For example, the type of traveler might make a difference in the weight given to a particular category. Arnold’s (1996, 2000) sources were scientists and travelers such as naturalists, whereas the majority of sources used in this study broadly fell into the tourist category. Such tourists were perhaps less acquainted with the details of tropical pathology. In addition, personal experience played an important role. Travelers such as Coleridge (1862) believed that his ailments had been cured during his tour of the region, so he would have been less inclined to support ideas of pestilence regardless of their dominance at that particular time. Similarly, Madden (1970, 136) traveled to the region with five other men also holding special assignments in Jamaica, four of which died from “inflammatory attacks and yellow fever.” He was clearly influenced by these deaths.

These gentlemen…were all in the prime of life, and in the fullest vigour of health. Poor Mr. Everard…often boasted to me of the excellence of his constitution. Musgrave’s health and strength were too vigorous for the climate; and perhaps, the high and buoyant spirits of his poor friend, Jerdan, caused him to make too light of the dangers that arise in Jamaica from fatigue and exposure to the sun (Madden 1970, 136).

His ideas about this category might have come from these deaths or his background in the medical profession. In addition, the writers were not always consistent in which category
they support. For example, Froude (1909) appears on the list of travel writers who imagined the islands of the region as an earthly paradise as well as those who viewed the islands in terms of disease and pestilence.

Cultivated and Wild

Sheller’s (2003, 38) distinctions stem from what she terms the “eighteenth century ‘scenic economy’ in which tropical landscapes came to be viewed through a painterly aesthetic constructed around comparative evaluations of cultivated land versus wild vistas.” Based on data derived from the travel literature of the Caribbean spanning the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, she divides European preferences for the region’s landscapes into two categories: cultivated and wild.

Like Arnold (2000) and Gregory (2001), Sheller (2004) also notes that early European writing on the Caribbean concentrated on the natural fertility of the islands, the ease of life based on tropical subsistence, and the conception of the islands as a paradise. From this perspective, she finds that the “Europeans were eager to grasp this paradise and make it their own” (Sheller 2004, 24). As with the Garden of Eden, the islands were transformed by cultivation.

The Enlightenment era produced a preference for scenes of cultivation in which the islands’ nature was ordered, civilized, and structured by progress (Sheller 2003). “Clearly in this period ‘wild nature’ had no appeal to European eyes, which desired to see nature shaped, ordered, and presented” (Sheller 2003, 48). As a result, this type of cultivation came to be the primary characteristic of the Caribbean islands. The beauty of
cultivation in the tropical landscape emerged as a key theme in descriptions of the region (Sheller 2003, 2004). Typical depictions provided an overview of plantations centered around the primary crops with provision grounds in the periphery and hills or mountains in the background (Sheller 2003). Travelers stressed their preference for this type of landscape through negative representations of uncultivated, ‘wild’ landscapes (Sheller 2004).

Sheller (2003, 2004) also argues that, in contrast, the rise of Romanticism brought about a shift in European preferences for landscape. The artistic appreciation for the sublime allowed for a reinvention of tropical nature. Scenes of cultivation remained, but an increasingly romantic view of landscape became more prominent in travel literature. These landscapes appeared wild, untamed, and untouched by human activity. The islands were re-envisioned in terms of primitive nature and even as natural Edens. These types of scenes were likely characterized by dense tropical forests, cliffs, and wild animals (2003).

Like the paradisiacal and the pestilential discussed above, there is a temporal break between categories of the cultivated and the wild. Although both categories existed throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, they were dominant in different periods. From the Enlightenment perspective, the preference for cultivated landscapes was dominant during the eighteenth century. Following the rise of the Romantic perspective, the preference for the wild landscape came about later. “Indeed an increasingly ‘naturalised’ and primordial view of Caribbean nature began to emerge in
the mid-nineteenth century, with the emphasis on its wilder, primitive aspects” (Sheller 2003, 54).

More specifically, there is a clear spatial division between the two categories. In many cases, cultivated and wild landscapes typically existed in different parts of the islands in the Caribbean. This division took place on both a horizontal and a vertical scale. In addition, the cultivated and wild landscape each contained distinct landscape features that gave the respective categories different appearances.

In accordance with Sheller (2003, 2004), both the cultivated and the wild categories can be identified in landscape descriptions for the British West Indies occurring in travel narratives written between 1815 and 1914. The Caribbean islands were characterized by orderly, cultivated landscapes, as well as wild uncultivated ones. Because the data sources used in this study were complimentary to those used by Sheller and even overlapped with Kingsley’s prominent narrative, each of these categories and characteristics were naturally present. The temporal, spatial, cultural, and personal contexts of the travel experiences depicted in these narratives each present a complicating factor. As with the paradisiacal and pestilential categories discussed above, the categories of this binary can not easily be separated.

Sheller (2003, 2004) establishes a general temporal framework for the cultivated and wild categories. She indicates that the cultivated category was dominant through the eighteenth century. Although this remained as a secondary category, she notes that the wild began to take precedence in the nineteenth century. Both the cultivated and the wild
were present during both time periods; therefore, the temporal perspective is relevant in terms of the shifting dominance of the categories.

All of the travel writers examined in this study, spanning the early nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, focused on the cultivated category for the islands of the British West Indies. These writers noted the general appearance of the fields as well as the characteristics of specific plants and produce. This shows that the cultivated category clearly maintained a presence, even though the wild category may have been dominant during the time in which these writers traveled. Some travel writers simply observed aspects of cultivation, while others placed a value judgment on or asserted a preference for cultivated landscape scenery. The travel writers were evenly divided in this regard. In addition, the temporal distribution of these travelers and tourists was also evenly divided. Of the ten writers who found cultivated landscapes appealing, six traveled in the first half of the time period and four in the second. Furthermore, the first four writers—George Philips [1821], Coleridge (1862), Alexander (1833), and Thomas Rolph [1832]—as well as three of the last four writers—Newton (1897), Henderson (1905), and Sir Frederick Treves (1908)—were included in this group.

The majority of travel writers also viewed the islands in terms that characterized the wild category. These writers particularly focused on the appearance of mountains, forests, and foliage. The four writers who gave little consideration to this category—Philips (1831), Houstoun (1844), Thomas Wilson (1860), and Nicholas Belfield Dennys [1861]—all traveled in the first half of the time period under study. Fewer travel writers placed a positive value judgment on or indicated a strong preference for wild landscape
scenery than the cultivated category. Of these five writers—Greville (1869), Lady Annie Allnutt Brassey [1883] (1885), Tait (1895), Newton (1897), and Henderson (1905)—all traveled in the second half of the time period under study. This perhaps indicates that while the wild category began to increase in importance at the beginning of the nineteenth century, it was not until after the middle of the century that it achieved dominance.

As indicated above, there is a relatively clear spatial break between the cultivated and the wild categories. The cultivated landscapes were typically characterized by easily identifiable plants with a neat and orderly appearance in island low or flatlands, while the wild landscapes were associated with dense forests or other vegetation having a rugged and untamed appearance, often tied to mountains or other highlands. The landscape descriptions in the travel narratives examined in this study broadly support these types of characteristics.

The cultivated nature of the islands was a primary feature of interest for travelers. Travel writers frequently commented on the extent of cultivation in specific islands, such as Antigua or Barbados, as well as the appearance of cultivated landscape scenery. Sugarcane fields were a landscape feature that most travelers remarked on in the region, while many other plantation crops were also depicted. In addition, several travelers that made excursions in specific islands also encountered cultivated landscapes in the form of provision grounds. Some writers provided the type of overview descriptions indicated by Sheller above. For example, in Grenada Coleridge (1862, 95) wrote, “The rest of the prospect is delightful; in every direction the eyes wanders over richly cultivated valleys
with streams of water running through them, orchards of shaddocks and oranges, houses
with gardens, negro huts embowered in plantain leaves, mountains and little hills…” In
contrast, Henderson guides his readers through a series of different cultivated scenes. He
wrote, “The railway journey will enable you to see agricultural Jamaica. The plantations,
great and small, skirt the railway track, and the traveller can note the varied beauties and
interests of the fruits of the Indies. He will see full-grown banana clumps… The fields of
pine-apples…and the pimento groves” (Henderson 1905, 168-9).

In addition, wild landscapes also seemed to present a key feature of observation
for travelers. These travel writers also noted the lack of cultivation or the wild character
of islands, such as Trinidad. Specifically, wild landscape scenery seemed to be most
commonly associated with mountains and forests. As with the previous category, this
type of landscape scenery was also viewed both from a distance and up close. As
Newton (1897, 50) observed Dominica in passing, she wrote, “the forms grew grander,
and ever more and more wild and rugged—more sublime and varied in shape… range
behind range, and peak behind peak, cone-shaped, with deep, sharp clefts, and valleys,
ledges, valleys and strange indentations everywhere, clothed to the highest summit in
tenderest verdure.” In Trinidad, Froude (1909, 73) described the experience of a
waterfall where “[t]he sides of the basin were draped with the fronds of gigantic ferns and
wild plantains, all in wild luxuriance and dripping with the spray.”

On the surface, there does indeed appear to be a clear distinction between
cultivated and wild landscapes in travel narratives for the British West Indies. For
example, Coleridge (1862, 179) found that on Nevis “[a] complete forest of evergreen
trees grows like a ruff or collar round the neck of the high land where cultivation ceases.” Other travel writers also marked this sort of dividing line where one landscape stopped and another began. This type of distinction, however, is more complicated than it appears, and the travel narratives need to be thoroughly examined to illuminate these complexities.

Travel writers such as Coleridge typically viewed the landscape from a distance when they made this type of distinction between the cultivated and the wild categories. When they were inside the landscape, it was much more difficult to draw such a clear line. At the same time, however, the novel tropical setting prompted some writers to take note of the types of landscape features not found in the cultivated scenes they were familiar with. In St. Kitts, Rolph (1841, 62) found that “the land seemed everywhere rich and verdant and highly cultivated: and the neat houses, plantations, churches, windmills, mountains, deep ravines, and majestic trees were all beautifully intermingled, and formed a most delightful scene.” Travel writers also frequently commented on the beautiful scenery or the greenness of landscapes without distinguishing between types of vegetation. For example, upon leaving Jamaica, Houstoun (1844, 110) simply wrote, “Again, and most probably for the last time, I gazed on the beautiful scenery and luxuriant vegetation of this most lovely of the West India Islands.”

In addition, travel writers also described a number of landscapes that were poorly defined. In some cases, landscapes that ordinarily would be classified as cultivated had a different or unexpected appearance. As a result, the travel writers’ descriptions of them were more ambiguous. For example, Bullen visited the Hope Botanical Garden in
Jamaica. This was clearly a cultivated setting displaying agricultural plants, but the scene it presented was not what Bullen anticipated. He wrote, “For although Hope Gardens has none of the conventional parterres or carpet gardening of similar places at home, it has a wild beauty entirely its own” (Bullen 1905, 58). In contrast, the same agricultural plants and trees, such as nutmegs, oranges or cloves, could also be seen as features of wild landscapes.

The islands’ provision grounds were, of course, cultivated landscapes; however, they did not have the same type of predictable appearance as, for example, a sugarcane plantation. Many different tropical crops were grown together on relatively small plots with a more haphazard look, and travelers often did not recognize the plants or produce. Trollope (1968, 30) described some such provision grounds in Jamaica as “very picturesque.” He wrote,

They are not filled, as a peasant’s garden in England or in Ireland is filled, with potatoes and cabbages, or other vegetables similarly uninteresting in their growth; but contain cocoa-trees, breadfruit-trees, oranges, mangoes, limes, plantains, jackfruit, sour-sop, avocado pears, and a score of others, all of which are luxuriant trees, some of considerable size, and all of them of great beauty (Trollope 1968, 30).

Similarly, many travel writers described the appearance of cacao plantations, also cultivated landscapes. These plantations were often found on the lesser developed islands, such as Trinidad or Dominica, and at higher elevations. Because of the cacao plant’s sensitivity to direct sunlight, they are grown together with shade plants. The Bois Immortel, referred to as the most beautiful tree in the region by several travel writers, specifically served this purpose on many plantations. The combined effect was such that tourists such as Wilson (1860, 63) felt that “[a]mongst the many natural beauties in which
the Island of Trinidad abounds, there are few more likely to charm the stranger, than the cocoa plantation.”

Finally, the lines between the cultivated and the wild categories were further blurred over the course of the time period as estates were abandoned. In some cases, features of both types of landscapes coexisted on these landscapes. Many travel writers imagined that the wild aspects would eventually overwhelm the remnants of cultivation. For Kingsley (1871, 29), “Nature in this land of perpetual summer hides with a kind of eagerness every scar which man in his clumsiness leaves on the earth’s surface; and all, though relapsing into primeval wildness, was green, soft, luxuriant, as if the hoe had never torn the ground.” The travel writers were divided on which course these transition landscapes should take. Froude was strong in his opinion that the land was going to waste, whereas Greville (1869, 141) indicated that “[b]efore many years are past and gone it may be conjectured that Grenada will again be a beautiful wilderness.”

Finally, cultural and personal contexts also play a role in the dominance of one category over the other. Colonial factors dictated the physical dominance of the cultivated over the wild as well as the eventual reversal of this trend. For example, Sheller (2003, 58) interprets the emphasis on wild landscapes of the Caribbean in the post-emancipation contexts “as pleas for renewed European intervention in economically and socially decayed colonies.” At the same time, as indicated by Sheller (2003, 2004), cultural movements such as Romanticism shaped the visual preference for the wild over the cultivated. In addition, individual circumstances influenced which categories travelers drew upon and favored, for example, the circumstances of the travelers that
gave little consideration to the wild category. Philips (1831) was a businessman and mostly focused on agricultural produce and economic concerns as they related to the rural landscape. Similarly, Wilson primarily traveled to the region to visit his brother’s cacao plantation. Houstoun (1844) was preoccupied by the hazards of the islands, and Dennys (1862) was chiefly interested in each island’s social circumstances. Also tourists such as Newton (1897) and Henderson (1905), were not always consistent in their preferences for one category over the other.

**Binaries of People and Landscape**

The paradisiacal/pestilential and cultivated/wild binaries are two examples of binary categories within landscape that were common for the tropics during the colonial period. These binary systems are made up of layers of various other binaries, and they contribute to the layers of larger binary systems. In particular, the paradisiacal/pestilential and cultivated/wild contribute to the binaries that separate people and landscape. The paradisiacal did not assume dominance over the pestilential or vice versa. Similarly, the cultivated did not assert its dominance over the wild. Humans assign dominance to one category or the other, and the maintenance of such binary categories serve as justification for the continued dominance of people over the environment. Consequently, the culture/nature binary must be seen in terms of the fundamental colonizer/colonized binary.

It could perhaps be argued that the cultivated/wild binary is simply another form of the culture/nature binary. Cultivation and culture are closely related, and cultivated
landscapes are distinctly modified by people. Wild is often defined by its original or natural state, and wild landscapes are seen as those that have been uninfluenced by human actions. However, both of these categories are categories in landscape; they form just one layer of the larger nature/culture binary. The same also applies to other binaries applicable to this study, including the paradisiacal/pestilential, tropical/temperate, and rural/urban. People, travelers and tourists to the British West Indies in this particular case, remain outside of the landscape and form the oppositional category. Furthermore, Western culture has long positioned itself as the dominant category in this binary system. As a result, both the paradisiacal and the pestilential, and both the cultivated and the wild landscapes are the nature that is the ‘other’ to be dominated by people.

Although the aesthetic tradition of landscape promoted an appreciation of nature, it also perpetuated the separation of people from nature, both physically and conceptually. Based upon the idea of landscape as a framed scene, the gaze, preferably from a certain physical distance, became the principal means of involvement, engagement, and interaction with nature. For tourists in particular, the idealized and sanitized nature of this landscape concept became a place of pleasure and recreation; it was clearly not a place to live or work. Even the travel writers that imagined a potential life in the tropics primarily envisioned the spectacle of that life. For example, Coleridge (1862) described the prospect of a friend’s estate on Dominica and determined that if the estate were his he would do nothing more than sit or stroll upon the terrace. Similarly, based on his experiences in Jamaica, Robert Baird [1849] (1850, 89) wrote,

Anything in the way of cultivation more beautiful, or more fragrant, than a coffee plantation, I had not conceived; and oft did I say to myself, that if I ever became,
from health or otherwise, a cultivator of the soil within the tropics, I would cultivate the coffee plant, even though I did so irrespective altogether of the profit that might be derived from doing so.

The primary purpose of such a landscape scene, paradisiacal or pestilential, cultivated or wild, was to be viewed and judged by human spectators who were conceptually outside of and above nature in a position of mastery. From this position, travelers viewed the landscape both possessively and prospectively, which contributed to the cultural appropriation of the British West Indies. According to Gillespie (2002, 556), “Indeed, one of the fundamental precepts of empire during the nineteenth century included the use of culture to imagine and control colonial geography on a global scale.” Travel narratives served as a form of cultural representation for the islands of the British West Indies from a dominant perspective. Although this perspective was people over landscape, it was also colonizers over colonized.

Possession-taking in the colonial dominance over nature typically took the form of land ownership. For colonial travelers and tourists, however, physical ownership of land was not a prerequisite. A figurative possession could take place physically as travelers overcame and ‘conquered’ the barriers that the landscape presented. Because the focus of tourism so often lies within the spectacle though, the writers were more likely to represent the landscape possessively through vision. Their representations strongly reaffirmed the islands as colonial possessions and their value as colonial resources. For example, Newton (1897, 5) “If I have said anything which will induce others to visit scenes I have so keenly enjoyed, or to realise more fully the value and great beauty of these tropical colonies, I shall be rewarded.”
Representations further reaffirmed island landscapes as British through landscape associationism, in which sites visited were compared to sites at home that readers would be familiar with (Duncan 1999; Gillespie 2002). Travel writers often likened estates in the rural landscape of the West Indies to English country estates. While Coleridge (1862) found the appearance of planters’ houses in Antigua to be like those of English country mansions, Trollope (1968, 41) found that on an estate in Jamaica his “host’s ordinary occupations were exactly those of a country gentleman in England. He fished and shot, and looked after his estate, and acted as magistrate; and over and above this, was somewhat particular about his dinner, and the ornamentation of the land immediately round his house.” As landscape ideas were transplanted from England to the British West Indies, certain values and relationships were transplanted as well.

In addition, as travel writers viewed the landscape, they also imagined themselves as the actual owners of certain landscapes. As indicated above in the quote by Baird, these landscapes were typically cultivated landscapes; however, they were specifically upland estates. These estates not only availed from the cooler environment and the comfort of an English country estate, but they also enjoyed a prospect over the cultivated portions of the land and the wider spectacle of the tropical landscape. Thus the individual would be doubly served by nature; he would profit from its productive capacity as well as benefit from the scenery it presented. Furthermore, the aesthetic tradition of landscape helped organize the scene around the spectator, the traveler or tourist, as if it were there solely for the purpose of his or her viewing pleasure. Taken a step farther, the traveler would capture a particular perspective of that view, shaped by personal preferences and
cultural conventions, that would only exist as a vicarious landscape for that individual. The landscape that was represented to readers in travel narratives, then, was this vicarious landscape.

The prospective view of landscape was often a result of possession-taking. When taken through land ownership, this view was specifically intended for landscape transformation. As with the possessive view though, this was not necessarily the case for colonial travelers. From the possessive representation of landscape, travel writers could also imagine the landscape as it could be. For example, when travelers and tourists emphasized the colonial possession of the British West Indies, they frequently projected an idea of the landscape under that relationship. Based on a variety of factors, this prospective view differed between travel writers. Henderson imagined that the land would be made productive and the colonies profitable. “We forget that these Western islands were at one time the richest of England’s possessions; we do not realise how rich they, some day, will again become” (Henderson 1905, 4). At the same time, Froude imagined that the land would continue to fall into disuse and the colonies would become increasingly impoverished. He declared, “What a land! And what were we doing with it? This fair inheritance, won by English hearts and hands for the use of the working men of England…and the inheritance turned into a wilderness” (Froude 1909, 151).

With the increasing appreciation of nature under the aesthetic landscape tradition, travel writers also began to hold a prospective view of the islands as a tourism destination. They felt that the region had potential for that purpose, but some changes still needed to be made. For example, Alexander (1833, 306) felt that “if more attention
were paid to draining swamps, these verdant and picturesque islands might be rendered perfectly healthy, and Elysian retreats for those who have been harshly used by fortune in the mother country.” Moreover, the creation of the Caribbean as a tourism destination served as a continued justification of colonialism, naturalized the possessive view, and reinforced the idea that nature in the islands existed for outsiders to derive pleasure from in the act of looking.

Finally, travelers and tourists viewed the landscape prospectively by imagining it as it could be rather than seeing it for what it really was. From the aesthetic landscape tradition, travel writers were given the ability to modify a landscape scene if it did not suit their particular preferences. They could eliminate those aspects of the real world that were not pleasing or did not conform to the artistic conventions that they anticipated. In addition, they could add features that might enhance the scene. Travel writers recreated the landscapes of the British West Indies in their internal, vicarious landscapes based on personal tastes and cultural conventions, such as the aesthetic ideals discussed above. Then they represented these vicarious landscapes in their travel narratives. As a result, the landscapes represented could be seen as much a product of the travel writers’ home environments as they were a part of the Caribbean region.

These landscape perspectives served to reinforce the separation between people and nature as well as the physical and conceptual distance between them. These perspectives continually emphasized the place of people as colonizers above nature, where they could possess and transform nature. At the same time, they established the place of nature as the colonized and the need to keep nature in its place. Consequently,
travelers’ and tourists’ vision and their representation of these perspectives served as a naturalization and justification for the maintenance of the culture/nature binary system and the continued dominance of culture or colonizer over nature or colonized.

It should also be noted that the opposition between the culture and nature is no different than the other binary systems discussed above. The simple structure conceals the complexity of the binaries and does not take into account the ongoing process of representation that creates shifts in the system. Although people positioned themselves as the dominant category, many travel writers nonetheless attributed ‘Nature’ in the West Indies agency. This nature was not always easily explained, predicted, or controlled by people. Travel writers made note of this through the formation of landscapes, the patterns of fertility, the rate of reclamation, and the occurrence of natural hazards. Kingsley (1871, 122) asserted, “In verity we are in the tropics, where the so-called ‘powers of nature’ are in perpetual health and strength, and as much stronger and swifter, for good and evil, than in our chilly clime, as is the young man in the heat of youth compared with the old man shivering to his grave.” In addition, personal preferences and cultural conventions also played a part and influenced the ways in which travelers and tourists viewed and related to the natural environment.

Lastly, although the categories of nature and culture are seen as fundamentally separate, they are nonetheless entangled. Nature, which is defined by its opposition to culture, ultimately becomes cultural through the process of vision, representation, and cultural appropriation. Travel writers often imagined that they encountered a landscape in the British West Indies that was untouched by humans. For example, in St. Kitts
Rolph (1841, 62) wrote, “There is a soft vale by Basseterre whose vivid green appears as if it never been violated by moral foot.” Even if this were the case, the landscape is ultimately transformed by the nature of his experience of that landscape, either visually or tangibly. His particular way of seeing would have been influenced by each of those spatial, temporal, cultural, and personal contexts discussed above. In the end, the nature that was seen as ‘out there’ would have actually become something that was inside in terms of those internal, vicarious landscapes.

**Tourists and Landscape**

The role of vision in tourism was solidified in the industry’s earliest stages of development. Consequently, the visible, the visual, and the vicarious may also be seen as expressions of the relationships between the vision of tourists, the landscapes of the destination, and the tourists’ landscape experiences. Each of these relationships has played a part in tourism, and they have significantly contributed to the physical and conceptual separation of people from nature. For example, in this formative period of Caribbean tourism, tourists were trained to rely on vision as the primary means of gathering information about the landscape, often due to logistical concerns. They were further encouraged to utilize the aesthetic concepts that instruct vision. As a result, tourists kept themselves physically separate from the landscapes of the islands they visited. Such aesthetic concepts were also used as the principal form of organizing and deriving pleasure from the landscape. This allowed tourists to conceptually separate
themselves from the landscape. They were able to see themselves as above the landscape and shape it as they saw fit, in their minds or in their representations.

Combined, these relationships had a distinct effect on the activities tourists undertook at a destination and the ways in which they experienced the landscape. All of the travelers and tourists used in this study had their sense of sight. They used vision as the primary means of engagement with the landscape, and this type of engagement crucially formed the basis of their travel narratives. The most common type of tourist experience with the landscape was highly passive in which vision was the only means of engagement. Under certain additional circumstances, tourists undertook activities in which they interacted with the landscape in more tangible ways and had the opportunity to experience the landscape through both vision and other senses. For instance, tourists participated in activities that allowed them to surround themselves with a particular landscape or move through a landscape.

Each of these activities, interactions, and experiences became characteristic of tourism. They contrasted with the activities of the island residents, especially those individuals who interacted with the natural environment on daily basis and depended on it for food or employment. For example, tourists who sought natural scenery often visited waterfalls like Maraccas in Trinidad; however, Sir James Edward Alexander (1833) notes that few of the residents have been to see the falls.

The first type of landscape experience specifically refers to the interactions in which travelers were physically removed from the landscape, and sight was the only sense employed. This type of experience was most commonly associated with a prospect
or an elevated vantage point. As previously discussed, perhaps the most significant means of achieving this prospect was from a ship at sea. In addition, such a prospect could also be found from a place of accommodation on the island or a selected place from which the best scenery of the sea and the island could be viewed.

Landscape viewing from the perspective of a ship has long been an integral part of the tourism experience in the Caribbean cruise. Early travelers and tourists typically made a concerted effort to be at a particular viewpoint when the ship passed or approached an island. Various writers mentioned rising early to look upon islands that were in sight, while others mentioned hurrying to the deck when such a scene presented itself. Like many travel writers, Robert Baird came topside as his ship first approached Barbados. “This being my introduction to tropical scenery, and the view of the town of Bridgetown from Carlisle Bay being a scene of much picturesque beauty, I was greatly and agreeably struck by the view which stretched itself before me on reaching the deck of the steamship” (Baird 1850, 23).

Travelers often equated viewing the landscape with experiencing it, and in some cases, they considered such a view to be the optimal form of landscape experience. John Boddam-Whetham devoted several pages of his travel narrative to the description of Dominica based entirely upon this view. Due to the inadequate tourism infrastructure on the island, he indicated that “we were assured by those who knew…if we wanted to carry away a pleasant memory of our English isle, we had better be contented with its view from the sea (Boddam-Whetham 1879, 55-56). Likewise, Anthony Trollope (1968, 153) wrote,
To my mind, Dominica, as seen from the sea, is by far the most picturesque of all these islands… It fills one with an ardent desire to be off and rambling among those green mountains—as if one could ramble through such wild, bush country, or ramble at all with the thermometer at 85. But when one has only to think of such things without any idea of doing them, neither the bushes nor the thermometer are considered.

Most simply, for St. Vincent James Anthony Froude (1909, 45) determined that “as a beautiful picture the island was best seen from the deck.”

Figure 12: Roseau, Dominica
(Henderson 1905, 246)

The impress of these patterns from the past are still visible in Caribbean tourism today. The Caribbean has been long been closely associated with cruise tourism. The sea was, of course, the singular mode of travel during the time period under consideration, and this form still accounted for a significant number of tourists to the region at the end of the nineteenth century (Caribbean Tourism Organization 2003; Wood 2004). Of the island nations included in this study, Trinidad and Tobago was the only destination that did not have half or more of their total arrivals coming from cruise
passengers in the year 2000 (Wood 2004). It is still common for passengers to remain on board the ship while at port, albeit for different reasons. Nonetheless, cruise tourism has built on a legacy which dictates that it is acceptable, even desirable to use vision from the vantage point of the ship as a means of experiencing the destination.

From this perspective, nature on the islands becomes something ‘out there’ to be viewed, described, sketched, or photographed. It is neither a part of life for tourists nor a tangible tourism experience. Tourists like Boddam-Whetham, cited above, may use vision to gather information about the landscape, while others such as Baird may use it to organize and derive pleasure from the landscape. Regardless, the vicarious plays the greatest role. In essence, tourists can only use their vision of the landscape as a basis for creating internal landscapes in which they can imagine what a particular landscape or landscape experience might be like. Tourists like Trollope appear to be perfectly content with this type of vicarious experience and physical as well as conceptual separation from nature.

In addition to this view from the ship, travel writers also looked to view landscape scenery from places of accommodation on land. Houses in the city, rural estates, and hotels were all surrounded to some extent by dramatic tropical landscape scenery. Travelers or tourists could sit on the verandahs or in the drawing rooms and view this scenery, almost as if they were viewing a painting on the wall. In the hills of Jamaica, Frank Bullen (1905, 156-7) visited the mansion of a “Mr. Feurtado, from whose verandah a perfect panorama of Kingston harbour might be obtained.” Similarly, in Dominica Froude (1909, 131) found that
The views from the drawing room windows were enchantingly beautiful… On one side we looked up a mountain gorge, the slopes covered with forest; a bold lofty crag jutting out from them brown and bare, and the mountain ridge behind half buried in mist. From the other window we had the Botanical Gardens, the bay beyond them sparkling in the sunshine…

This emphasis on scenery from a place of ease and comfort also left its mark on Caribbean tourism. Modern hotels and resorts in the region typically organize rooms around the ‘view’ (e.g. oceanview, gardenview), while patios and balconies encourage tourists to sit and enjoy these views. Resorts promote the situation and surroundings of the particular establishment and highlight the views and vistas. For example, the Flamboyant Hotel is described by the following: “Situated on a hillside overlooking Grand Anse Bay with some of the best views in Grenada (Island Resort Tours 2002, 41). In addition, travel guides will often cite the locations with the best views. In Port of Spain, Trinidad, for instance, “The Hilton offers a good view of the city. If you want a higher perch you could drive up to Fort George” (Anglin et al. 2001, 544).

From this perspective, nature is somewhat more tangible than the previous view because it becomes a part of the tourist’s experience for the duration of his or her stay. The visible and the vicarious are still involved in this experience; however, the emphasis here is on the visual. Although tourists may describe or photograph these landscapes, they are most likely to be viewed for the pleasure such scenery brings the viewer, such as that which is expressed by Froude above. The experience is a passive one, where the view has already been selected and framed for the tourist by the situation of the establishment. The landscape is not only ‘out there’ but also two-dimensional, where
tourists are most likely to appraise it as they would a painting without looking beyond the surface of the spectacle.

Additionally, some of the more enterprising travelers achieved vantage points that were more remote and physically challenging to reach. Some specifically journeyed to these places with the intention of viewing landscape scenery. Others took advantage of a particular prospect while they were touring an island or traveling to visit a given person or place on the island. Such travel writers were often impressed with the experience of viewing landscape scenery from such vantage points. Indeed, many felt that this type of landscape experience was profound. In Trinidad John Chester Greville (1869, 137) noted that “[t]he view from the hill above…is one to remember for a lifetime, and to carry away imprinted on the mind as a solace amidst future troubles which none can take away.” Other writers were more concerned with the trouble it would take to get to such prospects. Dr. Richard Robert Madden (1970) offered his readers a choice of two views of the scenery surrounding Kingston, Jamaica. In his opinion, the less physically demanding view of this scenery from the sea was certainly equal to the prospect from the mountains above and beyond the city.

For those tourists who seek such perspectives, the experience is less about the scenery than the conquest of nature. The environment presents a challenge to be overcome before reaching a desired position above the landscape. Those who succeed can view the landscape with a sense of mastery, as in Pratt’s (1992) “monarch-of-all-I-survey” trope, and remember it with a sense of triumph. Those who elect not to undertake the trial dismiss the landscape as unworthy of their effort. In either case, the
The tourist relationship with landscape is no longer that of neutral separation; the tourists perceive themselves to be superior to nature.

The second type of landscape experience occurs when tourists position themselves in the midst of a landscape in order to appreciate its scenery. This has taken place to a lesser extent than the previous type, but it is a nonetheless important perspective on landscape. In many cases, a traveler would view a particular landscape in passing and simply imagine it as a place that would be pleasant to pass time without actually doing so. Tourists such as Alexander (1833) and Bullen (1905) noted that Barbados’s Codrington College had an environment that they felt was well suited to the pursuits of study and reflection. Brassy (1885) encountered a scene in Trinidad in which she would have liked to linger if it had not been getting dark. On the same island, Trollope (1968, 207) viewed “open glades, and grassy enclosures, which tempt one to wish that it was one’s lot to lie there in the green shade and eat bananas and mangoes.”

Additional tourists surrounded themselves with a landscape in the course of an activity that encouraged the appreciation of nature. For example, tourists found themselves in this position while botanizing, worshiping, bathing in the sea or a spring, and painting or sketching. Among the travel writers examined, Margaret Newton particularly enjoyed seeking landscapes in which she could surround herself to sketch the scenery. “I walked a little higher and then, enchanted with so vast a scene of beauty, selected a ‘point’ and seated myself at a bend in the road to sketch. Cocoanut palms, bread-fruit trees and bamboos, rose tier above tier in front of me” (Newton 1897, 57).
Although the idea of ‘romantic’ landscape scenery was drawn upon throughout the time period under study and continues to be employed today, it is interesting that this type of landscape experience is markedly less significant. Romanticism specifically emphasized direct experiences and immersion in nature to refresh the mind, body, and soul and to reclaim the part of life than had been lost with fast-paced industrial life. Furthermore, the Caribbean vacation continues to be marketed in terms of an easy-going, relaxing break from the stress of daily life. Typical tourists, however, do not commune with nature. This type of experience only takes place secondarily in the course of, for example, lounging at a waterfall pool. Romanticism had the potential for bringing people and nature closer together or at least attributing values to nature that would elevate it to a more even position with people. In regard to these experiences, however, the landscape is seen as a suitable ‘natural’ setting for tourist activities.

The third type of landscape experience took place when tourists view landscape scenery in the course of moving through the environment on various excursions. Many travel writers felt like they had to see as much of the island as they could during their limited stay there. As a result, a key excursion was an island tour. For the smaller islands, such as Nevis, this could be a day trip. For example, Henry Nelson Coleridge (1862, 183) “rode entirely round this island, with the exception of a mile or two on the windward side, and found it uniformly rich, verdant, and beautiful.” For the larger islands, such as Jamaica, an extended journey around the island or several excursions in different directions was necessary in order to see the greater part of the island. Trollope undertook this type of a tour. In his narrative he commented,
I have travelled over the greater part of the island, and was very much pleased with it. The drawbacks on such a tour are the expensiveness of locomotion, the want of hotels, and the badness of the roads. As to the cost, the tourist always consoles himself by reflecting that he is going to take the expensive journey once, and once only (Trollope 1968, 28).

Other important excursions took tourists through the forests, agricultural estates, or botanical gardens, including the Trinidad’s gardens shown below in Figure 13.

![The Botanic Gardens at Port of Spain, Trinidad](Kingsley 1871, front)

Travelers moved through these landscapes by means of railroad, carriage (shown in Figure 14), horseback, on foot, or any combination of the above. For example, regarding a tour of Trinidad William Tait (1895, 116) wrote,

> We left Port of Spain by train at 8-30 a.m. for San Josef, the ancient capital of Trinidad. Here we had carriages awaiting us, which conveyed us six or seven miles to a small clearing of three or four houses, where we had to leave the horses, and carriages and proceed on foot for the remainder of the way, about one and a half miles.

Clearly different types of landscape scenery could be seen from the different means of conveyance. Nonetheless, travelers found appropriate scenery to be viewed from each.
John Henderson (1905, 168) indicated that “[t]he railway journey will enable you to see agricultural Jamaica. The plantations, great and small, skirt the railway track, and the traveller can note the varied beauties and interests of the fruits of the Indies.” Thomas Wilson (1860, 33) noted that “[a]s you drive out of the town [San Fernando, Trinidad], a most beautiful view presents itself; as far as the eye can reach, over hill and dale is one sheet of the most luxuriant green that can be imagined.” Also in Trinidad, Trollope (1968, 219) wrote, “I certainly never rode for three hours through more lovely scenery. At first, also, it was deliciously cool, and as our road lay entirely through woods, it was in every way delightful,” and Alexander (1833, 220) wrote, “It is now necessary to proceed onwards on foot, along a narrow path, with a precipice below, and amongst wild scenery; at last, on emerging from a thick wood, the traveller finds himself at the bottom of the fall.”

![Figure 14: Transportation by carriage, St. Kitts (Aspinall 1910, 214)](image)

Sightseeing is a longstanding tourist activity, and such patterns have changed little over time. Tourists in the Caribbean typically move through the landscape during at least
one tour or excursion. The island tour continues to be a common means of maximizing the limited amount of time tourists spend at a destination, allowing them to see much of the smaller islands in a day trip. A rainforest tour is also a frequent activity in which tourists move through the nature of this specific island landscape (Nelson 2003). In most cases, tourists move through the landscape during these activities by automobile and on foot, typically with a combination of the two. There are a few exceptions though. The railroad that once serviced St. Kitt’s sugar industry is now used as the means of conveyance for an island tour. Also horseback riding still takes place on most islands; however, the activity is now the attraction rather than a type of transportation.

The means of conveyance plays a key role in this type of landscape experience. Even for automobile and railroad transport, tourists will gain a more multi-dimensional perspective of the landscape, moving through it, rather than simply viewing it from the outside. The speed of movement, however, is a factor in the depth of the experience. The experiences on foot are perhaps the most active and most direct ways in which tourists engage with nature. Although vision is still the primary source of information, pleasure, and material for the creation of internal landscapes, other senses such as sound, smell, and touch are also important as tourists move through the landscape.

Tourism Representations of Landscape

Representations have played an important role in the development of tourism. Tourism destinations and activities, as well as tourist experiences, have long been represented in a number of forms, both private and public. Private forms of
representations have included letters and diaries that provided a record of personal tourist experiences. Illustrations, including sketches, paintings or engravings, and later photographs have visually depicted such experiences in both private and public representations. Finally, narratives, newspaper articles, and tour guides were common among the widely distributed representations that provided information or instructions for tourists, described places or activities, and occasionally promoted a particular tourism experience.

Bullen (1905), for example, traveled to the Caribbean as the guest of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company. Although he assured his readers that he has “subdued my natural bias in favour of the Company,” he shortly asserted, “I know of no trip likely to afford a more solid return in renewed health and wider outlook upon the world that that offered by the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company” (Bullen 1905, vii and ix). Other travelers had less explicit connections to the tourism industry but nonetheless intended to encourage others to undertake similar journeys. Newton (1897, 5) wrote, “If I have said anything which will induce others to visit scenes I have so keenly enjoyed, or to realise more fully the value and great beauty of these tropical colonies, I shall be rewarded for the exertion made after days of fatiguing rambles to record these ‘Glimpses of Life in Bermuda and the Tropics.’”

The purpose of these different types of representations was not always explicit. The type used in this study, for example, published travel narratives, served a number of functions in regards to landscape. They were clearly meant to entertain, providing interesting and often amusing accounts of the places encountered during the travel
experience. Many travel writers also attempted to provide information about the natural features of the islands they visited, including the elevation of mountains, the height of trees, the types of vegetation, the types of produce, and the extent of cultivation. In addition, several travel writers attempted to make an argument about the state of colonial agriculture or the healthfulness of island environments. For example, in the introduction, Baird (1850) indicated that he wrote his travel narrative with the intention of providing enjoyment for his readers and encouraging those who might consider a similar voyage for health reasons. He supported this purpose throughout the text. In one example he wrote, “In fine, I feel it is only discharging a duty I owe to others to testify my conviction of the fact, that few places on the globe furnish a more advantageous retreat for parties labouring under pulmonary complaints, than does this self-same island of Nevis” (Baird 1850, 63-4).

Perhaps most significantly, however, travel narratives served to create the vicarious landscapes of the British West Indies. In the course of their journey, travel writers experienced the landscape in the ways discussed above. From the vicarious landscapes based upon these experiences, the writers then represented the landscape in their travel narratives. Their vivid, detailed landscape descriptions and illustrations created a distinct image of the islands in the minds of their readers. If these readers had the opportunity to travel to the region, they carried these images with them. These new travelers sought the prospects and views described in travel narratives, and they had similar types of landscape experiences as those who came before them. They made comparisons between the landscapes that they viewed and the images in their heads, and
typically they found that their experiences lived up to or exceeded these expectations. They then reaffirmed these images in their own travel narratives, contributing to the cycle of expectation.

Three of the travel narratives used in this study were specifically referenced by other travel writers. Madden (1970) and Matilda Houstoun (1844) referenced Coleridge’s *Six Months in the West Indies in 1825*, and Sir Frederick Treves (1908) referenced Froude’s *The English in the West Indies or the Bow of Ulysses*. Charles Kingsley’s *At Last: A Christmas in the West Indies* was the most frequently cited travel narrative, referenced by Lady Annie Allnutt (1885), Froude (1909), Newton (1897), and Treves (1908). The travel writers often quoted these earlier travel writers’ narratives. For example, Treves (1908), in many cases more interested in the history of the islands he visited, often relied on other authors’ descriptions of natural scenery, including those of Kingsley and Froude. Likewise, Nicholas Belfield Dennys (1862) provided extensive quotations in the footnotes of his narrative because he claimed other authors could better convey the character of the islands than he could. In addition, travel writers used these previous descriptions as a basis for their judgment of the islands. Madden (1970), for instance, determined that Grenada was, indeed, the most beautiful of the Antilles, as Coleridge had designated the island.

Kingsley came to be seen as something of an authority on Trinidad. Brassey (1885), Froude (1909), and Newton (1897) each recalled his work while during their visits to the island. Froude (1909, 51-2) even wrote, “I might spare myself a description of Trinidad, for the natural features of the place, its forests and gardens, its exquisite
flora, the loveliness of its birds and insects, have been described already, with a grace of
touch and a fullness of knowledge which I could not rival if I tried, by my dear friend
Charles Kingsley.” He further indicated that, because of Kingsley’s account of the
island, he had a greater interest in it than perhaps other islands that seemed less familiar
to him. In addition, he described his experience of Trinidad in light of this previous,
vicarious experience. “Kingsley’s ‘At Last’ gave Trinidad an additional interest to me,
but even he had not prepared me completely for the place which I was to see. It is only
when one has seen any object with one’s own eyes, that the accounts given by others
become recognisable and instructive” (Froude, 1909, 55).

Brassey (1885) actually took *At Last: A Christmas in the West Indies* with her to
read during her travels. Like Froude, she also indicated that any descriptions she could
provide for Trinidad would not compare to those already given by Kingsley. However,
she also cautioned her readers, “I think that, perhaps, as a rule, he raises the expectations
of his readers almost too high” (Brassey 1885, 135).

As this cycle repeated itself throughout the time period and beyond, negative
aspects of the islands’ natural environments were gradually erased. Whereas the earlier
travelers were often preoccupied with natural hazards and environmental triggers for
disease, many of the later travelers focused on the relaxation, healthfulness, and
peacefulness of a trip to the region. Earlier travelers often indicated that it was unsafe to
be outside during the daytime. Houstoun (1844, 92) wrote, “We could only go out after
the sun was set, owing to the intense heat.” Some of the later travelers were less
convinced of this argument. In regards to travelers who passed their time in Barbados
sitting on lounge chairs on the hotel verandah, Bullen (1905, 29) wrote, “Yet even they are unconsciously receiving much benefit from the warm air and strong life-giving breezes of this most healthful little island.” Furthermore, as indicated in Chapter 5, these later travelers were more likely to represent the rural landscapes in positive terms such as peace, serenity, and tranquility.

The cycle of expectation was further perpetuated through travel guides and regional surveys for the region. Although these books often had different explicit purposes, they typically blended a combination of geographical, historical, and travel information. They were associated with various organizations, including the Royal Geographical Society, the Royal Colonial Institute, and the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company. They drew upon a variety of “authentic sources” (Osborne 1843), particularly firsthand accounts of the region from residents, scientific expeditions, travel narratives, and even other guides. Of the travel writers used in this study, Coleridge, Trollope, Kingsley, Boddam-Whetham, Brassey, Froude, and Treves, were referenced in these sources. Writers such as Kingsley, Froude, and Brassey were considered to be “distinguished” travelers who were necessarily referenced (Eves 1889, xxiii), while Aspinall (1910, 42-3) placed the narratives of Trollope, Kingsley, Froude, and Treves on a list of “volumes which, in the opinion of the writer, should prove most useful and interesting to those contemplating a visit to the West Indies.”

Travel writers presented an experience of landscape in their narratives. These guides and surveys, however, presented such travel writers as examples of successful travel experiences and itineraries to be followed. “If this small volume succeeds in
inducing a few to follow in the wake of Trollope, Froude, and Kingsley, who found so much happiness in a voyage to the West; in facilitating the arrangements of those who are contemplating a tour; and in helping those who have already embarked on one, it will amply serve its purpose” (Aspinall 1910, ix). These books further selected and represented landscape descriptions under the guise of geographies written by “authentic” sources with firsthand knowledge of such environments and features. For example, in *Central & South America with the West Indies*, Trollope is quoted in reference to the cotton tree of Jamaica. “Nature, in order to sustain so large a mass, supplies it with huge spurs at the foot, which act as buttresses for its support, connecting the roots immediately with the trunk as much as 20 feet above the ground. I measured more than one, which, including the buttresses, was over 30 feet in diameter” (Herbertson and Herbertson 1908, 12).

As a result, the influence of travel narrative landscape descriptions extended beyond the narratives themselves. They reached a wider audience and contributed to the idea of the British West Indies that served both fanciful and factual purposes. For the former, the landscape descriptions allowed armchair travelers to imagine what the islands were like. For the latter, they appeared to give readers an idea of the actual conditions of the islands. The overall effect was that the types of interactions that travelers had with the landscape and their representations of those landscapes created and re-created a distinct set of ideas that formed a cycle of expectation. These ideas were so pervasive and the cycle so persistent that the patterns established during the colonial period may also be evidenced in the post-colonial era of Caribbean tourism.
The cycle of expectation has been perpetuated over time through tourism representations. Photographs have perhaps become the most important tourism representations, as they are central in both private and public forms. Given the compressed duration of modern trips, the postcard has largely replaced the letter. In terms of public representations, the importance of the travel narrative as a form of literature declined over the course of the twentieth century. Travel guides and articles have had a continued presence with the purpose of conveying information and describing tourism experiences. These types are often considered to be independent and not associated with a given destination or tourism company. In contrast, promotional brochures and their Internet counterparts have become significant tourism representations that provide information but also have the explicit purpose of selling a product, whether it is a destination, hotel, tour company, or otherwise.

Despite these differences, evidence of earlier representations may be traced through those of today, influenced by the cycle of expectation. As Duncan and Gregory (1999, 7) note, “At the end of the twentieth century, we are still in the age of ‘industrialized’ romanticism. By this we mean that although the bureaucratization of travel has increased since the turn of the century, the romantic frame through which places are viewed remains much the same.” Color photographs now depict scenes similar to those that were illustrated in earlier travel narratives and guides. For example, Figures 15 and 16 depict landscape scenery in a travel narrative and a travel magazine respectively. The scene is made up of the same, commonly used landscape features.
composed in a similar fashion, with the forest-covered mountains in the background, the winding river through the foreground, and framed by jungle-like vegetation.

**Figures 15 & 16: Landscape scenery**

(Froude 1909, front)

(Franchise Tourism Organization 2002, 45)

Figures 17 and 18 show the Twin Pitons of St. Lucia. These impressive natural features have attracted interest by both tourists in the past and the present. They have
become the identifying characteristic of the island. In both images, the Pitons are depicted towering over everything else in the scene, particular the sailing vessel positioned in the foreground.

**Figures 17 & 18: The Pitons, St. Lucia**

(Kingsley 1871, 51)

(Gindin 2005, 111)
Finally, the images in Figures 19 and 20 are structured around a waterfall. The waterfall cascades down through the center of the image surrounded by lush vegetation on both sides. The water falls into a pool at the bottom which is interspersed with large rocks. People are positioned at this pool to marvel or contemplate the scene.

Interestingly, the figures in both images have dark skin; therefore, the implication is that they are locals rather than tourists. However, because such waterfall scenes were considered tourist attractions both then and now, tourists would be more likely to encounter other tourists than they would local people. In the images then, these people become part of the scene to be looked at just as they are looking at the waterfall.

**Figures 19 & 20: Waterfalls**

(Froude 1909, 72)  
(Dominica Hotel & Tourism Association 2003, cover)
Descriptions of the islands continue to draw upon the concepts of the past to convey certain ideas about the islands of the region. Tourist brochures employ many of the same qualifiers and expressions as the travel writers discussed in Chapter 5, at least on the positive side of binaries. The trend towards the erasure of negatives seen at the end of the time period has, with time, only been aided by place promotion. For example: “Luscious, bountiful tropical forests are filled with a large variety of flora and fauna. Glorious waterfalls cascading into clear pools in some of the stunning rainforests provide the most breathtaking natural views” (Grenada Board of Tourism nd, 4).

The ideals of paradise and Eden are timeless and employed in the tourism representations of the past and present alike. Interestingly, cultural conventions have also proven enduring. The artistic concepts of the sublime, the picturesque, and the romantic continue to be applied to island scenery. Just one example reads: “From the Pitons majestic twin peaks rising above the southeast coast, to Mt. Gimie—the island’s highest point—to its miles of pristine beach, St. Lucia offers an astounding natural splendor in its rainforest, a picturesque beauty of the Pitons, culture and an intrigue of historic towns and restored plantation estates” (Caribbean Tourism Organization 2002, 53).

**Postcolonial Patterns**

Critics have argued that the concern of postcolonial studies with representations, text, and imagery are too far removed from the reality of life in post-colonial places (McEwan 2003). Tourism representations, however, play an important role in Caribbean life. For the majority of these islands, tourism is the most significant source of income.
Tourism is therefore an important activity that affects the populations and will be maintained, if not expanded, in the future. This study specifically examines the landscapes of the islands, so it is also important to note that the natural environment is an integral part of the tourism industry. They have a reciprocal relationship, where tourism influences nature and nature has the ability to influence tourism. Thus, these patterns of tourist interactions with and representations of the landscape that were established during the colonial period, particularly from the late eighteenth through the early twentieth centuries (Gregory 2000), are important. The implications of these patterns have lasted beyond colonialism, and their impress may be evidenced in the present. In fact, Gregory (2004, 256) notes that “cultures of travel are some of the most commonplace means through which colonialism is abroad in our own present.”

Patterns of tourism and landscape were created by colonial travelers. Rather than breaking the cycle or establishing a new identity from within after independence, these Caribbean islands have maintained an identity that was created for them from the outside. Moreover, this identity has become deeply embedded in the region. As the primary markets for Caribbean tourists are from the Westernized countries of Europe and North America (Caribbean Tourism Organization 2003), the cycle of expectation is still at work. Islands will continue to market themselves in these ways in order to stay competitive and continue to attract these tourists. This identity has therefore become naturalized by its consistent presence in representations and continued role in the cycle. The nature of the relationship between tourists and island landscapes as a part of this identity is central to this study. Tourism representations are fraught with binaries such as
natural/artificial, exotic/familiar, and active/passive (Nelson 2005). Each of these binary systems contributes to the layering of the culture/nature and the colonizer/colonized binary systems.

These binary systems have justified and continued to justify the dominance of people over the environment. Such oppositions are never as clear cut as they appear though. In regards to the relationship between tourism and landscape, different categories of people have different levels of influence. The populations of the destinations have assumed a direct position of dominance over their respective environments. They are able to institute policies to monitor and control what activities affect the environment and how much protection or degradation occurs. Depending on the destination and the situation, local people may be the ones directly framing landscapes for tourists and guiding tourist experiences of those landscapes. Too often, however, it is not locals but outsiders. Foreign writers or publishers represent the landscapes, while foreign businesses shape experiences through cruise ships, resorts, or tour companies.

Ultimately, both local and foreign stakeholders are catering to the tourist market. In order to maintain a viable industry within the competitive region, a destination must provide what tourists are looking for. Landscapes are packaged so that a particular idea of nature is sold as a consumable experience, rather than nature itself (Cronon 1995a). The landscapes of the West Indies are idealized and sanitized for tourists. Based on an appropriate idea of nature, landscapes are framed as places of pleasure and short-term recreation for foreign visitors. The tourism infrastructure and tourist activities present
these framed landscapes to tourists, and the idea that ‘natural’ island landscapes exist for these outsiders to view and judge them as well as derive pleasure from them in the act of looking is naturalized. Thus today’s Caribbean tourists remain in the role of colonizer, in a position of mastery or dominance over island landscapes as the colonized.

**Conclusion**

One of the concerns of postcolonial studies lies within the creation and maintenance of binary oppositions, particularly those that perpetuate the relationship of dominance between colonizer and colonized. Although this relationship has bearing on the relationship between people and the natural environment, postcolonial studies have largely left this area unexplored. Landscape studies have given greater attention to the idea of landscape as the mediation between culture and nature, while studies of nature/society issues have been the primary means of addressing the binary categories for culture and nature. These types of nature-society studies have often argued for the transcendence of binaries. The existence of these binary categories, however, can not be erased from the past, nor can they be ignored in present studies of the past. Rather, it is important to understand the complexities of the binary system, the relationships between the categories, the shifts that took place, and the patterns that were established as a result of the dominance of one category over the other.

Postcolonial studies are further concerned with the effects of these patterns that were created in the past on the present. Travel narratives were not only a popular type of literature but also an extremely influential form of information about different parts of the
world. For the British West Indies, travel narratives created a distinct set of vicarious landscapes that allowed readers at home to grasp an idea of the geographical conditions of the islands as well as imagine the experience of those islands. As a result, these vicarious landscapes became caught up in a cycle of expectation that has shaped tourist experiences and representations of the island landscapes of the British West Indies. This study is concerned with patterns of tourism and landscape that were established and developed by colonial travelers during the colonial period so that the patterns of the present may be better understood. In particular, the relationship in which tourists maintained a dominance over the landscapes of the places they visited has had lingering implications.

This chapter has blended perspectives from both postcolonial and landscape studies to promote a better understanding of the culture/nature binary as a form of the colonizer/colonized binary system. I discussed the complexity of binary categories and examined two examples of binaries in landscape that were common to the region and time period under investigation. I argued that these binaries in landscape are part of the layers that make up the culture/nature binary, and, based on the interpretation of travel narrative data, I demonstrated that the perspectives and representations of travelers and tourists with respect to the landscapes of the British West Indies illustrate the patterns of dominance associated with the categories for colonizer and colonized. I explored the implications of these patterns through the relationships between tourists and the landscapes of the British West Indies and tourism representations of the landscape. The vicarious landscapes created as a result of these landscape experiences and
representations play a crucial role in the cycle of expectation. In the past, such representations were used as a source of information in regional geographies, travel guides, and other travel narratives, and they served as a basis for comparison by later travelers. This cycle helped perpetuate the patterns of the past and extended the influence of the culture/nature, colonizer/colonized binary system.
CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSION

Recent studies of tourism in the Caribbean have often focused on the connection between tourism and the environment. This is clearly an important area of inquiry for understanding the present effects of tourism engagements on the island environments of the Caribbean as well as projecting possible future ramifications of those engagements. Most approaches to these studies, however, neglect the historical perspective that is necessary to examine the roots of tourism in the region and how various activities, and the industry as a whole, evolved in the way they did. This study has specifically sought to investigate early travel and tourism to the region in order to gain a better understanding of the ways in which these travelers related to the rural landscapes of the islands they visited in the British West Indies, in terms of perceptions, interactions, and representations. The importance of this investigation may be seen through the patterns of the past that have been maintained in modern Caribbean tourism.

In this chapter, I will bring this study to a close by reviewing the material discussed. I will revisit the stated purpose of this study, discuss the results of the research, and highlight the particular points of significance that emerged in the course of this project. Finally, I will conclude this project by examining the potential areas for further investigation of this topic as well as areas in which this study may be expanded in the future.
Summary

Outside involvement in the Caribbean can, of course, be traced back well beyond the era of travel and tourism. Europeans—Spanish, Dutch, French, and English—played a key role in initiating change from the outside, from the colonization of the islands through the transformation to a commercial agricultural environment. The nineteenth century was an important period of change in the region. With the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, colonial possession of many islands was finally stabilized. The newly established British colonies were intended to be made into productive sugar islands, but the abolition of the slave trade and slavery had a countering effect. The sugar industry and the traditional plantation system in the islands declined, while agricultural diversification and smallholder agriculture began to rise.

The foundations of a tourism industry were also laid in this period. The process of travel became progressively safer, easier, and faster during this time. The islands of the British West Indies were perceived to be increasingly stable and suitable destinations to fill the demand for overseas experiences. Cultural norms privileged rural landscapes, and tourists were interested in agricultural scenes as well as the spectacle of undeveloped or abandoned lands in these tropical islands. The tourism industry grew slowly over time but would eventually come to fill the economic gap left by declining agricultural industries.

Travel and tourism often depended on firsthand accounts of individuals who had already been to the particular destination. As the tourism industry in the region evolved, published travel narratives played an important role in creating and perpetuating patterns
of tourism. Specifically, the landscape descriptions included in travel narratives became a key source of ‘factual’ information about the environments of the islands as well as a crucial factor in shaping the vicarious landscapes or imaginative geographies of the Caribbean.

As a result, these travel narratives have become an important source of data about the era. Instead of being used as ‘factual’ information about the physical attributes of the places visited, they are useful in examining aspects like the types of activities travelers and tourists engaged in at the destination during the time period under study and the specific interactions these travelers had with the natural environment. Furthermore, travel narratives as a source of data may be constructive in the examination of the cultural influences and attitudes of the time, the perceptions of individuals or types of travelers, and particularly the representations that these travel writers created and disseminated to a reading public. Individual differences and purposes for traveling or writing travel narratives must be taken into account, as well as the different ways in which these narratives may be interpreted.

Regardless of any differences, travel writers gave considerable attention to the rural landscapes of the islands they visited. The rural landscape formed much of the view of the islands when approached from sea, and it was the environment that travel writers experienced during tours or other tourist activities. It constituted a distinct part of these travelers’ expectations of the islands, and the consideration they gave it helped perpetuate these expectations in future travelers and tourists. Even those travel writers who had less interest in the rural landscape nonetheless felt obliged to include it in their narratives in
some form. Descriptions were often highly detailed and were made up of four interrelated components including features of the landscape, qualification of these landscape features, comparisons to other landscapes or landscape ideals, and reactions to the landscape. These descriptions were filled with contrasts and contradictions that created a binary system. In this system, each of these contrasting categories were layered, ultimately contributing to the overarching culture/nature, colonizer/colonized binary.

Published travel narratives served a number of different functions, from entertainment to information. In regard to landscape, the descriptions included in these narratives created a distinct image of the islands of the British West Indies in the minds of their readers. Subsequent travelers and tourists carried the resulting vicarious landscapes with them to the region. They sought to view the landscapes they had read about, and they compared these landscapes with the ones they held in their minds. In most cases, the comparison was favorable. Thus, they reaffirmed these images in their travel narratives and contributed to the cycle of expectation for the Caribbean that has persisted in modern tourism to the region.

Discussion

The purpose of this project was to understand the historical relationships between colonial tourists and the landscapes of the British West Indies through travel narrative representations of tourism landscape experiences. To achieve this purpose, I employed a perspective that drew upon concepts from both landscape and postcolonial studies.
Investigations of travel, tourism, and travel writing are clearly well suited to postcolonial studies, and many previous authors have utilized this approach. However, postcolonial studies lack a clear framework for addressing the physical rather than the anthropological aspects of the colonies visited and experienced. Landscapes studies, and the visual tradition in particular, possess a number of similarities to postcolonial studies that make the two approaches compatible. Furthermore, when the two approaches are blended, as they were in this study, landscape provides a clearer focus on the environment and the intersection between people and the environment in terms of the postcolonial viewpoint than postcolonial could alone.

I feel that this type of blended perspective was invaluable in the achievement of the goals of the project. Individually, landscape and postcolonialism each made contributions to my research. Landscape studies yielded the framework of the concepts and conventions associated with landscape painting and appreciation. These concepts were extremely influential during the time period under study. Postcolonial studies offered the framework of binary systems associated with imperial ideology. These systems were structured to create difference and ultimately establish the dominance of colonizer over colonized. Together, landscape and postcolonialism provided a complementary base for the interpretation of how travel writers viewed, related to, and represented the natural environments of the islands they visited. For example, concepts from the visual landscape and postcolonialism, such as prospect and appropriation, helped clarify the types of relationships travelers and tourists had with landscapes. I feel that the combined approach of landscape and postcolonialism is an underutilized
perspective. It merits greater attention than it has formerly been given, and it has considerable potential to contribute to geography’s ongoing debates about human-environment interactions and nature-society issues.

I thoroughly analyzed the rural landscape descriptions of published travel narratives through a process of coding. These landscape descriptions were highly detailed and created a sort of verbal painting. Coding was vital in helping me to productively break these descriptions down for the purposes of interpretation within the frameworks of landscape and postcolonialism established above. I was able to determine that the descriptions were composed of four interrelated components that illustrated the various relationships between vision, landscape, and landscape experience. Coding allowed me to better understand how travel writers viewed and represented the landscape. Most importantly, the process of coding illuminated the types of contrasts and contradictions that exist in the landscape descriptions. I was then able to develop grounded theory from the data to explain these contrasts.

In this grounded theory, I discussed the complex layering of binaries in the landscape descriptions that must be understood as a part of the culture/nature binary system and ultimately the colonizer/colonized binary system. Binaries have been an important component in studies of postcolonialism as well as studies of nature. In addition, other authors have shown that such contrasts have existed in depictions of the region during this time period. I drew upon such discussions in my examination of the binaries present in the travel narratives. I think it is important to note that binaries are not static, and they are not always clear cut. Investigations must take into account a range of
temporal, spatial, personal, and cultural factors that might cause a shifting in the dominance of the categories. Moreover, it is important to understand how binaries relate to one another. The paradisiacal/pestilential and cultivated/wild were binaries within landscape that formed the layers of the binary that dictates the dominance of people over landscape. Consequently, the culture/nature binary in travel narratives must be seen as a colonizer/colonized relationship that served as justification for the continued exploitation of nature in the British West Indies.

The culture/nature, colonizer/colonized binary is expressed in the relationship between tourists and the landscapes of the British West Indies. The connection between aesthetic concepts and tourism resulted in a privileging of the visual. This reinforced the separation of people from nature, both physically and conceptually. Landscape scenery was viewed and judged by tourists who were physically removed from the scene and conceptually above nature. Based on this position of mastery over nature, tourists represented the landscape both possessively and prospectively as a part of the cultural appropriation of the British West Indies.

Investigations of the culture/nature binary are often concerned with transcending the binary system, while those of the colonizer/colonized binary are often concerned with breaking down the separation of the binary categories. This was not my intention for this project. People have long been prone to a ‘self-willed historical amnesia’ with regards to human-environment interactions, which has allowed the practices of the past to continue unquestioned in the present. The purpose of this project was to understand the historical relationships between colonial tourists and the landscapes of the British West Indies.
These relationships can not be rewritten to suit modern ideas such as the hybridization of nature. However, it is important to understand the legacy of the past and its maintenance in the present in order to understand how ideas and practices might be reshaped to promote more appropriate relationships in the future.

In this context, I lastly explored the implications of this binary in the patterns of tourist interactions with and representations of the landscapes of the British West Indies. For the travel writers examined in this study, vision was the primary means of engagement with the landscape. Vision provided information, pleasure, and the raw material for the vicarious landscapes that travel writers represented in their narratives. This type of experience with the landscape was highly passive and often unique to tourists. Tourists were typically physically removed from and consistently held a dominant perspective over the landscape. The landscape descriptions in travel narratives were based on these types of experiences. Such representations constituted a form of knowledge and created an identity of the British West Indies as a tourist destination. These ideas were reified in a cycle of expectation through regional geographies, travel guides, and subsequent travel narratives.

I demonstrated the similarities of modern tourist interactions with and representations of landscape to show how pervasive the cycle of expectation has been in the Caribbean. Ideas of the region have been circulated and re-circulated so that modern tourism representations bear a significant resemblance to those of the past. The emphasis on the visual has been maintained, and its importance has only been increased with the use of glossy color photographs to depict the most interesting and attractive scenery in
the islands. These representations have further influenced how tourists experience the landscapes of the islands, what types of landscape scenery are designated tourist attractions, and what frameworks tourists use to judge landscapes.

As a result, it is crucial to understand the patterns of the past in order to understand those of the present. This is important because of the extent to which many of these former British islands of the West Indies are currently economically dependent upon the tourism industry and tourists from countries such as Great Britain, the United States, and Canada. The identity that has been perpetuated with representations has therefore maintained a colonizer/colonized relationship between people and nature in addition to the colonizer/colonized relationship between foreign tourists and the local populations of the islands. This takes place through the commodification of nature as a product to be sold to, consumed, and exploited by tourists.

This project has used a unique perspective for the interpretation of a diverse set of travel narratives produced in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. There are multiple potential interpretations of these narratives and their landscape descriptions, and the findings of this study should not be considered universalizing. In summary, this research has contributed to the understanding of the patterns of human-environment relations associated with tourism that have evolved over time in the context of the British West Indies and served as a justification for environmental exploitation.
Future Research

A number of different areas for future research have arisen during the course of this project. Primarily, I am interested in continuing to explore the linkages between landscape and postcolonialism. I have found these two approaches to be particularly compatible and useful in this investigation. I would like to further develop a combined perspective and apply such a perspective to other contexts relating to human-environment interactions. It could be used in the examination of different time periods for the same group of islands, and it could be employed in similar studies of travel, tourism, and travel writing in different locations, both tropical and temperate. This type of perspective could also be used to investigate different topics involving human-environment interactions in the British West Indies, such as the various land use transformations that took place during the colonial and post-colonial periods.

This particular study could also be expanded in several different directions. In this study, I took an overarching perspective of tourist-landscape interactions. In future research, I could focus on more specific aspects of these interactions, such as the perceived relationship between health and the Caribbean environment. I could also focus on more specific types of landscapes within the rural category, such as provision grounds or botanical gardens as conceptions of nature. I could include travel writers’ representations of the urban landscape and contrast it with their representations of the rural landscape.

I could also expand the project with respect to the types of sources used. I could continue to explore travel writers with different characteristics and motivations. I could
also include travel writers from different countries of origin to examine the influence of cultural factors on the ways in which landscapes were viewed and represented. In addition, I could include various types of writers along with travel writers. This might include foreigners who spent an extended period of time on a particular island to determine how interactions with landscapes changed as they gained more of an insider perspective than short-term travelers. It might also involve a comparison between travelers and residents to establish differences in perceptions, activities, and representations.

Finally, I could extend the time frame of this study to encompass the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. I could more fully examine the evolution of patterns from this period of early Caribbean tourism to modern tourism, and I could provide further evidence of the cycle of expectation in this context. This would allow a detailed analysis of the institutions and practices of the past that have been maintained in the present with regards to tourist-landscape interactions and more fully assess the direction of the future environmental relations.
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