

ENGLISH: *THE VIEW FROM CASTLE ROCK*

Prompt – No one experiences the landscape in exactly the same way.

I left on the third of February on the steamer 'Independence' we got along well until the morning of the 16th, running as we were close to shore proved too close as we struck a rock. At first I doubted if it had injured her but the water soon showed that she must soon sink. We ran along for about an hour till we found a suitable place and ran in, she struck again when about two hundred yards from shore.

The water had risen so high as to get into the furnaces, which caused fire to rush from the hatchway in a wave of flame, setting fire to the place around. The ship, coming from the tropics was as dry as powder and burned like wildfire. The boats were immediately launched. The first boat took some ladies but was swamped by the surf as they reached the shore, they all got there safely, the boat, however, could not return. The second boat also took some ladies and got ashore safely, but the sailors refused to return as the fire was fierce and they were afraid that too many would get in. The third boat took some ladies and did not return.

All around the boat in the side towards the shore was a sea of heads it was dangerous to jump, to swim lest some should take hold of you. I saw many a good swimmer get taken down. Several times I saw five or six cling to each other, each trying to get the uppermost and finally all going down together, sending up such shrieks as those who have never heard the death shriek cannot imagine. Although there was little wind that day the surf broke high and several who swam ashore were dashed against the rocks and killed.

I stopped until the fire was near me and there were few others left and the boat. There were not many around the boat now as most had drowned. I weighed my chances and decided to swim with my pants, shirt and vest on as to swim naked on a February morning would be worse than death. When I jumped in I swam as fast as possible until away from those around the boat, then took it easily. Soon I found the difference between swimming naked and with my clothes on.

At last I was completely exhausted, my arms dropped and I sank, I was not afraid of death, I never supposed I should be but when I thought of dying there all alone away from my friends and many other thoughts crowded on me, then did I strike a few more strokes and raised up to the surface again. I was still a considerable distance from the shore when I sank again for what I thought was the last time. A wave broke over me and I felt my knees touch the bottom and when the wave receded I was out of the water. I was too weak to more. Someone ran in and dragged me out and I was safe from drowning at least.

The island was perfectly barren and uninhabited, not a bird or an animal could we see and what was worse, not a drop of fresh water. Whalers took us on their ships, they were chartered to go to San Francisco. We were numbered and found that two hundred and forty of us were saved and probably two hundred were lost all together. We took five ships and had 17 days passage to the Sandwich Islands, spending five days at Ohylee. The place where Captain Cook was killed. I took passage on a vessel from San Francisco to New South Wales. I got here to Sydney three weeks ago and have been at work ever since as times are good. I intend to leave for the mines tomorrow. Don't ever think I am dead until you know it, whatever happens believe me that I shall ever be your affectionate brother, James M. Cole.

A letter from James Mudge Cole to his brother in Denbury, Devon June 27th 1853 from Sydney Australia while en route to the mines in Spring Creek Diggings Victoria.

Landscape is an ever changing environment that is subjected to the development and use of human kind, scars that have a permanent effect. Although there are obvious physical aspects to the environment, there is an imaginative part that it determined by emotions and memories.

The 'imaginative landscape' describes how each landscape is experienced in a different way by each unique person. Landscape can be, as is, influenced by a range of different things including human actions, memories, emotions, culture and lifestyle. The large range of this that can impact of an environment make it easy to understand why no two people experience the landscape in the same way, as there are no two people out there that are exactly the same. The landscape is not just changed by the individual. We are all connected and thus affected by the decisions and even the existence of others. As with my great, great, great grandfather James Mudge Cole, the island of Ohylee became 'The place where Captain Cook was killed'. Big moments in history also have an effect on our landscape in the present. Just like how James Mudge Cole's choices and experiences ultimately decided my landscape as it was Victoria Australia that he came to so it was Victoria Australia that I was raised in.

The landscape can be experienced in many different ways, which can be seen in James Mudge Cole's letter. Landscape reflects the situation that a person is in. The island that Cole described as 'perfectly barren and uninhabited' could be something beautiful to someone else. The people's desperate need for supplies such as fresh water, which could not be obtained from this environment, made them see the island as an enemy. They had no time to possibly enjoy the island or see it in another light as their own needs dictated them to leave as soon as possible. Emotions and memories of an individual mean that a landscape can be seen in different ways. When an individual puts time and emotions into setting something up in their imagination, they are often bound to be disappointed. Munro's connection to the landscape through her ancestors allows us to see this disappointment, "Nevertheless the valley disappointed me the first time I saw it. Places are apt to do that when you have set them up in your imagination." Her desire for the place of her ancestors to be somehow more than it was impacted the environment that was before her. After that initial disappointment there was no coming back in Munro's eyes, as the landscape could not line up to those high expectations she had set. It was now judged by her need for the landscape to be better.

Imagination has the ability to transform the landscape that one is in, making it different and allowing someone to experience it in an altered way. The landscape doesn't always live up to expectations as the imagination is so vast that in reality the environment can often be disappointing. "I was not quite swept into the state of mind, the worship that I had been hoping for." This is described by Munro in 'Laying Under the Apple Trees'. Something that had been built up to be magical wasn't something to do for experience in the end, it was more for acknowledgement. Often the landscape would be seen as its most beautiful when it is first being experienced, when it is something new. The addition of unique minds and thoughts means that landscapes are often changed and not seen in a pure and untouched way. They are infected by past, memories and emotions merged together, even when a person is not aware that what they see is influenced. Landscape is a powerful thing and shapes the lives of those who abide there, love for the environment that we are in causes us to become attached and hold a place so high that change can be devastating. In 'Home' the place that Munro held so dear changed 'The house does not mean as much to me as it once did'. So much so the Munros no longer cared for it anymore. It is in this way that the land can be influenced.

Landscape is a complex thing and is experienced through the influence of people allowing us to view it differently. Landscape is often changed permanently by human actions and it is in this way that human action is mirrored in the landscape. The human condition being mirrored in the landscape is not a foreign concept for us, each day we witness the landscape changing in the hands of people. We build our roads, houses, towns and cities all of which tell a different story, overriding the landscape in which they stand. The collaboration 'The View from Castle Rock' by Munro allows us to witness the change of landscape through generations. Munro's family timeline makes it easier to see the difference in the land. Humans are capable of causing a strong impact on the environment, so strong as to change the lives of those who inhabit or are to inhabit that place. The landscape is taken for granted, used for our benefit. We look onto the land and see what it could be, rather than seeing the beauty that is already there.

The landscape in all is an extremely impressionable thing. Us humans have not only the power to change it with memories and emotions we also change it with our hands. Physically changing the environment so that it is seen in different ways and used for different things. Our lives are influenced by the land in which we live, just as much as our lives influence the land, by changing it or leaving a lasting memory for all who look upon it. What we see when we look onto the land is never the land itself, it is always filtered by our actions, memories and emotions. Humans will have a lasting impact on the world that we call our own.