Connections to landscapes often rely on entirely imagined relationships, particularly when these represent locations that are spatially or chronologically remote or detached from those with which we are most familiar. Ancient Greeks and Romans imagined that beyond the edges of their known world, there was a land frequented by grotesque, monster-like Barbarians who behaved in crude and aberrant ways (cf. McNiven and Russell 2005). During the Renaissance of Europe, the yet-to-be-discovered “New World” was figured to be populated with hideous and deformed versions of humanity in an invented and imagined landscape. Such visions of fantastic landscapes are not simply a thing of times past; they continue into the present. The latest trend in Aotearoa/New Zealand, based on Peter Jackson’s trilogy of films, is a series of Lord of the Rings tours in which thousands of tourists visit the film locations. All of these imaginary places also exist as geographic features and as part of Maori and Pakeha historical landscapes. Similar tourist ventures in Papua New Guinea include Kokoda Track tours that offer school groups the opportunity to relive and imagine key moments in World War II history and to create in young Australians a sense of national pride and palpable national spirit. In this latter venture, the cultural landscapes of the Papua New Guineans are overlain with an imagined war-scape. For archaeologists, a number of issues arise: how to interpret, to present, and to conserve a landscape or sites that have cultural values that are “of the mind,” and how to accommodate the concerns of people who believe they have a relationship with that landscape that is not empirically demonstrable (cf. Everson and Williamson 1998).

This chapter explores some of these relationships between people and place as they relate to both (historically) real and imaginary landscapes. The case studies include Aboriginal Australian’s traditions of passing down connections to (and stories associated with) land and place, even when colonialism has ensured that there is no longer an opportunity to maintain an actual physical relationship. Contrasting this are Anglo-Australian concerns for the integrity of the World War I site of ANZAC Cove at Gallipoli, in Turkey, as recently documented in controversy over whether or not Australia should have a say in the development of the site for tourism (see below). Australians generally imagined that they had a connection to and relationship with a landscape that most will never visit and that this should allow an official level of intervention and engagement with development issues.

The exploration of imagined relationships to real and invented landscapes enables the development of theoretical models that can assist in appreciating
both contemporary and historic relationships to land and place and provide a heuristic device for understanding change over time (e.g., David 2002; Everson and Williamson 1998). Interrogating contemporary concerns for landscapes of the mind or imagination forces us to recognize that place-making includes imaginative processes of connection to place. Such connectivities are intuitive rather than empirically demonstrable, and imaginative processes of this kind relate to the past as much as they relate to the present (cf. Aston 1985; Nash 2000).

**Knowing Your Place**

It is a commonly held (and somewhat romantic) assertion that Australian Aboriginal people do not own land but that they belong to it. Aboriginal associations with country, their particular country, are usually passed down through the generations. Even when actual visitation was impossible and missions and other reserves had removed the opportunity to live “on country” (see Bradley, this volume), Aboriginal families passed on their land’s stories and memories. For many Aboriginal people, these landscapes of the mind—what others might call imagined places—represent real, viable, and tangible links to their heritage. Contemporary Federal legal provisions such as those of the Native Title Act (Australia) continuously struggle to appreciate, accommodate, and recognize these connections. Overly pessimistic analyses of Aboriginal people’s connections to land based on simplistic readings of physical presence and access, led the geographers Stephen Davis and Victor Prescott (1992: 134) to argue that:

> rights . . . accorded to Aboriginal groups by the ancestral beings are contingent upon the Aboriginal custodians continuing to care for the territory by singing the songs and performing the ceremonies associated with the territory as well as by caring for the sacred objects and places.

In the absence of physical proximity Aboriginal people were therefore doomed to lose such connections, because “traditional knowledge that allows territories to be precisely defined will continue to be lost. Fewer traditional ceremonies will be performed, songs will no longer . . . sung [and so on]” (Davis and Prescott 1992: 142).

Fortunately, the legal courts, particularly those associated with Native Title cases, have not applied these standards, and significant flexibility has been applied in judging connection to land. This for Indigenous Australians. As Bruno David (2006: 123) has remarked, the difference between the court’s view and that of Davis and Prescott is in “practice and theory . . . more apparent than real.”

As part of a large project involving the Aboriginal communities of Victoria, in southern Australia, I have been a member of a team that has undertaken some 100 interviews structured around the question of “storytelling” and storytelling—that is, the construction of narratives of history, personal, familial, and communal. In this process, many Aboriginal people have revealed that they have maintained the stories and narratives associated with their country, in some cases despite being restricted from visiting the actual locations. Reasons for not visiting country included being raised and living in a different state or city; difficulties with transport; land being in private ownership and the current owners not allowing access; and a desire to preserve the significance of memories as the locations had changed so dramatically that there was a preference for remembering a place rather than visiting it. In each of these cases, the relationship to country and the sense of belonging were not perceived to be diminished by the absence of visitation. The challenge for the archaeologist is to consider how these people who have never visited their country might be enabled to exercise their rights as traditional owners, stakeholders who are entitled to express their concerns for development, management, or research.

Recognizing and accepting connections to land never visited have also occupied Melbourne-based academic and performance artist Mark Minchinton. In 2003, he walked from Busselton (Western Australia), birthplace of his Aboriginal great-grandparents, to Kellerberrin, where his mother was raised as a white person. He kept a web-diary, which he updated daily. As he saw it, his grandmother had moved from being an Aboriginal to white in the process of moving across the landscape from Busselton to Kellerberrin. Minchinton hoped that he could attempt a kind of reversal involving reinstating his family’s Aboriginal identity as he moved back across the same land. The process of walking his country enabled him to articulate a particularly poignant engagement with imagined landscapes. He wrote:

> I want to be claimed. I want to feel the land with my feet, my body. I want the land to be written on my body . . . I want to know, in some way, this place I might have known already had my life been different, my family been different, the history of this country.
The desire to belong to land, to know it intimately, is a powerful force. However, as Minchinton (2004: 5) reflects, he does not “pretend that by walking [the landscape] I will become ‘Aboriginal.’” Nonetheless, he demonstrates both the power and the desire to know “your place” and, however imaginatively, to understand where you belong.

Anthropologist Paul Basu (2005) has explored similar issues with reference to Scottish diasporic landscapes and the sense of belonging that emerges from the popular trend of “roots-tourism.” Basu found that many diasporic Scots had settled in lands such as the United States, Australia, and South Africa, where dispossessed Indigenous peoples impinged on the newcomers’ capacity to feel that they belong. Traveling to the Scottish Highlands, memorizing “myths” and stories, and identifying genealogical clan connections enabled an “appeal of indigeneousness.” This was a “sense of unproblematic territorial belonging that has become impossible in their diasporic home countries” (Basu 2005: 147). That this belonging is often entirely mythical and imagined, based on 19th-century popular accounts of clan histories that bear little resemblance to historical fact or process, seems irrelevant. Instead, for those roots-tourists the (re)discovery of identity is a deeply meaningful experience, and the connection between soil and blood, however illusory, is significant.

**War Sites and Remembrance**

Perhaps nowhere is the connection between blood (spilled rather than inherited) and soil more keenly felt than in discussions of war sites and memorials. In April 2005, on the eve of the 90th anniversary of the landing of Imperial forces at Gallipoli, a controversy arose that in many ways exemplified the connection that people can feel toward places distant from or remote to them. Gallipoli in Turkey was, during World War I, where the ANZAC legend formed. This narrative of loss and sacrifice, of betrayal and heroism, has become a key feature of public discussions of Australian national identity. The narrative itself has enjoyed fluctuating fortunes. After flagging interest was shown in the ANZAC story from the 1960s onward, there has been increasing popularity since the 75th anniversary in 1990. ANZAC Cove at Gallipoli has become a fashionable visitation site for backpackers and other tourists, many of whom aimed to be present at the dawn ceremony on the 25th of April, 2005. These tourists had put increasing pressure on the site, and the Turkish government heritage agency sought to upgrade the facilities at the site, and the Turkish government heritage authorities, there was a tacit assumption that Australia and Gallipoli should be entitled to decide what happens to it and how any development is managed.

Another war site of both memory and imagination is the Kokoda Track in Papua New Guinea. Walking the track has become a popular pastime with both Australian school students and tourists. The walk has also been used in a number of television documentaries to help “straighten out” troublesome teenagers. In each of these cases, there was an expectation that proximity to the track, and the heroic deeds that took place there during World War II, would have a positive impact on the young people. It is as if the organizers of these tours hope that landscape itself will imprint its history onto the contemporary trekkers. Yet, surely, such connections are illusory. Young teens from inner-city suburbs, many from multicultural backgrounds, have little connection with the World War II sites of Papua New Guinea. It is as a feature of a national discourse that celebrates masculinity, “herculean war deeds,” and mateship that the Kokoda Track imparts its power. The Track itself, devoid of these signifiers, has no power.

Perhaps most interestingly of all is that Kokoda and Gallipoli, both situated on other nations’ sovereign soil, form part of an imagined national landscape that defies contemporary geopolitical borders. One wonders: if the Japanese people and government sought to visit Darwin, the site of significant World War II bombings, and celebrate it as a site of Japanese war-time achievement, would the Australian public and government officials welcome them?

Layers of meaning, entangled and competing, add to our understanding of people’s engagement with landscapes. Real or imagined, the relationships that visitors perceive that they have with Kokoda and Gallipoli should play a significant role in how that landscape is managed, presented, and interpreted—and, most important of all, how theoretical discussions of belonging are by widening the access road. These road works were requested by the Australian Federal government, led by conservative Prime Minister John Howard. As a result, a ridge, which was the location of army headquarters, mobile hospitals, and first-aid stations, was cut into and fundamentally changed (Grattan 2005).

One of the key points to emerge from the issues surrounding the controversial road works was that the Australian public believed that they had a fundamental right, indeed were stakeholders in, the Turkish landscape at Gallipoli. Even though the overwhelming majority of people will never visit the site, there was a tacit assumption that Australia should be entitled to decide what happens to it and how any development is managed.

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**Hobbits’ Houses and Maori Sites**

After the Pakeha film director Peter Jackson filmed his *Lord of the Rings* trilogy in Aotearoa/New Zealand, many of the film locations became sought-after tourist sites. Over 40 tourism companies advertise *Lord of the Rings* tours. As the tour buses travel to the mythical Middle-Earth locations of Rivendell, Lothlorien, and Helms Deep, the tourists travel through a palimpsestic landscape comprising overlays of geologic, geographic, Maori, and Pakeha narratives. The south island of Aotearoa/New Zealand comprises an extraordinarily diverse landscape of snow-capped mountains, glaciers, fjord lands, grassy plains, high-energy coastlines, and roaring rivers. Tourist brochures emphasize its isolation, remoteness, history, and beauty. Recently, Aotearoa/New Zealand generally and the South Island in particular are promoted as (Tolkien’s) “Middle-Earth,” where “the story is fiction, but the place real.”

Traveling the imaginary landscape is not merely the domain of organized tours. Maps and popular books are available, so that the self-guided *Lord of the Rings* enthusiast can also locate the key sites of Middle-Earth. Interestingly, in neither the advertising brochures nor the maps, or even the book on *Lord of the Rings* locations, is there mention of the Maori landscape over which these imaginary places were built. Maori values and even the historical values that Pakeha New Zealanders ascribe to the land are absent. It seems that the mythical and imaginary landscape of Middle-Earth has superseded the actual, real landscape comprising history and geography. In July 2006, I observed that a new series of tours had emerged—Narnia Tours. These tours are based on the film of C. S Lewis’s *The Chronicles of Narnia*. In the Narnia tours, there is an opportunity to visit the “Chariot Run Gully,” the site of the “Death of the Witch,” and “Aslan’s Stand.” Many of these sites are the same sites that can also be visited as part of the Lord of the Rings tours. Ascribing a cultural heritage or archaeological value on these sites and landscape features means weighing up the competing claims for connection and meaning. In a landscape where Indigenous values now compete with geographic, historical, and even imaginary interpretations, the archaeologist faces significant challenges that will force a move beyond positivist and measurable approaches and delve into something much more ephemeral and difficult to fully appreciate.

These competing interpretive claims can also rights, raising questions such as: can a landscape be owned, patented, or copyrighted? For decades, the Aboriginal community of Mutitjulu has requested that tourists and other visitors refrain from climbing the monolith Uluru (previously known as Ayers Rock). Uluru is currently managed by the Australian Government’s National Parks, in close consultation with the traditional Aboriginal owners; however, banning the climbing of Uluru has not been undertaken, since these activities generate significant money from tourists. The government controlled website states:

Nganana Tatintja Wiya—“We Never Climb”

The Uluru climb is the traditional route taken by ancestral Mala men upon their arrival to Uluru. Anangu do not climb Uluru because of its great spiritual significance. Anangu have not closed the climb. They prefer that you—out of education and understanding—choose to respect their law and culture by not climbing. Remember that you are a guest on Anangu land.

Recently, in response to government intervention with regard to self-determination, health, and a number of other issues, the Mutitjulu community have indicated that traditional owners of Uluru Mutitjulu residents were considering a ban from climbing Uluru as part of a civil disobedience action plan. An elder was recorded as stating: “The tourist industry brings a lot of dollars into the territory, and tourists all come to Uluru. . . . Obviously civil disobedience can come in protest form.” It is clear from these responses that the intellectual and cultural property rights associated with the site of Uluru are regarded as inalienable by the traditional owners even if such status is less clear within a legal framework. Reflecting on similar issues, Aboriginal legal scholar Terri Janke (1998: 3) observed: “Indigenous cultural and intellectual property rights . . . comprise all objects, sites, and knowledge.” The importance of archaeology to these discussions should not be understated; as Nicholas and Bannister (2004: 329) observe, archaeology needs to “understand the underlying issues of ownership and control of material and intellectual property as related to cultural knowledge and heritage.” In the case of Uluru, and perhaps by extension the hobbit’s houses and Maori sites, the tension among different ways of knowing, imagining, and ‘owning’ sites is complex, and multiple perspectives yield multiple...
A Long Time Ago, in a Galaxy Far Away

Although the imaginary geography of Middle-Earth and Narnia overlies the actual terrain of Aotearoa/New Zealand, there are even more extreme examples of imaginary landscapes. This is demonstrated by a place known as “Tatooine.”

There have been few film series as well received as George Lucas’s Star Wars (episodes 1–6). Opening nights have seen fans decked out in carefully constructed costumes, so as to imitate their favorite characters. The costumes and artifacts they produce represent many hours of painstaking work. When the posters were released for the first in the second series of films (the prequels to the films of the late 1970s and early 1980s), The Phantom Menace, many fans also demonstrated a deep understanding and familiarity with the geography of Lucas’s imaginary worlds. The poster depicted the landscape of the planet Tatooine, where young Anakin Skywalker casts a shadow that is shaped like his future metamorphosis Darth Vader. Fans maintained their deep understanding of the landscape and geography of this (imaginary) planet when they objected to the single shadow, because the planet is known to have two suns. These discussions took place primarily in Internet chat rooms, bulletin boards, and electronic magazines. The core concern of each of the contributors was whether or not two suns (a binary system) would throw a double shadow or if, depending on which sun was in its zenith, a single shadow would form. The one thing that none of the discussants raised was that Tatooine did not exist; that it was a fantasy.12

Discussion

People want to belong, they want to know a geography and unproblematically fit into a landscape—even if that relationship or landscape itself is imagined. Memory and imagination play important roles in our connections to landscapes and places. Anyone who, as an adult, has visited a place of his or her childhood is usually surprised by how small everything is. Windows are closer to the ground, shelves are lower than remembered, houses, paddocks, even trees are recalled as having been larger, rather than the self remembered as having been smaller. Our remembered landscapes belong to our imagination, but this does not diminish their importance or significance, however personal or idiosyncratic that might be. Understanding engagements with
to signify national narratives of loss and heroism, or even imaginary locations from far-away galaxies, offers a means for comprehending the complexities of human interactions with their environments. Although ascribing heritage or archaeological values to such places would be difficult, these connections (and belongings) should not be trivialized. As Stuart Hall (1990: 224) remarked (see also Rutherford 1990): “We should not, for a moment, underestimate or neglect the importance of the act of imaginative rediscovery which this conception of a rediscovered, essential identity entails.”

Similar acts of imaginative rediscovery can be seen in the actions of modern Druids, who have claimed Stonehenge as a site of their heritage, even though archaeological understandings affirm that the Megalithic monument vastly pre-dates Druid culture. Modern Druid celebrations of the summer solstice at Stonehenge today proceed despite overwhelming evidence that Stonehenge actually marked for its builders the winter solstice (see Chippindale 2004: 236). It is important that such contemporary imaginary and imagined relations to the landscape of Stonehenge not be ignored or trivialized, because to do so would both deny the contemporary relevance of historical sites to people today (whether or not they are reinterpreted through the imagination) and possibly pose a threat to the site (if Druid activity was not realistically acknowledged as meaningful to some, and carefully controlled). Social interactions with sites are real, contemporary, and, for the people involved, utterly meaningful, thus adding an important social layer to the historically and archaeologically complex and incomplete understanding of the Stonehenge landscape.

Imagining landscapes and imagining relationships to landscapes is part of the performativity of belonging (Bell 1999). The specialization of this process brings us closer to understanding the link between imagination, land, and identity and the resonances and connections among various ways of knowing.

Conclusions

This chapter considered the role that creative imagining plays in people’s relationships to landscapes and places—past, present, remembered, and even fictional. These connections, even when imaginary, are real for the participants and must be considered; when one is attempting to undertake an archaeological reading of landscapes, these
Notes

1. Maori people prefer to call New Zealand Aotearoa; however, because most readers outside the Oceania region are unfamiliar with this term, I use Aotearoa/New Zealand as an alternative.

2. This project, entitled Trust and Technology, has sought to uncover the relationships that Aboriginal people have with the records held in the Public Trust by government and other agencies. This is a large collaborative and multidisciplinary project, involving various university researchers and government and nongovernment agencies, that is funded through an Australian Research Council Linkage Grant and industry contributions.

3. The reader is also directed to his performance and journey as these appear in his web diary entitled Void: Journey to Kellerberrin, www.soca.ecu.edu.au/mailman/listinfo/void.

4. This was particularly the case during and immediately after the Vietnam War.


6. I am especially grateful to Tim Russell-Cook, who walked the track in 2003 as part of a three-week school trip to Papua New Guinea. His observations of the impact that this trek had on him and his school friends were invaluable in crystallizing my own thoughts on this issue.

7. For example, Channel Seven network in Melbourne in March 2005 showed a group of Muslim youths trekking the Kokoda Trail and argued that this experience had inspired them to become leaders in their community and work against terrorism. This story aired as part of the program Today Tonight.

8. Pakeha is the Maori term for non-Maori New Zealanders.

9. An Internet search was conducted using the search engine Google and the search terms “Lord of the Rings tours New Zealand.” More than 200 hits were recorded; however, careful examination revealed that these represented more than 40 companies.


References


