

THE MAKING OF THE LAKE DISTRICT*

In some ways it would seem easy to account for why 17 million visits are made to the Lake District each year. It contains many very well-established tourist sites, a surprising variety of attractions from spectacular mountains to quaint hamlets, and a wealth of historical and literary associations. It also has a coherent identity which makes marketing it relatively straightforward both in Britain and in many countries in the First World.

But explaining this pattern of visiting is not so straightforward as it might seem. To continue to draw people to this place rather than to many others involves continuous work, both in terms of marketing but much more generally in terms of 'cultural production'. There is nothing obvious or inevitable about why huge numbers of people would voluntarily choose to visit this particular place, a place that up to the eighteenth century was seen as the very embodiment of inhospitability (see Crawshaw 1994a, 1994b). In the *Short Survey* of England in the 1630s it was described as 'nothing but hideous, hanging Hills' (cited in Ousby 1990:130), while a century later Daniel Defoe famously described Westmorland as 'the wildest, most barren and frightful of any that I have passed over' (cited in Nicholson 1978:25). Visiting the Lake District has not been undertaken simply because it exemplified nature. It was in some sense natural in the early eighteenth century but at the time the hills and mountains represented 'unhospitable terror', rather than the kind of nature which drew people to it. The Lake District appears to be the very embodiment of nature, an area that naturally exists and requires no external factors to ensure its continued successful existence. But this is misleading. The area had to be discovered; then it had to be interpreted as appropriately aesthetic; and then it had to be transformed into the managed scenery suitable for millions of visitors. This particular leisure pattern has not been the inevitable consequence of the Lake District's 'natural' scenery. Up to the eighteenth century the Lake District was barely known about; it

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was a poor area, with few large houses and with little literature written in English. It was not part of England until it was both visited in significant numbers and some of those visitors began to write first in a somewhat mannered picturesque style and then in what is known as English Romanticism. Nicholson summarises: 'the Lake District does not come into English literature until it was discovered by visitors from the outside world' (1978:33). It was that literature produced by visitors which served to develop a place-myth around the area which we now identify as the 'Lake District'. Such a myth could not have developed without visitors and without the literature that some of those visitors produced and others read. Also it could not have developed without some of those writers becoming definitive of a standard English literature. Thus the development of the Lake District as possessing a particular place-myth only occurred because of visitors and writers and of the incorporation of Romanticism into what has come to be known, taught and revered as English literature (see Shields 1991, on the concept of the place-myth).

The interconnections between travel patterns and artistic activity is well shown by Holderness who argues that London theatres since the Elizabethan period have partly served a national and international tourism market (1988). They only developed and became successful because large numbers of visitors from outside London were drawn to them. Shakespeare himself belonged to a class of entrepreneurs that 'helped to establish a cultural pattern in which every spectator is encouraged to become a tourist: who may well undertake a lengthy journey to a metropolitan theatre, who is required to attend at the dramatic event with reverence' (Holderness 1988:10).

In the case of what we now call the Lake District, this only in a sense became part of England when many visitors, including artists and writers, began to travel to it, particularly from the metropolitan centre. These visitors turned the 'Lake District' into part of England particularly through the development of a particular kind of place-myth. The area came to be visited because a place-myth developed about this otherwise barren and inhospitable place. This was a noteworthy example of what became a strikingly significant characteristic of the late eighteenth century onwards, namely the rapid proliferation and circulation of myths of place. It seems to be a characteristic of 'modernity' that social spaces develop which are wholly or partly dependent on visitors, and that those visitors are attracted by the place-myths that surround and constitute such places (Lash and Urry 1994: Ch. 10). These may include places which are central to a society, such as London or Stratford-upon-Avon, as Holderness discusses (1988), or places which are otherwise peripheral, 'places on the margin' (Shields 1991). Examples of such place-myths which emerged in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in England included various country houses such as Blenheim and Chatsworth; certain ruins such as Stonehenge or Fountains Abbey; and resorts such as Brighton where royal scandal helped to concretise such a myth (Ousby 1990; Shields 1991).

The emergence of multiple competing place-myths itself stemmed from the striking shift in the nature of travel which Adler has documented between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries (1989a). She demonstrates that before the eighteenth century travel had been based upon discourse and especially upon the sense of the 'ear'. This gradually shifted as 'eyewitness' observation became more salient but travel was still viewed as involving the documentation of information. However, this emphasis upon the eye as opposed to the ear was soon to receive a different inflection. By the eighteenth century mere travellers could not anticipate their observations becoming part of the scientific or scholarly understanding of the world. Mere travel to a place did not provide that sort of authority. The 'scientific' knowledge of 'nature' (and civilisation) came to be structurally differentiated from travel which thus entailed a different discursive justification. This came to be organised around connoisseurship as both works of arts and buildings, and then landscapes, became the object of comparative aesthetic evaluation. Travel itself became something of a 'performed art' in which good taste could be demonstrated by the places visited and by the aesthetic judgements made (see Barrell 1990, on correct taste in landscape painting in the eighteenth century). And Adler suggests that over the eighteenth century:

travellers were less and less expected to record and communicate their observations in an emotionally detached, impersonal manner. Experiences of beauty and sublimity, sought through the sense of sight, were valued for their spiritual significance to the individuals who cultivated them.... In its aesthetic transformation, sightseeing became simultaneously a more effusive passionate activity and a more private one

(1989a:22)

She goes on to note the significance of the Rev. Gilpin's 'picturesque tours' in which travellers were enjoined to seek 'amusement' in the ways in which natural landscape was added to the other 'things' that an aesthetically trained eye might hope to grasp (Adler 1989a:22). The amused eye in the eighteenth century turned to nature and to those places which had previously repelled visitors since they were not in any sense foci of aesthetic judgement. As an aesthetic judgement came to fix upon nature so it turned to those places, such as the 'Lake District', which had previously done nothing to attract the eye of the connoisseur. The eye turned to nature but this was the eye of the amused visitor not the scientific enquirer; and it was an eye that sought out places partly in terms of myth and image. In the rest of this chapter I will consider how such place-myths developed within this rapidly circulating sign-system in 'modern' England about the area that came to be known as the Lake District. This place-myth sought to fuse together a literary shrine similar to Stratford-upon-Avon and a shrine to nature—*Wordsworth's Guide to the Lakes* combining both elements (Wordsworth 1984; Ousby 1990; Andrews 1989). And this was

a place-myth which established a discursive structure for being in, seeing and experiencing nature which was then taken as appropriate for reading and expending many other landscapes (see Chapman 1993:195–6).

Such a place-myth is of course socially selective since only some people are drawn to a place by such myths. Not everyone visits, nor do visitors come from all social groups to the same degree, nor do all groups feel the same regret at not visiting. In the eighteenth century the Lake District came to be popular with writers and artists. In the nineteenth century the emergent professional and managerial class began to visit in large numbers, especially for walking, as we shall see, and later for climbing which began as a sport for professional men (see Milner 1984). Nowadays the area is still more popular with the middle-aged, with those in professional and managerial occupations, with white people, with car-owners, and those who prefer relatively 'quiet recreation' (see Crawshaw 1994b). The working class, ethnic minorities, those without a car are less likely to be drawn to the Lake District, less seduced by its place-myth, although rock climbing and various water sports are popular with a wide variety of younger social groups (see Milner 1984, on the broadening of the appeal of rock climbing from about 1900 onwards).

The predominant mode of experiencing the Lake District is summarised by a participant in a focus group discussion: "To me, it is hills and mountains and lakes and water and peace and tranquility" (Crawshaw 1994b:11). But this response to 'nature' is something that has to be learnt. Finding pleasure in 'dead' scenery involves acquiring a fair amount of cultural capital. We do not really know how people learn how to enjoy such experiences; and these focus group interviews suggest that people are not directly attracted to the Lake District precisely because of its literary and artistic associations. In such interviews almost no one referred to such associations and indeed visitors often seemed unaware of many of them (see Crawshaw 1994b:13).

However, it is those writers and artists, beginning with Gilpin, who have provided us with the kind of language and vocabulary by which places are appreciated for their visual appeal. Lying behind individual perceptions of the Lake District are more systematic discourses of landscape, countryside, scenery and sight which have authorised and legitimated particular activities and ways of seeing, particularly those involving walking and 'quiet recreation' in the open air (Wallace 1993). Such discourses are socially and historically variable. The Lake District has both been transformed as a consequence of the development of such discourses and it has come to play an iconic role, especially because of the Lake poets, Ruskin and, indeed later, Beatrix Potter. However, such discourses and their related place-myths are not simply unchanging and eternal. The collapse of the attractiveness of the English seaside resort demonstrates that there can be rapidly changing social and cultural processes involved here; place-myths can evaporate or become outmoded or be replaced (see Shields 1991, on the changing place-myth of Brighton, for example).

One particular way that such myths can change is because of the flows of visitors; that too many or too few people arrive, or they are people whose social characteristics are inconsistent with or indeed directly opposed to the particular place-image. In the case of some English seaside resorts their place-myth of youthfulness, fun and repositories of excitement have been undermined by the declining numbers of people attracted to them and by the fact that an increasing proportion of visitors are elderly and are hence inconsistent with the place-image.

The place-myth of the Lake District suffers from the opposite problem, of huge numbers of visitors flowing especially to the so-called honeypots and the sense that many of the small urban centres are periodically overwhelmed. It is widely thought that at particular times in specific spaces, too many people are drawn into the Lake District and that as a result the enjoyment and pleasure of many visitors is reduced. Recent debates have occurred as to whether physical or financial systems of controlled entry to parts of the area should be introduced. In certain valleys the flows of visitors are regulated by deliberately restricted numbers of car parking spaces. There are various efforts made to channel, restrict and focus the flows of visitors, both to preserve aspects of the physical and built environment, and to enhance the enjoyment of those who are visiting, even if some of these initiatives entail modes of regulating the body in surprisingly restrictive ways. Much of the Lake District countryside involves its construction through discourses as a relatively 'passive landscape' (see Macnaghten and Urry 1993). This problem, of overcrowding and consequential surveillance and regulation, is particularly acute in the area because of two elements of the Lake District's place-myth.

First, there has been an emphasis placed upon what elsewhere I have termed the romantic tourist gaze, on the lakes and mountains constituting a positional good, a shrine to nature that individuals wish to enjoy in solitude or at least with relatively few others present. The emphasis here is upon a semi-private, quasi-spiritual relationship with the signifiers of 'nature' (see Chapter 8). This relationship with nature is established through walking in the countryside with relatively few other visitors being even visible, let alone nearby. In Chapter 8 I noted how Walter distinguishes between the physical carrying capacity of a place and its perceptual capacity (1982). During much of the year the perceptual capacity of some parts of the Lake District is met earlier than its apparent physical capacity; its perceptual capacity resulting from the pervasiveness of a romantic gaze which emphasises the more or less solitary, and peripatetic, appropriation of its supposedly unique 'nature'. Other countryside features such as caravans, allotments, groups of travellers, dairies, environmental protestors, traffic jams, pig farms, theme parks and so on are inconsistent with this gaze.

The second feature of the place-myth is the belief that the Lake District is particularly suited to 'quiet recreation', and that certain kinds of noisy

activities are inappropriate. In other words, that this shrine to nature is constructed not just visually but also aurally, that only certain kinds of noise are somehow appropriate to the place—birdsong, steamers, tractors, cars—quite where low-flying aircraft or military gunfire fit into this is unclear! This means that too many people in general or too many people doing the wrong kinds of thing and making the wrong kinds of noise also reduce the area's carrying capacity. Recent debates over the speed limit of boats on Lake Windermere demonstrate the significance of these notions. There is a proposal to limit the speed on the lake to 10 m.p.h. and hence to prevent the very noisy boats that pull water skiers, as well as to limit certain other water sports. What is involved here is an objection both to the noise of the speed boats (although cars are responsible for far worse noise pollution in the Lakes) but also a distinction of taste against younger men and women who engage in such water sports. Their practices demonstrate that not all visitors to the Lake District do in fact embrace the dominant place-myth organised around the 'romantic' (and quiet) tourist gaze. In Chapter 8 I suggested that there is in tourism a 'collective' gaze based upon conviviality and collective activity and this will not necessarily produce the same response to what others perceive as over-crowding. A focus group participant observed: 'There were loads of day trippers in Bowness today. They are not looking for peace and quiet. They are looking for the high life' (Crawshaw 1994b:18; and see Crawshaw 1994a). The Lake District demonstrates a clash between two forms taken by the tourist gaze, the romantic and the collective; in each case, the gaze is not simply visual since other activities stimulating non-visual senses are also involved (see Urry 1992, on the critique of the ocular in both social theory and travel literature, as well as Buzard 1993).

So I am concerned here to consider some of the reasons why the Lake District draws people to it, to problematise what might appear to be obvious. I will now show that it is not possible to understand the tourist attractions of the Lake District without relating its history to much more general processes of cultural and social development within England and to the variety of contending images of place and region that have been found during the last couple of centuries of English development. I will also show that it has been visitors from elsewhere that have produced *the* Lake District. Its very existence as a social space has resulted from the central role of visitors since the late eighteenth century. This most literary and artistic of sceneries is also one of the most visited so that it is tourism which has literally *made* the Lake District out of the 'wildest, most barren and frightful' of landscapes (Defoe, cited in Nicholson 1978:25).

It is important to note some interesting parallels with the emergence of a 'spectacle of nature' which developed in early to mid-nineteenth century France. Green argues that nature is not a universal but is something that is historically and culturally constituted. In particular, a relatively new conception came to be hegemonic in the nineteenth century, that is, nature as understood

as 'scenery, views, perceptual sensation' (1990:3). And this new conception resulted from the development of travel and tourism. Green argues: 'Nature has largely to do with leisure and pleasure—tourism, spectacular entertainment, visual refreshment' (1990:6).

Green connects this spectacle-isation of nature with changes taking place within Paris itself. Before the industrialisation of France Paris became a modern city: that is, for Green, it had novel *visual* characteristics. There were spectacular street scenes bathed in new forms of lighting; arcades and shops demonstrated a fashionable consuming gaze; a male gaze developed within the recently built public spaces; and new ways emerged of environmentally viewing the diseased and dangerous parts of the city. The Marquis de Salvo described the capital in 1846: 'tumult, a mass of objects which every day reproduce the sensations of the day before: the sight of beautiful shops, richly-decorated cafes, elegant carriages, lovely costumes, lovely women...and all this kaleidoscope which changes, stirs, bemuses' (cited in Green 1990:75).

However, this metropolitenism did not remain spectating only at Paris itself. There was a prolonged 'invasion of surrounding regions by and for the Parisian spectator' (Green 1990:76). Two particular patterns of leisure and recreation in the 1840s onwards facilitated this invasion, the short trip out of the city and the increased ownership of houses in the country. These combined to produce what Green terms 'metropolitan nature'; that is, nature as spaces located relatively distant from the city and turned into places to be viewed for leisure and recreation through an individualised rejuvenating experience of nature (see Williams 1973). Green summarises some of the advertising for houses in the country in nineteenth century Paris:

The language of views and panoramas prescribed a certain visual structure to the *nature* experience. The healthiness of the site was condensed with the actual process of looking at it, of absorbing it and moving round it with your eyes. Environmental values were here articulated in relation to visual modes of consumption that enabled the visitor simultaneously to look at 'the picture' and plunge into sensation.

(1990:88)

He also shows in the case of Barbizon, on the edge of the forest of Fontainebleau, the role of the burgeoning artists' community. Its growth had the effect both of producing appropriate pictorial images of metropolitan nature, and of actually leading the 'colonisation of rural space' (1990:120). It was part of that very process by which the 'cultural hegemony of metropolitenism' was effected in the context of a rapidly developing tourist industry (1990:128).

Some similar themes and processes are evident in the case of the Lake District, particularly after the growth of rail travel in the mid-nineteenth century (the 'rash assault' of the railway arrived in Windermere in 1847).

However, its location far away from the centres of power in England, namely, London and the south-east, meant that the kind of metropolitan nature that developed was rather different from that in Paris. In some ways the Lake District has always been a curious zone of transition between England and Scotland, a kind of anglicised, tamed and accessible version of Scotland. It has never been like the 'real' English countryside in the 'home counties', the more obviously 'metropolitan nature' which surrounds London. Hewison (1993) summarises: 'The wilder parts of Wales, Scotland and the Lake District offer grandeur, but Britain's imaginative heartland is a patchwork of woods and fields, small villages and distant spires. It is Samuel Palmer's Kent, Constable's Suffolk, John Piper's Oxfordshire'.

The Lake District countryside is rugged, spectacular and disturbing; it has been predominantly shaped by upland farming, especially sheep farming; there have been relatively few large landowners and stately houses built in the area; typical countryside sports are not those of the south; and it is land of evident hardship where working, walking, sightseeing, and now even driving involve a serious degree of effort. Unlike Scotland it has not been owned by very large landowners (except around the perimeter) and it has not provided a leisure resource only for the super-rich. As a consequence it has been more accessible, especially in the twentieth century to car owners, even though the majority of the land remains in private ownership (in fairly small units).

I will not provide here a lengthy account of the emergence of Lake District tourism since that has been developed in various other places (see, for example, Nicholson 1955; Bicknell and Woof 1983; Andrews 1989; Murdoch 1990; Ousby 1990; Buzard 1993; Wallace 1993). Some of the key moments were: the poet Gray's visits in 1767 and 1769; Arthur Young's visit in 1768 and his subsequent practical proposals for 'enabling the spectator to command...the luxuriant beauties and striking views'; Gilpin's visit in 1772 and his subsequent elaboration of the picturesque; Thomas West's guidebook in 1778 with its account of various viewing stations and of the desirable use of the Claude glass; the appearance of various satires such as the Revd James Plumtre's *The Lakers* in 1797; the discovery of Buttermere and the popular fascination with the story of the Maid of Buttermere; and Wordsworth's *Guide to the Lakes* in 1822 with its elaboration of the sublime and the picturesque and their subsequent transcendence by Romanticism.

There are I think four key points to emphasise in this history. First, most of these writers of the Lakes were initially visitors and not locals. They then wrote in such a way that popularised the area and encouraged many other visitors. This was achieved through developing the terminology by which nature could be characterised. Such a terminology later became applied to all sorts of other places but was initially formulated in the Lakes. The categories were applied elsewhere, often to imply that visitors were out-of-place and spoiling the 'romantic' sense of nature that people had learnt from the Lake District. This area was 'made' out of these visitors and of

their struggles to convey the pictorial, experiential and emotional responses which their encounters with nature appeared to engender.

Second, although some of what was conveyed by the Romantic poets was universal, concerned with the living force of nature and its power to console, uplift and ennoble, other elements were much more localist. Coleridge, Southey and of course Wordsworth came to be known as the 'Lake poets'; their growing fame and the popularity of the area becoming indissolubly linked. And this was in an area which had previously lacked any celebrities who had made their mark in English life. The Lake poets became such celebrities and hence themselves were major tourist attractions. As early as 1802 Coleridge's residence in Keswick was being noted as an additional attraction of the area; while by the 1840s it is thought that Wordsworth was receiving 500 visitors a year at Rydal Mount (Ousby 1990:180). After their deaths the Lake poets were transformed into literary shrines and memorialised in a fashion similar to the bardolatry at Stratford-upon-Avon (see Holderness 1988). But even more than this their greater effect was in the construction of a 'literary landscape'. This is clearly pointed out for example in some of Wordsworth's own poems which indicate the kinds of experiences and feelings likely to be engendered as one walks over certain routes in the area (Ousby 1990:182; Newby 1991).

Third, what also thus came to be established in the Lake District was a particular way of relating to its presumed 'nature' through walking and this has established a widespread cultural pattern which supposedly exemplifies good taste. Wallace argues that the following factors transformed the material and ideological shape of walking: transport changes from the late eighteenth century onwards, especially the turnpikes and then the railway, which gradually removed the association of walking with necessity, poverty and vagrancy; the diversity of modes of transport which enabled people to compare and contrast different forms of mobility and to see the virtues of slower ways of overcoming distance; agricultural changes which threatened existing rights of way so that visitors in particular were keen to ensure that they remained open through regular usage; and the development of a new ideology, the 'peripatetic', which represented excursive walking as a cultivating experience capable of renovating the individual and society (Wallace 1993:1-17). She argues that walking: 'preserves some portion of local topographies against widespread, nationalizing physical changes and, by extension, partially preserves the sites in which the ideal values of agrarian England were supposed to have flourished' (1993:12).

Walking gradually came to be viewed as a positive choice. Since ordinary people did not now always need to walk so walking travellers were not necessarily thought of as poor. Nor were women walkers not going on a pilgrimage deemed to be necessarily disreputable. Hewison (1993) nicely makes this point:

when Shakespeare's King Lear leaves court to wander on the heath, he does not meet bobble-hatted hikers in sensible boots enjoying a refreshing tramp across the moors. He is among the naked, the starving and the mad, the excluded of society in this hostile wilderness.

During the nineteenth century there was an increasing appreciation of how aesthetic choice was one of the main readings of why people went walking voluntarily. There was an extensive growth in excursive walking—and this resulted from the increasingly widespread belief that walking as travel had personal and social benefits. Moreover, this was a disciplined and organised mode of walking well-reflected in Wordsworth's choice of the term *The Excursion* (see Wallace 1993: Ch. 3). This he uses to refer to the walking tour. The walker does not wander aimlessly or in a socially disruptive fashion. The wanderer returns continually along paths that have already been walked. This ensures connection and stability and in particular there is the intention to return. Wallace interestingly discusses the notion of the 'wanderer' in Wordsworth; that it is not a withdrawal from community but a deliberate, directed labour undertaken to remake the individual and the home (1993:122).

This conspicuous example set especially by Wordsworth and Coleridge stimulated pedestrian activity by their contemporaries and then by many other relatively affluent men in the nineteenth century. The distances walked by the intellectuals of the period were prodigious: William Hazlitt claimed to walk 40 or 50 miles a day; De Quincey walked 70 to 100 miles a week; and Keats apparently covered 642 miles during his 1818 tour of the Lakes and Scotland (Wallace 1993:166-7). By the middle of the century 'the very highest echelon of English society regarded pedestrian touring as a valuable educational experience' (Wallace 1993:168). It had become particularly associated with 'the intellectual classes' who had begun to develop quite complex justifications, a 'peripatetic theory' based upon the way that the pedestrian is re-created with nature. Some of the key texts in this analysis are Hazlitt's 'On Going on a Journey' in 1821; Thoreau's 'Walking' in 1862; Robert Louis Stevenson's 'Walking Tours' in 1881; and Leslie Stephen's 'In Praise of Walking' in 1901 (Wallace 1993:172-3). They explore the impact of Wordsworth's justification for walking although they differ as to the degree to which 'the peripatetic' necessarily connects people back to local communities or remains a much more private activity. Later in the century parallel justifications began to be advanced for rock climbing in the Lakes, an activity which became transferred from the Alps where it had originated (see Milner 1984).

Fourth, issues of conservation have always been part of the discourse surrounding the Lake District, Ousby noting the early protest in 1802 against a particular development of Pocklington's Island (1990:190). However, in the early years of the nineteenth century most writers, including Wordsworth,

were arguing for the interests of visitors so that they could enjoy an unspoiled nature; but by 1844 and Wordsworth's public letters on the Kendal and Windermere Railway the threats of 'mass tourism' were much more apparent. Ousby summarises Wordsworth's distinction of taste, one repeated two decades later in Ruskin's diatribe against the 'stupid herds of modern tourists':

The Kendal and Windermere letters throb with a horrified vision of 'cheap trains pouring out their hundreds at a time along the margins of Windermere', of the industrial towns being able to send as many weekend excursionists to the Lake District as they did to Scarborough, of 'wrestling matches, horses and boat races without number' and of pothouses and beershops run by 'the lower class of innkeepers'. (Ousby 1990:192)

In particular Wordsworth argues that while we may all appreciate the ordinary countryside, the Lake District is distinct. It demands a different eye, one in which we are not threatened or frightened by the relatively wild and untamed nature. This is not something that can be appreciated briefly, through what in Chapter 12 I termed the 'spectatorial' glance. It requires according to Wordsworth 'a slow and gradual process of culture' (cited in Ousby 1990: 194), what I would call an 'environmental' and 'anthropological' scanning of nature and culture.

But Wordsworth also views the 'tourist' as a symptom of larger changes taking place in English society, of those external forces which were beginning to undermine integral rural communities at the end of the eighteenth century (Buzard 1993:25). Wordsworth saw these forces as inducing a kind of fall from a state of affairs in which social life was organic and natural. Buzard's analysis of Wordsworth's 'The Brother' (1799) brings out how the tourist is a synecdoche for the power of external forces to undermine integral communities:

It signifies...the beginning of modernity, characterized alternately as a time when formerly integral cultures fall within the reach of encroaching impersonal networks of influence, or as a time when one stops belonging to a culture and can only *tour* it. (Buzard 1993:27)

But Buzard also notes that for all Wordsworth's criticisms of these processes his poem (and those of various contemporaries) does not entirely escape the 'lure of aestheticization, bearing an unmistakable likeness to standard and satirizable touristic views of rural settings' (1993:27). This seems to a more general feature—that the conservation of the Lake District in the nineteenth century increasingly employs terms and expressions which are similar to the ways in which the travel industry itself characterises such places. In the making of the Lake District there is an increasing coalescence of the cultural and the commercial. Each feeds into the other as the Lake District place-

myth is developed and enormously elaborated. The language of Romanticism plays a burgeoning role in the discourses of both promotion and conservation.

I have so far discussed some of the processes affecting Lake District tourism up to the middle of the nineteenth century. There was though another set of relevant influences and that was the changing place of the countryside more generally in English life as England forged ahead as the first and most spectacularly successful industrial power. Wiener has famously asked: 'Why did hostility to industrial advance persist and even strengthen in the world's first industrial society? Why did such hostility so often take the form of rural myth making?' (1981:7). He talks of British modernisation being a struggle between a northern and a southern metaphor with the former losing out and becoming characterised as the merely 'provincial', separate from and inferior to the metropolitan centre in London. There have been a number of strands to this southern anti-industrialism in England. First, there has been the attraction of the past and the denigration of the new and especially the denigration of the new industry of the north (as in the industrial revolution). Many commentators have asserted that England was and should be viewed as an overwhelmingly 'old country' (see Wright 1985). Second, there has been the more specific idealisation of the old countryside and a profound anti-urbanism which has never been seriously dislodged although England has always been the most urbanised of European and north American countries. Stanley Baldwin famously stated: 'England is the country, and the country is England' (cited in Lowenthal 1991:205); note the paradox in England of the way the army often is able to present itself as the agent preserving the countryside from unwelcome developments. Third, since the countryside was depopulated at a very early stage through the enclosure movement it has not been denigrated as 'barbaric' and 'idiotic' as occurred in other countries. From the eighteenth century onwards the countryside as pastoral came to represent a particular ideal of England. It was the *towns and cities* outside London that came to be viewed as the merely 'provincial'; while the countryside of the north has been partially colonised by the south, in a way similar to that around Paris (Wiener 1981: Ch. 4).

Lowenthal argues that it is this English countryside that has ultimately served to constitute national identity, given that many bases of such identity are lacking in England/Britain compared with elsewhere. He argues:

One icon of heritage has a distinctly English cast. That is the landscape. Nowhere else is landscape so freighted as legacy. Nowhere else does the very term suggest not simply scenery and *genres de vie*, but quintessential national virtues.... Peopled and storied in all the arts, rural England is endlessly lauded as a wonder of the world. (Lowenthal 1991:213)

Lowenthal cites many commentators who have argued for the importance of the English landscape to British identity (see Hewison 1993, on the 'deep-

seated identification between the landscape and national identity'). G.K. Chesterton's homage to the (southern) English village proceeds as follows:

That solid look of the village; the fact that the roofs and walls seemed to mingle naturally with the fields and the trees; the feeling of the naturalness of the inn, of the cross-roads, of the market cross...in a real sense the Crown Jewels. These were the national, the normal, the English.

(Cited in Lowenthal 1991:213)

Lowenthal also notes that this English village and countryside is a 'consummate artefact', a 'vast museumised ruin' (1991:217). And even when there is too much countryside, so to speak, this is to be offset by orderly control. All land seems to require human supervision—in England nature cannot be left to its own devices. Hence with the 'set-aside' arrangements every piece of land must be cared for by someone, especially by landowners and farmers. Lowenthal notes how it is the southern English countryside which has been owned and managed by relatively few large and medium-sized landowners and farmers; and it has also been seen as *the* 'proper place for proper people to live in' (Newby 1990:631). It is of course a racial landscape, one which is presumed to be white. The photographer Ingrid Pollard describes the English countryside as a 'landscape of fear'. Captions next to her photographs of the English countryside include: 'I wandered lonely as a black face in a sea of white' and '...and what part of Africa do you come from?' inquired the walker'.

The Lake District, although white, is not of course a southern landscape. So when it has been appropriated within what Wiener terms the 'southern metaphor' there has had to be a complex transformation. This rather exotic and intimidating landscape has been turned into one that is safe both for being viewed and for certain relatively novel kinds of sport, especially the climbing and walking that became fashionable in the nineteenth century, as we saw above.

Wiener suggests that it was around 1900 that the southern metaphor had become dominant in England. This: 'went together with the devaluation of both the locales of, and the qualities that had made, the industrial revolution. Such places and such characteristics became "provincial"' (1981:42). Working-class and lower middle-class suburbs were therefore characterised as provincial, as far away from the metropolitan centre. The countryside occupied a rather different and diverse location. Much of the countryside came to be viewed as a kind of honorary part of the metropolitan centre. Horne summarises:

Things that are rural or ancient are at the very heart of southern English snobberies, even if they occur in the North. *Provincialism is to live in or near an industrial town to which the industrial revolution gave its significant modern form.*

(1969:38)

Wiener also notes that this incorporation of the rural takes both an elite form and a more populist, socialist version, Williams best representing this alternative reading of rural Britain (1973).

I will now suggest what are some of the main characteristics of the metaphors of north and south using Shields' characterisation of the contrasting cultural constructions of the north and south of England (I have slightly amended this from Shields 1991:231).

Table 13.1 The north and the south

North	South
Periphery	Centre
Working class	Economic and social elites
Beak countryside	Tamed countryside
Industry, factories	Stockbroking, management
Rugged leisure pursuits	High culture, the 'season'
Wet and colder climate	Warmer climate
'Gemeinschaft'	'Gesellschaft'
Neighbourliness and emotional community	Social institutions, money, power

Shields emphasises that these are cultural constructions, which have in part developed from the literary and journalistic writings of the nineteenth century (Dickens, Mrs Gaskell, Disraeli), and which have then been reinforced by cultural output during the twentieth century (D.H. Lawrence, Arnold Bennett, George Orwell, post-war British realist cinema and theatre, *Coronation Street* and so on). What this cultural construction does is to transform differences of social class into a cultural geography. These different 'places' have become metaphors for different social classes and for the process by which a landed, financial and managerial ruling class working in London and living in the south-east has dominated the rest of Britain and has partly remade the countryside through its metropolitanism. The terms which are used to characterise the 'north' constitutes a spatial discourse which privileges the centre, London, and reinforces the north as an economic, cultural and social periphery around that core (see Shields 1991: Ch. 5 for detailed analysis of these contrasting place-images). To demonstrate the power of these images which exemplify such domination consider George Orwell's comments in *Homage to Catalonia* on his return to 'southern England, probably the sleekest landscape in the world':

The industrial towns were far away, a smudge of smoke and misery.... Down here it was still the England I had known in my childhood: the

railway cuttings smothered in wild flowers, the deep meadows where the great shining horses browse and meditate, the slow-moving streams bordered by willows, the green bosoms of the elms, the larkspurs in the cottage gardens.... all sleeping the deep, deep sleep of England.
(Orwell 1938:314)

Ousby notes how Orwell, the self-questioning intellectual and journalist, unselfconsciously slips into a conventional tourist imagery of England and especially of its southern rural charms (1990:2). This suggests that what Ousby terms the 'tourist map of England' is singularly powerful and all-encompassing, and it certainly swept Orwell into its seductive charms (see Chapter 10 on Orwell and the place-image of Wigan).

In conclusion I will consider the relationship of the Lake District to this 'tourist map', and more generally to the variety of available place-images, especially that of the north. First, the area is located a fair distance from many of the well-known industrial towns of the north and could not be viewed as simply part of the 'provincial' north. However, such a perception depends upon 'forgetting' the fact that surrounding the Lake District to the south and west are a string of once-significant industrial towns which are in many senses marginal to the margins of England (Barrow, Cleator Moor, Workington, Whitehaven). Chapman on the basis of some ethnographic materials summarises the hyper-marginality of this west Cumbrian area as follows:

This area is emphatically not part of the Lake District.... The great majority of the British population knows little or nothing about this area.... The existence of the area is, most importantly, scarcely acknowledged by most people who frequent 'the Lakes'.... Hundreds of thousands look out over it, from the summits of Lakeland peaks, but their eyes are on the horizon.
(1993:197)

He describes walking into Cleator Moor wearing breeches, boots, brightly coloured socks, orange waterproofs and a rucksack. Instead of feeling intrepid, as one is permitted to do on descending a modest Lakeland mountain into Ambleside or Keswick, he felt acutely out of place. He was wearing what would be seen as fancy-dress in Cleator Moor—he had literally walked *out* of the Lake District which he characterises as:

the *locus classicus* of high-minded and privileged leisure, wealthy, rural and beautiful, a national playground for the healthy and the thoughtful, with stone-built hotels in parks of rhododendron. West Cumbria, and Cleator Moor particularly, represents a desolate and unregarded landscape of industry declining, industry departed and high unemployment.

(Chapman 1993:205–6)

This hyper-marginality is further demonstrated by the location of the most dangerous of Britain's nuclear installations on this west Cumbrian coast, at Windscale/Sellafield, only a few miles from what many locals and visitors deem to be the most 'unspoilt' and 'natural' parts of the Lake District. These 'places [right] on the margin' of modern Britain hardly figure in most people's geography of the north or indeed of the Lake District, although they are part of the county and tourist board area of Cumbria. Given the proximity to Sellafield the comments from focus group participants as to the cleanliness and freshness of the air are striking: "You can see the purity of the air by the lichen that grows on the trees.... If there is a tree and it was so polluted there wouldn't be anything growing on it" (Crawshaw 1994b:12). Chapman nevertheless effectively shows that the marginality of west Cumbria is well-reflected in the debates over the future of Sellafield. He argues that the generally pro-Sellafield views of local people (that is, those living 'outside' the Lake District) are consistently misunderstood and mis-reported by national TV and press (1993:211–17). He suggests that many local people consider that Sellafield fits rather well into the west Cumbrian economy (and is indeed apparently cleaner than previous industry) but not of course into the Lake District economy which it would totally eliminate if there was a significant nuclear accident.

Second, the Lake District, while geographically in the north, it is not quite of the north. It is almost an honorary part of the south-east and that is mainly because of the particular forms of elite leisure that were established in the area. The Lake District is rather like Nice, Madeira, the Alps, the Dordogne—places significantly made as part of the English south-east and of its white metropolitanism. Shields argues with regard to leisure that 'one does not go to the "North" for high culture but for hiking, fishing, or for the British version of "unspoiled nature"' (1991:231). However, although this general point is important the Lake District occupies a special location here because of the way that it provides a particularly striking social and physical setting for various kinds of activity. The Lake District has a place-image which derives both from the 'north' but also from the 'south', a hybrid. This hybridity stems from the way that the bleak wild countryside has been mostly tamed for visitors: it has been tamed by its art and literature which have become canons of English culture; by the mainly middle-class outdoor leisure practices; and by its compactness and array of accommodation services. It has continued to connote good taste, the various leisure activities found in the area being more common amongst both middle-class and service-class people, especially men (see Savage *et al.* 1992: Ch. 6, those employed in 'education, health and welfare' particularly favouring climbing, camping, and rambling/hiking). Recent research by Squire brings out the attraction of Beatrix Potter tourism to women visitors in the Lakes—and how the buying of souvenirs from the National Trust shop can be considered to be in appropriate taste (1993).

The Lake District is a hybrid nature: on the one hand, like highland Scotland, it is wild and threatening; and on the other hand, like the *home* counties, it

is small, pretty and inviting. It is not a wilderness experience but it does contain some extremely wild and inhospitable scenery. Yet that is located within walking distance of attractive valleys and quaint little villages. One focus group respondent suggested: “‘The Lakes is contained wilderness. It has been contained and produced in a certain way’” (Crawshaw 1994b: 12). The sublime and the picturesque are almost coterminous. Hence it is the contrasts that attract. As another respondent said: “‘It is a unique part of the country. One can’t get away from that fact. There is nowhere else you could find this sort of contrast in such a stark, clear juxtaposition’” (Crawshaw 1994b: 15). The scenery like the weather is continuously changing. The Lake District then is a kind of mirror image of how English people might see England itself, that is, as small, accessible and containing a wide diversity of experiences and sceneries. It is a nature of contrasts, not a nature that appeals through the unending scale of a particular feature.

The Lake District is like other parts of England in another sense. Although some of it is wild it is at the same time a highly managed landscape. In focus group one discussion participant said that: ‘My father’s family have just been here and they thought it was great. They said “it’s so neat and tidy” as if that was their idea of beautiful. That is what the Lake District is. It is very neat and tidy.’

This tidiness results from the long period of control over development, so that ownership of land by farmers or leisure-based industries has been heavily compromised. Capitalist enterprise has been regulated even though most land has remained in private ownership. This managed landscape has resulted from a very restrictive planning regime (since the National Parks Act in 1949), and from ownership of about one-quarter of the area by a voluntary association, the National Trust, which has come to assume an almost hegemonic role in the area. The Lake District is highly managed and almost manicured with extremely little derelict land, litter or graffiti. It is the exact opposite of unmanaged wasteland. It has been gentrified. Lowenthal notes the way that farmers are highly circumscribed in what they are able to do since they have now become ‘museum custodians...scenic stewards for tourism’ (Lowenthal 1991:217). It is a landscape that could be described as the ‘consummate artefact’, a place where nature could not be left to its own ‘natural’ devices. As one respondent in focus group discussion said: “‘it feels very civilised. Wherever you go it still feels civilised’” (Crawshaw 1994b:17).

This relates to Strathern’s more general point (1992). It is clear that in contemporary England there is a greatly enhanced emphasis upon the importance of nature—to value the natural, to be attracted by images of nature and to seek to implement nature conservation under the impact of green and new age philosophies. But Strathern notes that these emphases are fundamentally mediated by culture—it is this which has in a way rescued nature. But this in turn has the effect of producing: ‘the conceptual collapse of the differences between nature and culture when Nature cannot survive without

Cultural intervention’ (1992:174). The Lake District particularly exemplifies the role of this cultural intervention. It has had to be rescued from itself. Culture has been necessary to save nature in the Lake District and to produce a very distinct and ‘civilised’ place for consumption (especially for the white service class). It is a place that is simultaneously valued for its culture and civilisation *and* for its naturalness and relative wildness. It is a hybrid landscape.

