Chapter II

From a Visual Odyssey to *Paysage Intérieur*: Landscape in Travel Writing
**Introduction**

In this chapter, I shall be analysing two travel texts, *On a Shoestring to Coorg* by Dervla Murphy and *Family Web* by Sarah Hobson to analyse the phenomenon of landscaping that runs through travel texts of British women writing on India. I shall be also looking at parts of Gillian Tindall’s *City of Gold: A Biography of Bombay*, to substantiate my arguments. As a background, I shall be looking at the skeins of meanings of landscapes, as they existed in the literary and metaphorical contexts in English literature. For this, the history of landscaping in English literature and its connection with the concepts of quests/conquests that existed from medieval times and their importance in travel writing shall be looked into. This enquiry is, in turn, supported by the philosophical developments that took place in the aesthetics of vision in Europe. These investigations bring about the historical and political relevance of landscaping in literature as well in arts. How landscaping as a phenomenon construed the paradigms of the city and the country, the idyllic and the artificial, can be wrought out in our analysis of the history of landscaping. The quest for the idyllic took the adventurers to the far and distant lands where they conjured up real and imaginary landscapes; and this eventually led them to the possession of the land along with its resources. The knowledge of this can explain the far-reaching colonial implications of landscaping.

But these histories are limited in the sense that they look at the way in which a man depicts an alien landscape. The quest and conquest can be primarily seen as male tropes which were definitely internalised by women travellers too, to a certain extent. By looking at the way how landscaping is handled in the texts
of British women travellers in India, one can see how a negotiation between the pre-existent tropes of travelling [which were primarily male] and subjective female experiences, combine and coerce with each other.

As a traveller/writer travels in a different geographical space, we can observe a distinct feature in their writings. That is the description of landscape, without which any travel book would be incomplete. Narration of the landscape is an important aspect that adds a descriptive gloss to the physical act of travelling. In this chapter, I would like look at landscape as a text. By studying landscape, I shall be looking into the linguistic as well as the illustrative aspect of the visual phenomenon, gleaned through the mobile/physical act of travelling. These aspects need not be necessarily complementary, but in many texts we can see them enrich each other. For example, linguistic descriptions of a place are meant to evoke the visual spectacle; where as the illustrative aspects, like drawings, photographs, etc, need not necessarily buttress a linguistic narration.

If we look at the dictionary meanings of landscape,¹ we can trace the emphasis on the primacy of the ‘visible features’, which can be ‘improved’ or changed via illustrations, photographs, etc. These definitions also point to the fact landscape is the representation of a visible stretch of land which is already there which can be, at the same time, controlled and altered by the one who is seeing it. That is, the ‘landscape’ which is already there as a physical phenomenon, can reasonably be rearranged from the point of view of the beholder.
These meanings point to the fact that a manual grooming and altering of a given piece of land is connected with landscape. Taking on the possibility of physical alteration, critics like Jay Appleton (1996), Simon Schama (1995), Richard C. Poulsen (1992), Richard Muir (1999), etc, have gone a step further by investigating landscape as a mental category of analysis as well by tracing the literary, cultural as well as the political history behind its construction. In their definitions of the landscape, we can see a poignant departure in the concept of ‘landscape’ as a phenomenon which is associated with land and its perceptions. They bring in the aspect of the power of visuality and the mind that works behind various ways of perceiving when they try to define ‘landscape’. For example, when the critic Simon Schama, in his *Landscape and Memory*, traces the etymology of the word landscape, he brings in the aspect of ‘pleasure’ that is associated with seeing:

[Landscape] entered the English language, along with ‘herring’ and ‘bleached linen’ as a Dutch import at the end of the sixteenth century. And landschap, like its Germanic root, Landscaft, signified a unit of human occupation, indeed a jurisdiction, as much as anything that might be a pleasing object of depiction (1995: 10).

Here again, the authority of man over land and the capacity to ‘control’ and alter it in a pleasing manner are emphasised. Another important critic, Richard C. Poulsen, in his *Landscape of the Mind*, brings in the aspect of ‘mind’ over ‘physical’ nature as he defines ‘landscape’ in a rather rhetorical manner:
What is landscape (land akin to Irish lann, Welsh lann, “Church’ + ‘scape’ – Old English sceap, akin to German schaft, ‘relationship’ or ‘creation’; thus landscape = ‘a church relationship’, a sacrilazation of the land by endowing it with a transforming image; quite literally, ‘a creation of land’)? (1992: 10)

In these writings, we can see landscape emerging as a crucial category where the ‘physical’ aspects of it are embellished with the mental imaginings. From the backdrop of these arguments which ground the depiction of landscape as a phenomenon which is imbued with the power of the beholder, I shall be looking into the act of ‘landscaping’ which appears in the writings of the traveller/writers on whom I am working on. For this, it is important to look at ‘landscape in the text’ and importantly ‘landscape as a text’.

In traditional classical writings a text meant,

the actual words of a book, poem, etc, in the original form they have been transmitted in or transmuted into; a book of such words; words set to music, the main body of matter in a book, distinguished from notes, commentary or any other subsidiary matter; the exact wording of a book or piece of writing as opposed to a translation, paraphrase or revision... (Oxford Dictionary: 2003).

Here, the ‘words’ in a book, music, etc, are elevated to a meaningful and linguistically comprehensible status as texts. It can be said that the description of landscape in travel narratives also fall under this category. Here, following critics like Appleton, Muir and Schama, I would like to extend the meaning of a ‘text’ in a Barthesan sense in which one can read meanings into the realm of
the unspoken. Such a realm would which include paintings, music, maps, the
description of landscape, etc, as cultural productions in its fold. These cultural
productions are seen as active signifiers imbued with meaning. By looking at
landscape as a category for cultural analysis, I shall be adopting an ‘expanded’
view of the landscaping as a text.

‘Landscaping’ in this Dissertation

In my dissertation, I shall be referring to ‘landscaping’ as an act that involves
the observation and linguistic depiction of the scenery that is observed by the
traveller. Literally, it is the humanization of the landscape that is the main
focus of this chapter. I do not want to confine the meaning of the word to the
description of picturising the countryside alone. Landscaping, as used in this
study, involves the complex procedure of narrating the panorama of ‘land’
[geo graphien means writing the land], which does not necessarily straitjacket
the term as the inscription of rural and urban landscape alone. Parallel to the
formal and structural construction of the land, the natural/artificial
equipments that go with it [the rivers, trees, houses, automobiles, etc] shall
also be considered part and parcel of the narration of the landscape. I want to
bring under the purview of landscaping the textualization of the rural and
urban scenery as well, which shall be called as ‘country’ and ‘cityscaping’,
respectively hereafter. Most importantly, the ‘writing’ of the ‘human beings’,
who are also deemed as inseparable from the land, shall be termed
“bodyscaping”’ in this chapter. The aesthetic representation of the ‘human
body’ as part and parcel of the rural or the urban landscape, I believe, is an
underlying strategy that can be perceived in most travel narratives.
By analysing ‘landscaping’, I shall be looking at narration that transcribes the ‘facts’ which are seen, observed and translated into a written form for a target audience. I shall bring within the purview of ‘landscaping’ the detailed, contextual readings of the land made by the author. These include:

(1) The depiction of the landscape through the verbal or the linguistic medium. This particular aspect shall be analysed with help of the texts that I am working on. Here I shall be looking into the tropes and metaphors employed to persuade the reader to specific points of view.

(2) The graphic description of places/spaces, which fall further under two categories:

   a) The larger spaces indicated in the larger framework of the ‘outside’, for example: maps. Maps are as the best examples of description of the specific details of the larger topos under scrutiny.

   b) The delineation of the smaller spaces or the ‘insides’ [e.g. The graphic depiction of a typical architectural design of an Indian house which describes the concept of space distribution within the domestic hold, the detailed etching of family trees, etc]

(3) The photographic narratives, narration of human bodies with the help of photographic stills. This is an important feature in travel writing. How the eyes of the camera selectively capture the life in action, which are meant for transmitting some specific messages, will be a major point of study in my dissertation. Under this category, I shall bring in sketches, illustrations, etc, made by the travel writer herself.
To analyse the constitution or the construction of ‘realities’ of landscape as texts, to begin with, it is necessary to embark on the tradition of landscaping in English literature.

**The literary and aesthetic tradition of landscaping**

Travel and landscaping being the primary concerns in this chapter, it is interesting to look at the various ways in which both enhanced each other in English Literature. In this section, I shall be looking at the development of a definitive aesthetics in landscaping which is closely related to literature and art. The phenomenon of landscaping, according to the critic Appleton, could be traced back to the Renaissance period. He cites Hussey’s *The Picturesque Studies: Studies in a Point of View* (London: Putnam, 1967), to elaborate the fact that the English “awakened to an appreciation of landscape during the time of the Renaissance as the English nobility and gentry came into close contact with continental landscape paintings and Italian landscape”(1996: 24). Another critic, Simon Schama elaborates on this by stating that that was the period that saw the European encounter with the modern edifices of culture, like “(E)mprise, nation, freedom, enterprise and dictatorship” and he elaborates on how these institutions “have invoked topography to give their ruling ideas a natural form” (1995: 27).

These critics point out the fact that it was during Renaissance that the allure of landscape caught the imagination of the English and found a creative space in their literature. However, it is to be noted that travel existed as an enterprising activity as early as the Middle Ages. It was during that time that the expansionist zeal of the Crusades had been levitated to fervent spiritual
excesses. As early as that period one can easily see the correlation between
the quest [of the spiritual ‘self’] and the conquest of terrains [of the physical
‘other’]. The reflection of this theme can be seen in the literature and legends
of those times² (Mohanty 2003: 23).

Claude Levi-Strauss, who brilliantly interwove the theme of travel/quest and
its relation to the quest for one’s self in the European context in his *Tristes
Tropiques*, sums up that travel and discovery brought

...that crucial moment in modern thought, when, thanks to the great
voyages of discovery, a human community which had believed itself to
be complete in its final form suddenly learned...that it was not alone,
that it was part of a greater whole, and that, in order to achieve self-
knowledge, it must contemplate its unrecognisable image in this
mirror.³

It may be said that it was this relation between *gaze* [looking at ‘self’/’other’]
and *possession* [travelling/conquering; be it land or woman] which generated
the theme of quest and proprietorship in English literature. What is
interesting is the way in which the quest always led to “conquest.” If one
analyses the aspect of *gaze* on the landscape as embodying quest, search,
possession, etc; then it is interesting to study its correspondence to
Greenblatt’s observation that according to the medieval concept of natural
law, the uninhabited territories were automatically owned by the first person
who discovered them or gazed at them (Payne 2005: 27).

The act of travelling, gazing and possessing alien lands was dwelt with a
persisting obsession during the Elizabethan times.⁴ Bassnett comments on
this phenomenon and its recurrence in literature thus: “By the sixteenth century, the wandering knight, on his eternal quest through the forests, was replaced in popular imagination by the seafarer, bringing back strange treasures from unknown lands beyond the horizon” (Mohanty 2003: 3).

The Augustans took up this theme with great enthusiasm. During this time Nature versus Culture/Country versus Town clashes took on unbelievable propositions. Probably, this debate was anticipative of the advent of the Industrial Revolution. Meanwhile, London became the hub of British civilization. It was the place where the politicians, high priests of art, artists and the literati assembled en masse, thus enriching the cultural ambience. It was the largest city, ‘the happening place’, the commercial centre and the seat of culture. At the same time it had its murky sides in its underbelly, which were inhabited by rogues, outcasts, pimps, prostitutes and crooks. The intelligentsia was deeply concerned over the moral degradation and deterioration of the city. “The city was a synecdoche for the political identity of the nation” (Hammond 2002: xxi). Hammond however adds:

A long tradition of writing had associated towns with corruption and danger and the countryside with innocence and health.... The landscapes of England [were] often imagined via Roman landscapes, and so it becomes not only geographical but a conceptual space, a terrain where ‘the happy man’ (as tradition calls him) can become truly himself, free from the pressures of life at court or town (2002: xxi-xxii).

These deliberations were imaginatively worked out in the works of Marvell, Dryden, Swift, etc. The emergence of novel as a new genre at this time has
been understood to be connected with the on going process of landscaping. This was also the time when the novel as a genre took its shape. Firdous Azim traces the birth of the novel, which is rooted in an imperialist heritage. He says that a novel creates a scenario, and defines a territory where the individual is posited in opposition to the ‘other’ subject position (1993: 29). In the new genre, according to Azim, the theme of colonialism is looked from different perspectives. In *Robinson Crusoe*, it is celebratory. The spirit of adventure, which would lead to the establishment of a colonial enterprise, is heavily lauded.

The subject as a cast away by shipwreck (the typical Robinsonnade dream) into a luxuriant, but barren wilderness carries with him/her social and signifying structures in which s/he had been constructed as an individual. Seen in this light the first -person narratives describing far off places remain rooted with in the bounds of their own society, while desiring to flee and free themselves of social constraints. The oscillation between the society, and the unknown, and the subject, who is traversing between the two worlds, is the dominant theme [in the novels of those times] (1993: 29).

Nigel Leask elaborates on this further by stating that the anxieties of the suspension and the dislocation of a cultural sovereignty [of England] were witnessed more during the romantic times. “[A]s exemplified by Shelley’s famous sonnet ‘Ozymandias’, Egypt [like India or Mexico] had a particular resonance for the romantic sensibility, attracted as [the sensibility] was to the antique, the picturesque and the exotic, even when...that attraction was qualified by political and moral critique of the past or present inhabitants of
antique lands” (2003: 3). Appleton analyses the English obsession with the exotic and natural landscapes as an attempt to escape from the gruelling realities of an institutional bondage brought in by the advent of industrialisation.  

With this knowledge, it is interesting to read the landscape poems of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley and Keats in a new light. During the Victorian and Edwardian times ‘landscaping the Orient’ became a recurring feature in English literature. Here, I am specifically limiting myself to the narration of the ‘oriental landscapes’. It is also important to see this convergence as a significant one. As Said pointed out, the Orient had become a permanent fixture in the imagination of the West (1977:34). The Orient was a prevailing phenomenon, which appeared implicitly or otherwise. So when I figure out the obvious references I am in no way negating the not-so-obvious inferences to the Orient. I am, as a matter of fact, assuming that the prevalence of the Orient in the narratives of those times is very important and pertinent.  

To sum up, if we look at the history of ‘landscaping’ in literature, we notice that at the time of the evolution of English literature, travel was a theme of the quest of the self that lay embedded in the violent struggle between the spiritual and the physical world. During the Renaissance, travel/adventure became one of the fashionable themes, and landscape became one of the inevitable prerequisites to describe the strange and exotic lands. From its sheer topographical and geographical functioning, it was during the Restoration and Augustan times that landscape paved way to the polemical drift of mapping one’s own mental space: that is her/his associations with the
inside/outside, country/town dichotomies. It was at this juncture that scientific enquiry and the depiction of empirical facts became necessary preconditions to highlight the factual aspect of writing on ‘strange’ and unseen lands, which stood the risk of being regressively denigrated as both ‘fictitious and fantastical’. The obsession with the Orient was in the background, lurking around with the intensity of a fantasy. The Romantics brought it back again with a renewed vigour, which exoticised strange and far-off lands seen and unseen. With the new found enthusiasm of describing landscapes and exotic far-away lands, slowly a new genre of travel writing was literarily unfurling with its immense possibilities during this time. During the Victorian times, after the Grand Tour, travel writing became a distinct genre altogether.

We have seen how landscaping gradually developed in English literature providing a fertile ground for the flourishing of new genres like novel, travel writing, etc. At the same time, landscaping in English literature is also closely associated with the evolution of different movements in the aesthetics of vision that dominated Europe right from the time of Renaissance. In the literary procedure of landscaping, in travel narratives in particular, one has to keep in mind the aesthetics of landscaping that occurs in these narratives. Landscaping in travel writing is aimed at a target reader. So it has to be packaged in such a way as to arouse the curiosity of that reader. When one looks at the aesthetics of landscaping in literature, we can see that it was the outcome of the demand for veracity in experiential narratives. The travellers’ tales were often spiced with the stories of the far-off and the unseen; these had to be authenticated with a credible, detailed narrative of what had been seen and heard. The seventeenth century explorer-cum-traveller tried to seek out
tools through which she/he could aesthetically represent a synchronized
narrative based on observation and representation. Science was emerging as a
discipline; it had based itself on empirical analysis and anything which did not
substantiate itself with examples was looked upon with a certain amount of
suspicion. This change in method, from an atavistic narration based on
exaggeration to one based on ‘objective reality’, according to Stafford (1984:
12), was primarily the traveller-cum-explorer’s attempts to ward off
prevaricating tales with exaggerated metaphorical and allegorical narratives
which had dogged the travel-tales till then. Therefore, it was necessary to dab
travel-tales with the rosy hue of first-hand witness narratives added with
generous helpings of truth telling. As a consequence, in the tales of
exploration and discovery, truth-telling was elevated to an aesthetic status. It
is also interesting to find that:

...at some point in the seventeenth-century, a profound conviction was
coherently voiced that something really is out there and that art and
language were used to get beyond imitation - that is, beyond a hallowed
art and language in order to grapple with the real things. This conscious
rejection of certain established mental constructions became part of the
larger Enlightenment struggle to avoid the conventionality of verbal
and visual languages in pursuit of an unmediated nature (Poulsen

Jay Appleton traces the aesthetic history of landscaping back to the works of
Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftsbury (1671-1713). His important
work Characteristics, Men, Manners, Opinions, Times (1711) reintroduced the
concept of Longinus’s Sublime to the English audience.
Shaftesbury’s importance ...does not lie in his discussion of style, but in the fact that he was influential in transforming the idea of sublimity from a rhetorical to an aesthetic one. ... Before Shaftesbury, the word ‘Sublime’ was used always in connection with style; after the appearance of Characteristics, it increasingly betokened a specific sort of feeling in the face of the awful and great.8

Thinkers like Addison and Kant expanded on his concept of Sublimity and eventually this became a central theme in eighteenth century aesthetics in Europe. Burke’s essay, a detailed study of the concept, A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful (1757), had a deep influence on the English and it affected their thought and sensibility. This work was deeply thought out, well argued and had direct relevance to ‘landscape’, and here we can see Burke’s neat division between the Beautiful and the Sublime. Sara Suleri connects Burke’s conception of the ‘idea’ of the sublime to his obsession with the processes of imperialism that were taking shape in the British political front in her policies towards India. She believes that it was no historical accident that The Enquiry became the aesthetic paddle on which the question of India was addressed with implicit helpings of aesthetics. “[The Enquiry] provides in itself an incipient map of [Burke’s] developing political consciousness: as a study of the psychic proximity of aesthetic discourse with the concomitant intimacy of cultural terror, [The Enquiry] converts the sublime into that theatrical space upon which he can most closely observe the emergence and disappearance that empowerment signifies to any discourse of control”(Suleri 1992: 37). Pramod K. Nayar, in his article “The Sublime Raj: English Writing and India, 1750-
1820”, further elaborates on how the 18th century aesthetics of the sublime and the colonial ideology were intricately linked. In an interesting piece of rhetoric he brings out the various features of the sublime in landscaping which was practiced in the narratives of the Raj era. Nayar says:

The aesthetics of the sublime, common to 18th century Europe, embodied terror and vastness, darkness and obscurity, danger and challenge.... The English traveller negotiates the threatening [Indian] landscape of desolation, characterized by emptiness, vastness, ruins, absence of markers, roads or cultivation or excessive natural phenomenon in the three moments: (a) the moment of self preservation in the face of threat from landscape, when the traveller describes a threatening landscape this ‘negative sublime' where the landscape is devoid of markers or directions. The desolation frightens because there is no discernable meaning. (b) the moment of affirmation, of the ‘hermeneutic sublime’, where the attribution of meaning to the desolation by the English traveller asserts individual agency (c) finally, through acts of self affirmation, the traveller moves from solitude to society... (2004: 3811).

The consequence of Burke’s theory of ‘Sublime’ was the conception of the ‘Picturesque’. Uvedale Price, William Gilpin and Payne Knight brought in the cult of the Picturesque by deviating from Burke’s idea of the Sublime and the Beautiful. The ‘School of the Picturesque’, as they were called, sought out the qualities of “roughness of texture, irregularity, asymmetry, partial concealment, and the unexpected and above all the impression... of natural occurrence rather than artificial contrivance” (Appleton 1996: 32). Though
theoreticians deem the controversies of the Beautiful, the Sublime and the Picturesque to be some random, stray ruminations recollected with rhetoric and passion, post-colonial studies by Suleri and Nayar specify that they dwell on the elusive realms of trying to harbour imperialistic impulses within the whole gamut of the aesthetics of landscaping.

During the Romantic period, the preoccupations with the notions of liberty and a genuine reaction against institutional authority [religious, social and academic] being the main features of the age, nature or the physical environment was considered as a constituent part of man’s existence. Thus poets, philosophers and artists were constantly re-examining the paradoxical nexus between the restrictive structures of the society and the liberating features of nature found in the lakes, mountains, wooden glens, and rocky crags. Constable and Turner, the landscape painters of that time, gave visual expression to these concerns of the poets and the philosophers. “Constable revolutionized the attitude of the landscape painter towards the processes of converting observation into expression, while Turner discovered entirely new potentialities in the nature of colour and light” (Appleton 1996: 38). Other than the writers and the painters who tried to personify nature in their works, we do not find any major theorist till the latter half of the nineteenth century. But it is to be noted that landscape art emerged as a popular genre that attracted many patrons. It could also find for itself a major, prestigious and coveted space in the drawing rooms of that time.

John Ruskin, in his major work Modern Painters [published by Cook and Wedderburn in 1903], was the next major theoretician who dealt with the landscape in a modest fashion. Nevertheless, he made significant
contributions. Kenneth Clarke comments: “Ruskin approached art through nature. During the first half of his life he believed that nature - by which he meant the mountains, rocks, trees, plants, skies and rivers of Western Europe - was a direct revelation of God’s glory, designed for the edification of man…” (1964: 89). The Victorian dilemma of being torn between Science and Religion is addressed in this book; we can see Ruskin taking a Hopkinsian stance of the positing Nature as divine and blissful. What is peculiar to Ruskin was the fact that he was a theoretician/critic who himself was an artist.

In the twentieth century, we can find revolutionary studies in the aesthetics of landscape. Charles Darwin and Sigmund Freud had revolutionized the aesthetics of landscape by bringing in environmental and psychological factors into it. John Dewey (1921) and Gombrich (1960) worked on the technical, symbolic and behavioural aspects of landscape. Simon Schama worked on ‘landscaping’ in literature. Barbara Maria Stafford, Richard Muir, James Turner and most importantly Jay Appleton worked on the history and politics of the aesthetics of landscape. Many art critics have analyzed the technical and symbolic inferences to the man-nature relationship etched out on canvas. The contributions of these critics in their entirety are overwhelmingly large, and would constitute another area of research altogether. I have cited only a few aestheticians of landscape art.

In this section we have seen how landscaping is associated with the development of new genres and determined the growth of a definitive aesthetics in English literature and art. However, most of the studies on the politics of landscaping have been from a purely male point of view. The questions of how men look at landscape and how they represent it in their
works have been studied extensively. Specific studies on how women perceive and depict landscape are scarce in the whole discourse on the aesthetics of landscaping altogether. My attempt is look these issues and probably formulate a handy theory on the ‘landscaping’ techniques of British women travel writers. The observations that I make are by no means generalisations on women travellers as a whole, and my theory is specific only to the texts that I have chosen for my study. And here it is important to say that, for this study, I have drawn heavily on the theory of ‘gaze’ from visual arts. It may be observed that the travellers I am working on seek out the ‘beautiful’ and the ‘ugly’ simultaneously, thus both reinforcing and disrupting already existing and neatly mapped out notions of visual aesthetics. However, it is worthwhile to mention that the narratives of women travellers open up a distinct chapter in the history of aesthetics.

**The Power of visuality in travel writing**

Landscaping is one of the most significant ways in which the power of visuality is imported to travel writing. It is the technique in which a written form appeals to the reader’s ‘optical feelings’. By optical feelings, I mean, the visual sensation that is gauged by a sort of spatial awareness and experience. I have used the term ‘optical feelings’ deliberately to imply the association between the act of seeing and the corresponding thought process which ensues almost simultaneously. But when an author narrates landscape, the bearing of the visual experience is foregrounded by sustaining the spontaneity and the impact of the mental picture, though this process often occurs in a different time and space.
I shall be dealing, primarily, with landscape as a text in the writings of women travellers who present their imaging/imaginings of India in literature. In their texts, landscape in itself becomes a technique through which the ‘eye witness account’ is peppered with participatory narratives. These participatory narratives, which try to assess and represent the data of observation, emphasize the authority of ‘experience’. Here is where the question of the female gaze presents itself in the texts of women travellers.

According to John Berger’s *Ways of Seeing*, women are accustomed to being the object of male regard; however they do not return the gaze in order to transform men into objects of desire. Instead they internalise the male point of view and become self-surveyors even when they are looking from their subject position. “Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at... The surveyor of woman in herself is male: the surveyed female” (Berger 1972:47). Laura Mulvey, in the context of cinema, in “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema”, argues that women are controlled in films by having to act for men as sexual spectacles. “Woman ...stands in patriarchal culture as a signifier for the male other, bound by a symbolic order in which man can live out of his fantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by imposing them on the silent image of the woman still tied to her place as a bearer, not maker, of meaning” (2000: 35). According to her, female subjects thus become the passive raw material for the active gaze of man. Rey Chow quotes Fredric Jameson and his contribution to the theory of gaze in his essay “Where Have All the Natives gone?”

In his volume of essays exploring film culture Fredric Jameson writes that “The visual is *essentially* pornographic” [...] This straight forward
definition of the visual image sums up many of the problems we encounter in cultural criticism today [...] The activity of watching is linked by the projection of physical nakedness. Watching is theoretically defined as the primary agency of violence, an act that pierces the other, who inhabits the place of the passive victim on display (Mongia 2006: 123).12

Teresa de Lauretis contests Berger, Jameson and Mulvey by articulating the dual dimensions of being objectified and identified by gaze: “for women spectators ... we cannot assume identification to be simple. For one thing identification is itself a movement, a subject process, a relation: the identification (of oneself) with something other (than oneself).” (Lauretis 1984: 141). Felber further exemplifies Lauretis’s view in “Capturing the Shadows of Ghosts: Mixed Media and the Female Gaze.” She says, “significantly the female image experiences identity and difference, discovery of the self and the other. Unlike the dyad of the male gaze/female spectacle, it produces identity (sameness) and a slighter extent of difference” (Felber 2001: 28). Richard Leppert in his Art and the Committed Eye (2002) observes that the object objectified is not as passive as it is assumed to be. The object in an artistic piece, be it a painting or a movie, wields a certain amount of power over the spectator. Though the distribution of power is not equal, there is a considerable amount of ‘titillating’ the desire and ‘frustrating it’ going on behind the scenes. The spectator emerges as the not so powerful ‘possessor’ of the image in the whole show. These theoretical debates revolve around the realm of the male gaze and the objectified position of women in visual arts. Again very few theories exist which talks about the agential position of women
as the originator of meanings in the realm of visuality and the translation of it. In the texts that I am working on, I am dealing with the agency of the gaze of the travelling women. At this point it is necessary to lay down my own premises on the basis of a thorough analysis of my primary sources. The main premises are; as women travel and observe the place and they try to reproduce the visual impressions imprinted in their mind through their memory:

1. The linguistic medium helps them to articulate their memory. Words try to substitute the mental images relived through memory.
2. The visual image caught in a moment in time has a problematic relationship with the words [or the linguistic medium], which would later describe the spectacle witnessed.
3. The gaze is a self-conscious one as well as it is directed towards a self-conscious object. Here while we get into the skin of the ‘spontaneity’ of the act of gazing or being gazed at, one can notice the power that the subject as well as the object wields on each other.
4. The gaze also tries to translate ‘nature’ [the things that really are] to ‘culture’ [things that are made].
5. The pleasure of looking or gazing [scopophilia] is another aspect of gaze that calls for our rapt attention.
6. The emotion behind the gaze is all-important, is it as simplistic as the white/traveller/writer trying to ‘possess’ the land that she is gazing at? Is the gaze proprietary in nature? Or is the gaze ridden with the complexities of a cultural encounter?
7. Is there a distinct difference between the male and the female gaze or is the female gaze an extension of the male gaze? Or are these narratives a compromise of both?

In gazing and the consequent experiential disbursement of data, the balance between objectivity and the representation of it becomes delicate. Hence, in these travel narratives that I am working on, storytelling is adorned with the representation of space as a visual and emotional experience with an astounding clarity. The recognition and the familiarisation of a given space begin right from the time of one’s identity formation. Greebie, a critic who had worked extensively on spaces, says, spatial awareness is acquired “much earlier than speech...Furthermore, we respond to space as a totality, from many directions simultaneously, in what the psychologists call a gestalt experience” (1981: 43). Greebie further elaborates on the ‘inside’ /’outside’ spaces.

The transition between the inside and the outside of the home envelope the ‘here’ and ‘there’ polarity that governs all relationships. This occurs first in relation of the rooms of the house, and then terms of the house to yard, yard to street space, and street to neighbourhood and so on. These establish the boundaries or extension of ‘skin’ between us and the material environment (1981: 7).

In this dissertation, gaze is all about experiencing the visual phenomenon from ‘outside’ and representing it from ‘inside’ or within. When we theorize landscaping [which constitutes witnessing (visually), experiencing (emotionally and intellectually), and expressing verbally (in print)] we can
find a harmonious blending of the three-fold dimension of this phenomenon. At this point it is interesting to look at Muir's elaboration on the traveller's encounter with the disparate spaces of the 'insides' and 'outsides.'

In experiencing places, we simultaneously encounter two closely related but different landscapes. The one lying beneath our feet and extending to the far horizon is a real landscape: it is composed of rock, soil, vegetation, and water and is home to an abundance of creatures and has its objective past and present existences. The other is the Perceived landscape, consisting of sensed and remembered accounts and hypotheses about the real landscape (Muir 1999: 115).

After examining the concept of the gaze it is important to understand 'space' in its conceptual form. Space in itself becomes a complex phenomenon as the entire psychological gamut of the author's 'self' is deftly, yet unconsciously fleshed out within the twin concepts of the 'inside' and the 'outside'. In travelling we can see the uneasy merger of the 'inside' and 'outside' spaces. Inside space can be conveniently called 'home', the familiar environment the traveller associates herself with. It is here, the early development of identity formations take place. The concept of 'home' does not merely have the restricted meaning of a man-made space that protects; it can be extended to the entire ethos and institutions which help the 'self' to evolve as individuals within a given community. Thus 'home' carries with it, markers of the evolution and construction of human beings within specific communities they belong to. While analysing the meaning of 'home', we can see the familiar spaces, climates, food habits, customs, racial features, etc become part and parcel of this notion. Thus home becomes a sensuous, emotional and familiar
geographical space. Anything that is antithetical, new and strange to this familiarity is what is considered to be the ‘outside’. Thus, alien lands and all the features that go with it, right from strange spaces to people and customs fall into the notion of ‘outside’ or ‘abroad’.

The concept of ‘home’ becomes the symbol of the self or inside and the ‘self’ has no meaning in its entirety but in contrast to the ‘outside’. Travel Writing generally evolves through this complex mediation of the ‘self’ and the ‘other’.

The perception of the ‘outside’ and the verbal construction of it in the texts that I am dealing with, are also synonymous with that of the mapping of the psyche of women travellers. Travel in itself or mobility in terms of time and space, can be understood as explorations of one’s own self almost verging on epiphanies. Thus, the texts I am working on become a sort of ‘bildungsroman’, in its generic sense, leading to the merging of the physical and the psychic, the ‘inside’ and the ‘outside’; the ‘self’ and the ‘other’.

Karen A. Lawrence opines that the women travellers/writers had actually disrupted the given concept of the ‘self’ and the ‘other’ within the convention of [male] travelling/writing. She says that with in the Western tropes of travelling, the image of women had either been as a cistern of fidelity anxiously waiting at home for the return of her travelling husband; or that of the Circe, the potentially dangerous woman who had to be tamed and physically conquered (Lawrence 1994: xiii).

Travelling becomes a journey in time, as the spatial displacement becomes synonymous with temporal displacement as well. At the outset travel, within
different time zones becomes a mental sojourn in different historical periods as well; especially when one is travelling ‘outside Europe/England’. Travelling to India becomes equivalent to travelling to a colonial past, thus confronting colonial vestiges as well as ‘wastages’. Thus the ‘outside Europe/England’ experience, in fact, transforms into a rendezvous with the past of Europe/England itself: if not its colonial, the paradisiacal one, which is at once imaginary and ideal. India, therefore, becomes the perfect ground for realizing and imagining both the polarities and paradoxes of the past: which is rooted in the colonial as well as paradisiacal concepts of time. The quest of the paradisiacal is closely linked with the ‘orientalisation’ of the ‘former colony,’ which explains those instances of the quest of pristine beauty and innocence within the Indian landscape. The disappointments with India, India’s modernisation in particular, which is sandwiched between tradition and time, can also be well explained by this phenomenon. Having introduced the various layers of landscape as a concept in travel writing, the discussion will now move on to the analysis of landscaping in Murphy. In this chapter, I shall be using Gillian Tindall to a certain extent, to explicate the idea of Place Fixation.

I

Narration of Spaces, Cityscapes, Ruralscapes and Bodyscapes: Murphy’s On a Shoestring to Coorg

Dervla Murphy’s On a Shoestring to Coorg: An Experience of Southern India, published in 1976, is a guide book and travel account. Here the narration of the landscape becomes an indicator of the travails of one’s own act of
travelling. For example, ‘Introductions’ or ‘Prefaces’ in the travel narrative have voluminous descriptions about the landscape, used as a device to introduce Indian topography to the target reader. If we take the example of maps, we can see that maps have a significant role in travel literature; invariably almost every travel narrative begins with a map of the place the writer is going to speak about.

Murphy provides two maps as graphic introductions to India (Fig.1). The main focus is on the southern peninsula of India with an emphasis on the western part with the names of the major places in that area which she has visited. This area covers portions of coastal strip of Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and parts of South-western Tamilnadu. Andhra Pradesh is not mentioned at all though Murphy claims, in her title, this sojourn to be her experience of ‘South India’. The topography is neatly etched out with a detailed layout of the Western Ghats and the various rivers that criss-cross the South-western tip of India. Here, she foregrounds the territory of Coorg, on which she zeros in as the pivotal region from which she tries to trace out the quintessence of India. In the inset, the ‘complete’ map of India is projected which, interestingly, has Pakistan and Bangladesh, included in it. Severed from the Indian sub-continent is the map of Sri Lanka, as an inseparable feature of India. Interestingly they are not labelled as separate countries, but they are included within the geographical frontiers of India.
Figure 1: Murphy’s map of South India
From this particular observation, the surmises that would naturally arise are

1. By the employment of the cartography the author tends to create an unproblematic relationship of the map with that of the region that is narrated. The map of India in any travel book is intended to reflect the mirror image of India.

2. The cartographic details presented by Murphy, present the ambiguous stance taken by her in bundling off of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, as a homogenous space, which elaborates the sub continent as a holistic region. This, according to John Pickles, is an instance of “the manipulation of spatial data” (1992: 230). This ‘complete’ map of India incidentally coincides with that of the pre-partition Raj territory. Incidentally, what the author rakes up through maps are the nostalgic memories of the past in the very first instance. It may be assumed that Murphy has a target reader in her mind, who is probably white [or to be more specific, British].

One can also speculate the authors’ perception of the cartography of India as a homogenised and civilizational whole. Though it can never be deemed as an offence, one also wonders if it had been the authors’ haphazard way of using the readily available map of India that treats the sub continent as a holistic political entity.
Figure 2: Map of Bombay, British
Figure 3: Map of Bombay Before British Annexure
In the case of Tindall’s *City of Gold*, we can see her illustrating the map of a specific place in India. In this text, Gillian Tindall gives the topographical description of each and every place in Bombay, like the extent of the town, suburbs and coconut groves, semi drowned land, rice paddles, etc. We also find that one of the maps of Bombay is that of the early nineteenth century and simultaneously the author illustrates the map of the early twentieth century Central and Southern Bombay in the next page (See Fig 2 and 3). The latter gives us the picture of Bombay which is closer to our knowledge of it today with more inhabited spaces and roads criss-crossing its vastness like tendons of modern life. A much developed railway line is also seen in the picture. We can also locate docks, clubs and hotels. The author does not write anything about these maps directly, but it is interesting to note that both the maps belong to the pre-independent period of Bombay’s history, though the traveller-historian writes about Bombay in 1984. It may not be a sheer coincidence to find that those two maps of Bombay belong to the Raj period. Nor is it incidental not to find any trace of contemporaneity in Tindall’s cartography. Another interesting fact is that these two maps tell us the tale of the transition of Bombay from a small marshy piece of land [as the British found it when they took over Bombay’s administration from the Portuguese] in early nineteenth century to that of a well-developed city with a much sophisticated infrastructure in early twentieth century. Incidentally these maps are emblematic of the British rule, and in the beginning of the twentieth century it was at its zenith.
Place Fixation in Landscaping

In this dissertation, I have used a term called Place Fixation to indicate a particular feature which is latent in all the travel texts that I am working on. Place fixation in the texts that I am dealing with takes place at two levels. In the first level, it is a process of zeroing in on a particular country as a traveller. This particular bearing in the first level of Place Fixation is a process of ‘selection’ of the country the author intends to travel. At this level the author elaborates on the various processes through which she passes to omit certain other places she has had access to.

Characteristics of place fixation

1. Zeroing in on a particular country.
2. Careful selection of a particular region in that country.
3. The dramatic narration of the entry into the place, which, in most cases, is lesser known to the outside world, to be more precise, to Western readers.

Place Fixation happens through landscaping, “bodyscaping”, the photographic narration of events, anecdotes, the narratives of ‘witnessing’ which propel the customs, the rites, the ceremonies, etc of the place into our focus. It is aided by source books, which replenish the author’s prior information about the place. However, the role of landscape in place fixation is my sole concern in this chapter. The other aspects shall be taken up for analysis eventually.

Dervla Murphy, who is a travel writer by profession, elaborates on her sojourn in India in her book On a Shoestring to Coorg. She travelled to India in August 1973. She tells us that it was five years since she had been outside Europe and she describes her zest for travel and writing as inextricably one and the same in a
metaphorical way: she calls it the “itching of the pen and the feet” (OASC: 1). Thus, right at the beginning, she discloses the fact that travel is a physical as well as intellectual/emotional activity for her. These tropes relating to the physical as well as the creative realms of travel are seen throughout the writings of women travellers. They see the dual potential of travel as exciting both at the physical and mental level. In the very introduction itself, we are told of the process of Place Fixation that happens and Murphy highlights the fact the she has chosen the little known place called Coorg as the focus of her writing on India. According to Murphy, embarking on a journey to India needs oodles of mental energy rather than physical stamina. In the convoluted meanderings typical of a traveller, Murphy gets into the thick of the matter by subtly suggesting the difficulties one has to face in India.

In her ‘Prologue’ she tells us about the various choices that she had been given and why and how ultimately she had chosen the place called Coorg. Here, she gives a glimpse of the fact of Murphy being a professional travel writer. She speaks about the various channels of exploration that were open to her. China, Australia, Kuala Lumpur, Mexico, etc were other places that tempted Murphy’s travelling instinct. This is one of the processes of Place Fixation where the reader is given a glimpse into the very many choices of the author and her dramatic way of narrating why she selects a particular place. This circumspect manner of ‘Place Fixation’ is closely connected with ‘fixing’ or focussing the reader’s mind on that particular place which shall be explored by the author through her narration. Initially, the phenomenon of Place Fixing is all about the scattered choices of travel and the author’s discretion or the process of diligent selection that she makes.
Here the traveller/author also speaks at length about the emotional conviction and the appeal that India as a country has: “I recognised it at once, though some years had passed since I last felt it. It was an excitement amounting to intoxication, a surging impatience that quickened my pulse. It was a delicious restlessness, a stirring of the imagination, a longing of the heart, the thirst of the spirit” (OASC: 2). But this ‘effervescence’ of feelings apparently comes with an ambiguous mix of the author’s apprehensions of Hindu life. Here she speaks of her previous acquaintance with India as well as the limitations to her admiring the country whole-heartedly. “Far from having fallen in love with India during previous visits I had been repelled by some aspects of Hindu life, irritated by other, uneasily baffled by most and consciously attracted by very few” (OASC: 3). Murphy goes on her self-examining spree of trying to find out why her destination is India. She rules out the spiritual side, the physical comforts and even the aesthetic comforts that a place like India can offer. “I had no quasi mystical ambition to improve my soul by contact with Hindu spirituality, nor had I forgotten the grim details of every day Indian life - the dehumanising poverty, the often deliberately maimed beggars, the prevaricating petty officials, the heat, the flies, the dust, the stinks, the pilfering” (OASC: 3). This is an exposition or introduction to India from a experiential point of view of the traveller. On the one side there is this unpleasantness, which is revolting to a European; whereas on the other hand, these disturbing details are in turn aestheticised. She simultaneously presents the idea of India as ‘evasive’, full of “complexities, subtleties, secrets, enigmas, paradoxes, unpredictability and apparent chaos” (OASC: 3). She further adds that the rationalistic, artificial masks of apparent smooth functioning, straightforwardness and dependability are absent in an enigmatic place like India. In the expository prologue itself, we can see Murphy
presenting the ambiguity of perceiving India as a terrain, which accommodates the dual propensities of attraction and repulsion. She states that she is attracted to the enigma and the evasive secrets of Indian life and as she shares her concerns about India with the readers, she is compelling their minds to share the same enigmatic attractions that India offers. Therefore, she offers India in a platter as a labyrinthine puzzle to be unravelled and she narrates with suspense that she would be unfurling these secrets to the readers. In this narrative strategy, Murphy tries to bridge the gap between the reader and herself as well as the distance and time. The traveller/writer thus sets the stage ready for the drama of exploration.

She tells us in the ‘Prologue’ about her apprehension of travelling with a child. Here, she confronts her first hazard as a woman traveller with a child. “...I decided this was the moment...to share with my daughter Rachel the stimulation of a non-European journey. Already she had twice proved, on European testing grounds, that she could enjoy short bouts of travelling rough: but I did realize that no 5-year old could be expected to proceed as speedily as my faithful bicycle or as sturdily as my Ethiopian mule” (OASC: 1). Here, we are told by Murphy, in so many words about the ordeal of travel and the physical necessity to prune her daughter to be fit for the expedition through an “apprenticeship to serious travelling” (OASC: 4). Another three fold challenge raised by India is the one posed by trying to balance a successful fusion of three roles; of a mother, writer and a traveller.

It is here, at this interesting climax that she speaks about her chance wandering and her *coeur d'affaire* with Coorg. Coorg materialises towards the middle of Murphy’s search, and becomes central to her being in her brief stay in India. Before mentioning Coorg, Murphy, in the typical perambulating manner of a
traveller, narrates her experiences in Bombay where she embarks first. She is, in fact, familiar with Bombay, though Indian cities with their myriad puzzles still bewilders her Western sensibility. Throughout, she is in search of the meaning of these puzzles and is trying to rationally find an answer in her search. Murphy tells us about the ‘discovery’ of Coorg through her personal and professional experience as a traveller. She lays before us the myriad choices of places that she had, as a traveller, before her as well as her meanderings in India to Bombay, Goa and Kerala before accidentally tripping on Coorg.

Gillian Tindall adopts the same approach in her book, *City of Gold*, opens with the narrative strategy which is seemingly matter of fact, yet the three quotations with which she begins the texts are imbued with the author’s deliberate attempts at Place Fixation. Tindall quotes from Samuel Pepys’s *Diary*, William Hickey and Sheikh Sadee. The first quotation explicitly captures Pepys’s astonishment at beholding the wealth of an Indian vessel and his awe at witnessing the opulent abundance. Hickey speaks about the East Indies as the ‘receptacle’ and succour to ‘abandoned’ and ‘undone’ men. This welcoming warmth of India is reflected in Sheikh Sadee’s appreciation of the monumental edifices of civilisation of the place [probably Bombay] as well as the immortality of the architect who constructed it. Through these accolades, Tindall tries to highlight the mercantile wealth as well as the artistic opulence of the place she is going to historicise. This is neatly done with the help of quotations from various travellers. She conjures up the ghost of the past through the present. She nevertheless evokes curiosity in the readers about the place, that is, the ‘city of gold’ that she is going to narrate. Thus, Tindall fixes the place in a straight forward and factual manner without any convoluted peregrinations.
Cityscapes

In the first chapter, ‘Initiation in Bombay,’ Murphy’s gaze falls on “scores of waiting taxiwallahs” (OASC: 6), which at once speaks about the collectivising phenomenon in that gaze. The gaze also extends to that of the scatological details of an average Indian with an emphatic voyeuristic relish as Murphy describes the early morning sights of India. “On flat stretches of waste land dozens of men were performing their morning duty, unconsciously squatting with rusty tins of water to hand and some times a hopeful pig in the background. The Hindu opening his bowels must be the world’s greatest mass infestation of ostrich mentality. Your average Hindu is an extremely modest man, but his gaze fixed on the ground, he will serenely evacuate while hundreds of people pass to and fro nearby” (OASC: 7). In this sweeping statement Murphy tells us that an average Indian [whom she automatically calls a Hindu] has an Ostrich mentality of consciously averting the gaze, or ignoring it, or perhaps he is unaware of it by becoming a passive agent of the gaze that is directed to him. She gives a graphic description of Bombay as she narrates with the supportive statement of her five-year-old daughter that everything looks ‘scattered’:

...or with the bougainvillea gloriously flourishing on the one side of the high way and the stench of fresh excrement drifting to us from the other. All around were uncountable thousands of homes - many not bigger than small tents - constructed of bamboo matting or driftwood, or beaten kerosene tins. Between and in these shelters people seethed like so many ants, and diseased pi-dogs nosed through stinking muck, and shrivelled looking cattle were being driven on to the dusty, grey-green waste land to eat Shiva-alone-knows-what (OASC: 9).
With deliberate Indianizations like “Shiva-alone-knows-what” and “Kali-alone-knows-what”, Murphy brings in the desired effect of irony. Here the images of the crowd, the shambles, the bougainvillea, reeking odour and garbage are cluttered together to bring in the utter devastation of a “grey-green waste land” (OASC: 9).

In the enunciation of stink, muck, wastelands, shabbiness and the directionless crowd, Murphy evokes a landscape of barrenness and desolation.

The urban landscapes or the cityscapes are juxtaposed with the poetic qualities of the rustic life so as render a striking contrast with that of the filthy sliminess of industrialization and modernization. She goes to the extent of saying that while looking at India’s least attractive urban-slum aspect, she felt affectionate. Throughout we can see the White condescension smiling beatifically at witnessing India’s strange paradoxes. “A cool breeze freshened the windowless bus as we slowly jolted through mile after mile of slums, semi slums and swarming bazaars. Rachel was fascinated to see banana on trees, cows lying on the city pavements and a crow boldly swooping down to steal a piece of toast off the street vendor’s stall” (OASC: 9).

**Bodyscapes**

In “bodyscaping” we can find Murphy’s description of abysmal poverty in Bombay that is delineated through the description of a collection of human bodies. Here we can also notice Murphy’s descriptiveness in the delineation of malfunctioning, handicapped and poverty stricken anorexic bodies in a grotesque graphic. “Outside one sagging bamboo shelter at the edge of the road a graceful dark skinned young woman was washing her feet, using water
taken from a stagnant, reeking pond with a lid of bright green scum, she
looked up as we passed, and met my eyes and smiled at us: and her smile had
a quality rarely found in modern Europe” (OASC: 9). Again the smile of the
poverty stricken is exoticised as an unselfconscious, pristine one, which
cannot be found in Europe. Here, it will be relevant to quote Gunter Grass
(2001), who described this phenomenon as the “vexing smile of poverty”.18

While graphically projecting the picture of stark poverty in India through
“bodyscaping”, Murphy is overcome by the burden of her Western sensibility
as she deplores the futility of her actions of generosity in the face enormous
suffering, misery, etc. Here she says that the real witnessing and confrontation
of poverty is much more ravaging than the imaginative concept of it. She says
that one cannot be detached while facing this kind of poverty. She narrates her
experience of poverty with the help of “bodyscaping”.

Men with no legs and/ or no arms were heaped in corners or somehow
propelling themselves along pavements; lepers waved their stumps in
our faces or indicated areas where their noses had been, deformed
children frantically pleaded for paise and hung on my ankles so that, as
I tried to move away, their feather weight bodies were dragged along
the ground; perfectly formed children ... sat slumped against the walls
or lay motionless in gutters, too far beyond hope even to beg. One pot
bellied, naked toddler stood alone, leaning against the pillar of a
shopping arcade with a terrible expression of resignation, and mature
awareness of misery, on his pinched, mucus-streaked face...an ancient,
armless man, wearing only a token loin cloth and head moving all time
slightly to and fro like a mechanical toy, and his hardened sightless eye
balls rolling grotesquely (OASC: 11).

Here, the traveller wallows on the grotesqueness of narrating bodies with a voyeuristic obsession. Here is also a narcissistic contemplation of one’s own superiority as a cultural ambassador, all knowing and empathetic to Indian miseries and situations found in these observations. She feels the weight and burden of her own being, while coming into contact with ‘feather-weight bodies’ and the deformities of beggars point to her being as a complete, privileged whole. She is also weighed down by this traveller's guilt due to voyeuristic witnessing. Nonetheless, we can observe the nightmarish display of poverty stricken bodies in Bombay as Murphy’s indictment of India as a disjunctured place caught in the nefarious web of Westernisation and modernization.

In “bodyscaping”, it is generally the movement of the body or the lack of it that is graphically depicted. Bodies display a variety of propensities to attract the roving gaze of the traveller. This is depicted in the narration of collective bodies and single ones. If it is grace, agility and spontaneity of the physique and emotions that the rural folk display, the urban folk emote through their subtle momentous gestures, mostly bordering on strained and artificial manoeuvres. Rural bodies and urban bodies are set at a striking contrast so as to project the various subtle dimensions of the nature/culture conflict, which can be seen in travel writings in general and writings on India in particular.

Nevertheless, landscape and bodyscape are mixed together in an aesthetic palette of colours that both become indistinguishable and inextricable from each other. In Goa, Murphy gazes at the local fisherfolk and sizes them up.
They are portrayed as self-conscious of the gaze and they are reticent to Murphy’s openness which invited contact. With Rachel, they are least self conscious, and Murphy picturises them as tall, well-proportioned human beings and on top of that an exotic description of their costumes is handed down in a metaphorical platter which, ranges from sparse to exotic [“The gay blouses and the swirling skirts”]. Their grace and the colourful feast they provide Murphy, the enchanted beholder, according to her, cancels all the ugliness of industrialization and modernization which are ‘anathemas’ to cities like Bombay [“India’s westernisation seems to me very superficial: though that is another too sweeping generalization…” (OASC: 49)] She goes ahead further:

The local fisher folk - whose boats and nets are strewn all over the beach-seem very, very shy though willing to be friendly with Rachel. They are almost black skinned, quite tall and beautifully proportioned. (Good advertisements for a fish and coconut diet.) The women wear gay blouses and swirling skirts, the men only a codpiece attached to a string around their waist. ...It delighted me to watch these men – all grace, strength and skill - performing the ritual unchanged for millennia (OASC: 23).

In this instance of the female gaze falling on bodies, to be more precisely male bodies, we can find a measuring, erotic lingering on the perfection of the body in movement, or in performance. The male perfection of figure is in contrast with the colourfulness of women, and Murphy watches the display of strength, grace and skill with a scopophilic eye. In a kaleidoscopic recollection, Murphy smudges the differences between the landscape and the bodyscape as she
gazes at the nimble footed fisherwomen almost mingling with the sea waves with a natural concordance and yet becoming distinct due to their colourfulness. “...I saw a line of five young women walking at the edge of the waves, balancing enormous wicker-baskets on their heads. They moved with a marvellous grace and against a turquoise sea the full-skirted gowns - orange, blue, pink, yellow, red, green, mauve - billowed and glowed brilliantly” (OASC: 25).

“Bodyscaping” is a phenomenon through which a complete identification of the bodies with the surrounding landscape is dexterously visualised. The geographical topography as well as the human body maps are intermittently blended in the self-same canvas thus etching out harmony and discord. In “bodyscaping”, as we can observe in landscaping, there is the subtle prevalence of a foreboding or the conjuring up of fear from the unknown recesses of mind that is clearly perceptive. Murphy narrates the way in which Rachel had been scared by the sight of moplah women in burkhas. Here Murphy describes these women as cadaverous, shrouded figures moving about swiftly and silently perpetrating their ‘evil presence’.

Rachel was a little scared to see several groups of moplak women in silken burkhas ... One can understand how these completely shrouded figures, moving about so swiftly and silently on their dusty slippers - though apparently unable to see - could make the child faintly uneasy (OASC: 49).

By defending the child’s position, Murphy also voices her sense of foreboding while witnessing strange and inaccessible bodies. In these instances, we can
find the traveller being unable to establish any contact with the bodies which are distant or hidden from her sight. This inapproachability and inaccessibility are deemed as sinister and uncanny, as the traveller is denied entrée to the ‘all-knowing’ gaze.

**Cityscapes, Countryscapes and Place Fixation**

Through instances of cityscaping, Murphy reveals a colourful picture of India. The chromatic patterns and the visual sensations also collapse into a maze of colourful sensations. The art of creating visual hyperboles through verbal images is an interesting phenomenon as one analyses the traveller's gaze.

The narrow streets of the Ville Parle bazaar were lit by a golden glow from hundreds of oil lamps hanging over stalls heaped with every sort of merchandise: bales of shining silks and vividly patterned cottons, stacks of gleaming copper pots and stainless steel ware, round towers of glittering glass bangles, pyramids of repulsively Technicoloured sweet meats, acres of fresh fruits and vegetables, mountains of coconuts, molehills of cashew nuts, hillocks of melons, forests of sugarcane and gracefully overflowing baskets of jasmine blossom. ... (Foul gutters and festering sores, jasmines and incense: India in a nutshell?) (OASC: 11-2).

Murphy’s observations on the rural landscapes always embark on the unchangeability of the rural landscape. While disembarking on Goa, which is her destination after Bombay, she articulates her own desire for a perfect landscape. She describes the Colva beach as everyman’s dream of a tropical paradise.
Murphy’s all-encompassing gaze on nature and landscape covers the human bodies as participatory of nature and not as separate entities. In these narratives of landscape there is a blending of nature and human bodies and these human bodies are invariably the ‘lower class’, the ‘aboriginals’, the fisher folk, etc. They are marked as part and parcel of nature and are held as ineffaceable from the pristine, paradisiacal beauty of nature. Nevertheless she perceives the middle class Indians, officers, land lords, journalists, etc as separate from nature. They never blend and they are described as aberrations in the natural landscape of India. They belong to the urban cityscapes, which are harmful and jarring to the existence of India. They belong to the tattered landscapes of the cities and they are mentioned as corrupting, ugly and disgusting: the adjectives she uses in cityscapes as well.

She also finds the ‘half-educated’, middle class Indians as repulsive. She finds India’s transit to industrialized modernity from a ‘violated’ pristine nature of the ‘real’ or ‘authentic’ India as revolting. The signs of these industrial, modernistic ‘violations’ are quite unpalatable to Murphy. At this point, through comparisons and contrasts, the author sets two idealized target notions of the landscape. One is the landscape that is mentally compared with that of the landscape and the cityscapes of home. The well-ordered structures of capitalistic Europe that she is used to and the other one is that of the nostalgic reminisces of the European countryside, which is again, harmonious, orderly and neatly comprehensible to the eye as well as the mind. The second kind of ideal landscape that emerges out of her narratives is that of the inviolate, pristine and ‘pure’ ruraltscape of India, which embraces plenty of colonial nostalgia with it. This kind of ideal landscape which India can be
effectively packaged into carries with it the “freedom form abominable effects of industrialization, the consumer society and internal combustion engine” (OASC: 41). The landscape that she was searching for in her mind had probably fitted in perfectly with that of Coorg, in South India. Before embarking on Coorg, she meets with the prelude to such an ideal abode in Mysore. Murphy finds Mysore attractive though she states that it has deteriorated since the British left. What draws Murphy to Mysore is its old, colonial beauty. Mysore serves as a disjunctive space between the independent India and the colonial Raj. In this very space, the nostalgia for the Raj as well as the technological present of India are closely enmeshed. She admires the old world beauty in Mysore as she looks at the remnants of feudal life in Mysore. “The feudal past looks good in Mysore” (OASC: 69).

In the chapter “Musings in Mysore”, the author identifies similar kinds of landscape which remind her of homeland. Here we can see as an innate, subtle idealization of homeland that takes place in the author’s mind. Through a series of visual metaphors the author lets her inquiry loose, which leads to a nostalgic identification of Mysore first and Coorg later, with her homeland. Being far away from home compels Murphy to draw constant parallels and associations with home. “On the Mysore plateau many solitary, spreading trees grow in the wide, red-brown fields, giving the landscape a slightly English look - accentuated today by the bulky white clouds drifting across...” (OASC: 67).

It is after long meanderings that Murphy reaches Coorg, and the dramatic narration of her chancing upon Coorg is reckoned with the importance of a ‘discovery’ that should be ascribed to her. She begins with the description of
the place and delineates the landscape as a very pleasant and colourful entity, thus satisfying the mind as well as the senses. She orchestrates her achievement thus “Why has nobody ever heard of Coorg? Or have I been alone in my ignorance of this most enchanting region?” (OASC: 54). In Coorg she discovers an ideal setting for Place Fixation. She finds the landscape idyllic and colourful with a congenial climate.

Mercara’s average temperature is 66 °F and as we trotted down hill, the sun was warm, the breeze fresh and the sky intensely blue - an almost incredible colour…. At intervals, in the cool depths of the forest, we saw the sudden flourishes of colour... and once Rachel came within inches of treading on a small snake (OASC: 54).

Along with the ardent appreciation of beauty, the sense of the uncanny also lurks in Murphy’s musings. Moreover, Murphy associates the people of Coorg with the pleasant and agreeable landscape there. “Obviously the people in Coorg are no less exceptional than the landscape, both men and women make one feel welcome to a degree that is most uncommon in India” (OASC: 55). This association in itself is an example of drawing an affable and positive parallel between the landscape and the bodyscape, and there is an ineffaceable link that the traveller traces between the two phenomena. This fact is a pointer to the traveller’s gaze that forges a subconscious association between landscape and bodyscape. The union of body and land is also wrought out as an indelible part of the landscape. The traveller's gaze interconnects both and treats them as one and the same, thus establishing complicity between both in an unobtrusive manner.
The sun was setting as we left Bandipur and came to an undulating cultivated land where dark red earth glowed in the hazy golden light and the glossy green of palms, plantains and wayside banyans stood out against a deep blue sky. Then a purple pink tinge dramatically suffused the whole scene as the sun dropped lower, and its last slanting rays burnished the classical brass water jars that were being carried across the fields on the heads of slim women in vivid, graceful saris. At such moments the simple, timeless beauty of rural India can be very moving (OASC: 176).

While witnessing a rural scene like this with all imaginatively conceived dramatic deliberations on nature, Murphy blends nature, human beings and their vivid, graceful, colourful movements into a single panoramic canvas in order to represent the melodious harmony of land with human beings; the union of stasis and movement. This blend represents the spool of the ‘timeless’ and ‘perpetual’ perfection of the rural scenario.

In this serene landscape where she is reminded of an Irish morning, Murphy finds evil lurking somewhere in the background. “On the edge of the forest ...I was quite overcome by an awareness of evil - a feeling altogether unexpected and inexplicable, but none the less definite for that. (I omitted from my diary that night because I was still trying to shake off unpleasant after effects.) Similarly, amidst this tranquil isolation one is very aware of Good being in the ascendancy...” (OASC: 49). The fear, anxiety and apprehensions of an impending menace that pervade along with the appreciation of landscape are reminiscent of Sara Suleri’s observation that “the beautiful can evoke in the text only a lacklustre description of its availability to imprisonment” (Suleri:
41). Thus, what Murphy finds as beautiful also harbours her fear of confronting the alien ‘other’.

Geographical beauty for Murphy is a troubled reflection of the vagaries of her own fear, misapprehensions, unpredictability and ambiguity. Where does the fear arise from? This fear perhaps arises from her encounter with the strange ‘otherness’. And this encounter is expressed as ‘unexpected’ and the ‘inexplicable’.

Reversal of Gaze

The experience of the intimidating ‘otherness’ is manifest more in Murphy’s descriptions of the reversal of the gaze. Murphy posits instances of such reversal and her reaction to it as a problematic realm which emphatically underpins the socio-cultural differences between her and the ‘counter gazing’ object. On a few occasions, she elaborates on the ‘gazed’ subject as an active agent, who reciprocates with alacrity to the act of being gazed at. For example, on her way to Mysore, she narrates the instance of a few toddlers fleeing with terror at the sight of a travelling white woman and her child. “We passed a few huts with shaggy straw thatches and glimpsed a few toddlers who fled from our strange white faces, howling with terror. Perhaps their mothers use Europeans as bogy-men” (OASC: 65). At this juncture, Murphy condones the stance that visuality is a matter of habit. As Murphy tours the whole of South India, she experiences the reversal of gaze, which lingers in her mind with a disturbing tenacity.

The occupants were black-skinned, thick-lipped, curly-haired, bright-eyed and well-built. Most of them greeted us cheerfully, when they had
recovered from their incredulity on seeing a more or less a white woman and a child strolling down the road, but the toddlers were terrified and fled shrieking to the shelter of their mother’s skirts (OASC: 29)

Here the encounter is purely a racial one and Murphy is a bit taken aback by the instinctive rather crude responses of to it. As she tries a string of adjectives to describe the colour and the race of the people, their reaction to seeing her is that of incredulity that verges on a kind of shock. Murphy and Rachel are subject to ‘collective’ gaze of men, women and children. Murphy concludes that the gaze is basically racial and converts the racial implications of the reversal of gaze into the ignorance of the lower middle class or the poor in India. She comes to the irate conclusion that the media is so ineffectual that the people are ignorant about what others look like. “In countries as developed as India, one expects ‘the media’ to have by now given everybody an approximate idea of what everybody looks like... the annual per capita income in Kerala is... so obviously the poorest class cannot afford to take their children to the coast, where they might get a glimpse of foreign tourists or at least see pages from magazines, pasted on tea–house walls, which would give them some visual idea of white people” (OASC: 109). Murphy definitely tries to hide her ire by taking a condescending stance on her being observed and looked at during different occasions. She narrates the incident of her bathing at Cape Comerin that attracts undue attention to her bare bottom.

Yesterday’s experience taught me that it is futile to attempt to dress modestly. There are lots of corners, and relatively, yet a crowd of men, women and children pursues one to the farthest corner of all and
stands staring, with pathological insensitivity, while one attempts, if one is fool enough, to cover one’s nakedness. Last evening, being without a towel, I made no such attempt and the sight of my bare bottom provoked cyclones of laughter. It is nice to be able to cause so much of innocent amusement by the use of the most basic raw material (OASC: 129).

Here, again Murphy is subject to ‘collective’ gaze from men, women and children. Murphy tries to evade the gaze though. Here Murphy narrates how it was her turn to be caricatured, as her body becomes a piece of exhibitionist spectacle. The gaze disturbs her to an extent of violating her physical needs to privacy, but she converts the incident to a big joke as she unselfconsciously becomes the basic raw material for it.

In Coorg too Murphy is subject to gaze; but she observes that White bodies are observed as visual spectacles, without any intrusion. The gaze is seen as more or less harmless and unobtrusive. The Murphys are being observed as curious spectacles but there is a lot of reticence, if not restraint on the part of the observers. One has to note that this gaze emanates from the lower middle classes who more or less belong to the periphery of Coorg life. The distance the gazers maintain as well as the self-effacing reserve they uphold are really lauded by Murphy, who is of the opinion that the majority of Indians are otherwise.

Because of the threshing our yard is more populated these days than it normally would be as we are a marvellous added attraction - something like a side-show at a circus. All hours people wander up to our
apartment to observe the odd habits of the foreigners; but they never stay long or handle anything - just study us shyly from the top of the ladder (OASC: 189).

**Sensual Imagery in Landscaping**

The olfactory, visual and auditory images blend into one to create an exotic and eroticised facet of landscape. Synaesthetic metaphors and images in landscaping are poignant devices with which the ‘humanisation’ of landscape takes place. Synaesthesia is achieved by the unconscious merger of different kinds of sensuous images in an imaginary cauldron where the stimulated sense blends with that of the experienced one and both become inseparably one and the same. The following quote from Murphy is a case in this point:

...each rural sound is separate, distinct and comprehensible – the soft trot of cattle-hooves on dust, the tossing of rice on a wicker tray, the crowing of a cock, the squeaking of a pulley as water is raised from the well, the harsh disputes of the parakeets, the shouts of men urging oxen around the threshing-floors, the barking of a dog, the grinding of grain in stone hand-mills, the laughter of children, the thud of a coconut falling.... I awoke at six thirty to hear an exotic dawn chorus of jungle-birds and see a silver sky thriving blue behind the trees. A thick mist lay on the paddy valley and the moisture was dripping to the ground like slow rain, from the leaves of the immensely tall palms (OASC: 184).

The visual, tactile and the auditory images in both animate and inanimate nature coalesce into a form of landscape that is personified and humanised. As the elements, the sky, water and the earth, blend into a labyrinthish and
consummate whole, the living and the non-living things also merge tacitly in this panoramic landscape. The sensory images and metaphors are profoundly invoked through landscaping. The visual, gustatory and tactile metaphors are aroused with a dogged persistence so as to render the target reader a ‘feel’ of the landscape that is described.

Wherever one looks there is beauty, none of it spectacular or wild or dramatic but all of it profoundly satisfying. The light has an exhilarating clarity one expects only at a much higher altitude; the colours glow with magical vitality and the very air tastes good. Hence there is the warmth of the Coorg welcome, which makes one soaked in contentment as the land itself is soaked in golden sunshine (OASC: 210).

**Going Away and Coming Home**

At the same time, during her stay in Coorg, she elaborates on the reasons why she is attached to the paradisiacal beauty of Coorg.

I set out, after all, to tour South India, and my lingering seems suspiciously like escapism. Undeniably, Coorg is a place apart- clean, quiet, uncrowded, unmodern, not impoverished at any level of society, never too hot or too cold at any time of the day or night and populated by exceptionally congenial people. Add a truly magnificent landscape to all this and you have a perfect paradise (OASC: 89)

In appreciating and fixing a place like Coorg, Murphy undergoes the elaborate ritual of trying to locate the ethnological origins of the Coorgis, trying to
sketch their history, politics, etc. This aspect is also an inherent part of Place Fixation. Coorg’s uncanny resemblance to England/Ireland is one of the factors that is harped time and again in the book.

...as we walked up a long drive I could for a moment have believed myself in some quite corner of England. On either side, green park land was dotted with handsome trees; nearby grazed a few fine horses and a herd of even finer cows, and in the distance, beyond the big house amidst its brilliant abundance of flowers and shrubs, lay the long uneven line of the Ghats. Their gentle blue is contrasted with the vivid, sharp, almost incredible blue of the Coorg sky.... Nor would one pass there a nursery of orange-tree saplings and baby-coffee bushes, each infant protected by a wicker shield... (OASC: 95).

To Murphy, home becomes the central metaphor indicating tradition and its endurance in the life of the Coorgis. One can also observe remnants of feudal nostalgia that is mixed along with this uncritical admiration for tradition.

...an imposing, two-storied, brown-tiled house, freshly painted white, with verdigris pillars, balcony-railings and window-surrounds. On the left, as one approaches, are two solidly built granaries, on the right is the well - some eighty feet deep- and beyond it stand three white washed huts where the Harijan field labourers live. Moving around to the side entrance, opposite these huts, one sees roomy stone cattle-sheds and two threshing-floors now over looked by great growing ricks of rice-straw. And all around, at a little distance, stand majestic trees that must be centuries old - some bearing enormous, cream coloured
waxen blossoms with a powerful scent which fills the air at dusk (OASC: 180).

Home is described as a sturdy establishment and it is described in many ‘solid’ metaphors. The plenitude at home is indicated through the description of granaries, wells, labourers, cattle as well as the ancient and brawny trees that buttress the age-old traditions of the so-called ‘inner space’, home. In a graphic representation of a traditional Coorg house, Murphy projects the antiquity, sturdiness, plenitude, and the symbolic durability of tradition through its age-defying mechanism of survival. By these descriptions of home we can see Murphy trying to swerve and manoeuvre her nostalgic recollections of the ‘home’ she had left behind to that of the ‘place she has fixed’. Through chromatic images, metaphors of long lasting sturdiness and the dexterous visual display of light against darkness, she invokes ‘home’ images and she, simultaneously wallows in voyeuristic feast painted by herself. By employing this device, Murphy elaborates the process of the traveller becoming ‘temporary residents’ thus familiarising and internalising the ‘Place Fixed’ as one’s own ‘home’.

This identification with home is brought to an intense level as the human characters also blend into the familiar landscape of ‘home’:

At all events, the Coorgs have never heeded this prohibition [of liquor] and excessive drinking is undoubtedly their worst collective fault. Often men stagger home at lunch time unable to keep upright without assistance and the local reactions to this spectacles remind me very much of Ireland. People are mildly amused or affectionately chiding, or
ribaldry witty, or occasionally slightly impatient - but never critical (OASC: 194).

From this identification Murphy’s cultural peregrinations lead her to ‘feel at home away from home’. Murphy tells us her own transition of seeking a ‘temporary’ abode that leads to a feeling of settling down ‘permanently’.

“Everyday I fall more seriously in love with Coorg; it is the only place, outside my own little corner of Ireland, where I could imagine myself to live permanently’ (OASC: 210).

Here we can see the author’s final identification with the land or the Place Fixed. Her sojourn in time and place has in fact led her to herself, thus enabling her to discover herself through the land she explores.
Photographs and illustrations are systems of representation, which help the readers and viewers to experience, consume, interpret, and “make sense of their lives both as image-makers and viewers. In essence, we construct ideological selves through a network of representations _ many of them visual, this include television, popular magazines, art and magazines” (Struken and Cartwright 2000: 56). To this list I would like to add travel photography and illustrations too. Peter D. Osborne in his Travelling Light: Photography, Travel and Visual Culture, illustrates the nexus between travel and photography thus:

“the making of visual images has always cohabited at the core of the general process of modernity. Photographs superseded earlier forms of graphic imaging, whose role in the construction of the taste and desire for travel, of the objects and goals of travel and the portrayal of the range of travelling subjects themselves had been important”(2000: 3).

He also says that the cognitive importance of seeing and travelling and the establishment of spatial realism and naturalism are conserved in travel books, which have photographic/illustrative images as the balancing phenomena in them. In travel photography, the portrayal of a different set of cultures, people, terrains, etc, takes place and this in fact highlights the aspect of ‘difference’. Inference to the spatial and cultural distance, which appears to be natural and co incidental, is another interesting factor, which is brought out
through the perspective of the lens. Many theorists on the visual culture have already demonstrated that photographs are not above any sort of critical scrutiny. Osborne proves with the help of actual photographs that they are not passive and reflective, though they present a bona-fide, authentic, near-real copy image of the real. Through the analysis of various photographs, he establishes the fact that in effect they connived with the colonial project by becoming apparatuses of control (2000: 39).

Here, it is necessary to elaborate on the role of photography as a device of representation and as a tool, which further perpetuated the colonial enterprise. As I am dealing with a number of portraits, it is necessary to begin with portraiture in paintings as well as photography and dwell briefly on the history of photography in India. Throughout the history of portraiture, to begin with paintings, portraits were meant for a specific kind of people. In the realm of image-making, portrait paintings came into prominence as a sub-genre in painting in the sixteenth century onwards. Portraits are defined by their likeness or lack of likeness to the sitter. Portraits, in paintings for example, have always served as vehicles for specific people [collectively named as patrons] whose identities they wish to establish and perpetuate. Besides this, in portrait paintings, body becomes the terrain on which non-physical realities could be mapped and visualised. Usually, portraits used to be of people who were important in their historic time. They also provide us the factual information about the lifestyles and the society of those particular times, the society in general. Portraits, in their exact likeness, established themselves heartily with the patronage of a few connoisseurs who could very well afford the luxuries of being represented in ways that immortalised them.
It was at this stage that photography made its entry. Its technical precision reduced many errors.

Photography was invented in 1839 and in that year Louis Daguerre produced the daguerreotype. In England, Fox Talbot produced the negative and perfected the art of producing a photographed image on paper. These twin industries, according to Carol Crashaw and John Urry, [who trace the history of tourism and photography in the essay “Tourism and the Photographic Eye”] along with the setting up of a railway terminus, almost coincided with and gave an impetus to the establishment of tourism as an industry in the latter half of the nineteenth century (Crashaw & Urry 1997: 180). Maria Sturken and Lisa Cartwright elaborate on the popularity and the utility value of the device, when it was introduced in the nineteenth century, which rendered precision and an undisputed certitude in representing ‘reality’:

Photography thus became an integral part of both scientific professions and the regulations of social behaviour by bureaucratic institutions of the state and in the social sciences, such as anthropology and sociology, to enable the creation of the subject positions of the researcher (anthropologist) and the object of study (in many cases, defined as the “native”). The versatility of the photographic image thus spawned a broad array of image-making activities for the purpose of surveillance, regulation, and categorization (2001: 95).

Photography was introduced in India in 1840, a few months after it was developed in Europe. (Pinney 1997: 17) It was more or less an apparatus of the colonial state. Pinney quotes William Simpson’s India Ancient and Modern
(1862) to elaborate on the spectacular dimensions brought out by photography.

To represent India by mere word-painting is an almost impossible task. The most graphic writing falls short of the mark of faithful description. Only a vague, unsatisfactory idea of the objects represented by the printed page is left on the reader's mind (1997: 17).

According to Pinney, photography became a decisive tool in sharpening the descriptive rhetoric of any traveller [read colonizer]. During the latter half of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, there was an explosion of knowledge by means of new disciplinary discourses like anthropology and ethnography. For these studies, empirical surveys were necessary and note taking, recording, etc, became basic components of field work [which generally involved travelling]. At this point we can see that camera also became an important tool for recording the facts and findings collected from the field, which were invariably in places far away from the metropolitan centre. The camera also helped the British to visualise the spatial and human dimension of the colony and the enormity and variegations were flattering to deceive the viewers.

On the basis of the credibility lent by photography, precedence was given to the scientific recording of facts over the much time more consuming tedium of sketching and illustrating. Moreover the illustrations rendered by the artists of the Empire were beheld with a substantial amount of suspicion by the consumers at home (Pinney 1997: 18). This suspicion was based on the artist’s potential to prevaricate and unleash his/her fantasy in representation.
Malavika Karlekar, in *Re-visioning the Past: Early Photography in Bengal*, poignantly illustrates the intellectual fibre of photography: “The product of scientific enquiry and years of experimentation, photography was a powerful ... tool in the quest of a growing intellectual tradition committed to empiricism and a recording of the world as it appeared to the observers” (2005:8). She further expands on its role in the Indian context,

...surveying, cartography, and dactylography were vital aids to British rule committed to consolidation of authority not only through governance but also through an understanding of territory and exclusion with the concomitant emphasis on surveillance and control. As such an understanding necessarily entailed much more than the written word, artists, cartographer, surveyors, dactylographer, engravers and photographers were part of the imperial government” (2005: 27).

Karlekar mentions that photography during that period had twin functions as an instrument of surveillance on the one hand as well as a tool for poetically depicting a pleasing spectacle, on the other (2005: 36). This ensured physical control over of the subjects as well as delusive smugness, which guaranteed a psychological mastery over the Empire as a prized possession. Mastery of the latter kind was also meant for an audience at home who were eager to know about the distant colony.

As we can infer from the preceding paragraphs, it was the systematic application of photography as a tool in narrating the colony that gave rise to the touristic importance of India in the eyes of an imperial traveller. ‘Timeless’
monuments, people who were entirely different, and landscapes, which were enchanting and exotic, were immortalised and imported to the imagination of a readership at home who was temporally and spatially distant from the colony. According to Crashaw and Urry:

The development of photography and the growth of tourism have been closely bound together. The invention of the camera, the manufacture of the ubiquitous box camera and the development of daylight loading film and the mass-production of picture post cards have all coincided with landmarks in the democratisation of travel and the expansion of tourism (Rojek& Urry 1997: 180)

We have already seen that the aesthetics of landscape was deeply embedded in the artistic and literary mindscape of England, and incidentally camera became a tool for travelling to capture the exotic other. By the twentieth century, “travel for pleasure had become well-established and picture taking was becoming a popular past-time” (Rojek and Urry 1997: 181). Initially, there may have been large-scale male control over the act of looking through both one’s own and one’s camera’s eyes; but later there were many women photographers in the colonial India. Lady Charlotte Canning, an amateur photographer and wife of Governor General Lord Canning, was one of the earliest photographers who tried to capture India with all its visual glories (Karlekar 2005: 35). Not much work on the contribution of women photographers is available, but indeed it would make an interesting study in itself.

As mentioned earlier, not many theories on the agential position of women as
photographers or women behind the camera are readily available. Here, would like to look at the camera work as well as illustrations of Sarah Hobson, to formulate a handy theory of women’s ‘gaze’ who become originators and interpreters of meaning. In this section of my dissertation, I shall be looking at how “bodyscaping” is effectively conceived with the help of the photographic eye by one of the women travellers in Independent India. In the book, *Family Web: A Story of India*, the author Sarah Hobson complements her narratives with photographic information and illustrative details. In this particular section, I shall be analysing certain selected photographs and illustrations of Hobson. These selections have to be made at the cost of certain omissions due to constraints in time and space in this dissertation.

Sarah Hobson came to join her husband who was working on his Oxfam and BBC project on family planning in India. Though the book is intended as a sociological project the author adds apologetically that it was impossible to sustain the objective. “To remain as objective recorder was even more difficult once I was sharing their confidence, though any idea of helping them proved poignantly inadequate. I have therefore included my relationship with them in the story in order to show the difficulties which must face any outsider wishing to enter a community whose codes and structure rest more on the need to survive than on humanistic principles” (FW: xiii). We are told in so many words that the author is presenting a phenomenon which exists on basic instinct of survival, and not on ‘humanistic values’ [with which the author has grown up with or she had been exposed to all her life]. She also has a specific audience in her mind to whom she reports her intention of narrating the details of an Indian family she had worked on. For this she uses a Family-Tree
diagram (Fig 4) in the beginning of the book where she neatly charts out the relation between members of the family, their gender, age, their educational status, etc. It is interesting to note the author witnessing the perplexities and confusions latent in her queries as she tries to etch out a family tree.

Figure 4: Family Tree

It seemed a little confusing so I asked their permission to draw up a family tree: I knew it would also produce a lot of unguarded information. But the old man and the old lady could not agree on the details. Each named the sons in a different order with different ages. The old man had talked about a daughter who had died; the old lady spoke of only four sons; the old man added two more sons and a daughter, and the old lady deducted another two who were
living in the town. I tried to match the sons with their wives, and then add in the children, but this only increased my confusion (FW: 12).

Subsequently after the illustration of the family tree, for various purposes of research, especially to ‘highlight the urban-rural conflict in India’ she goes on to delineate the architectural design of the family house (Fig. 5). The author gives us a glimpse of the house, which is drawn to our attention as the quintessence of a well-to-do village house. Hobson recalls her meeting with the family and the patriarch of the family. She also tells us her position as the ‘objective’ observer of the family and their circumstances.

We sat for a moment to take in the feel of the place. It seemed more homely now, and there was a roughness in its structure, which made it inaccessible. The mud walls were freestanding without any connecting ceiling except for some planks in part; the inside of the roof was strutted with tick bamboos supporting the layers of red clay tiles.

‘Your house is very fine’, I said. The old man did not acknowledge the compliment but stared impassively ahead (…) ‘The one as we entered the village?’ I asked. ‘Who does it belong to?’ (…)

I looked at the old man. ‘Yours?’ I said with surprise, for the family did not look very prosperous: they had no flesh on their bodies, their clothes were shabby and ragged, and their house displayed no luxury. But then I checked my surprise: I would not make such judgements or show such subjective feelings - I wished only to learn, to listen, and to record. (FW: 8)
It is the inaccessibility and the ‘difference’ in design and purpose that compel Hobson to illustrate the picture of the house describing the house as a multipurpose construction which has destined space for every thing: cattle shed, room for house hold implements, washing place, grain store, cooking area [kitchen with an ante room], god’s corner, etc. Yet it is diametrically different from a western concept of domestic space where the parlours, sitting rooms, porches, porticos and kitchens are precisely and strictly divided.

Figure 5: Family House

The author says,

Manje Gowda’s house stood at the widest part of the street: an impressive house whose verandah was made from massive blocks of granite plastered with red cement. Three carved pillars supported the porched roof, and a lavish roadway glistened with silver paint. At least, it was lavish by village standards, and I felt the need to see things in
village terms. By western standards, the house was a bit of a shack, though solid enough to withstand storms, and pleasantly inviting (FW: 5).

Through these illustrations, the author intended to erase her subjectivity, we can find her trying to etch out the point of ‘difference’ and straighten out the cultural ‘confusions’ that await the target reader as she/he reads the narrative.

Figure 6: Cover Photograph

The cover photograph of *Family Web* is that of four women in the act of exhaustive and severe physical labour. It is a black and white picture against a red background, where four sari-clad women help each other carry burden. On the reverse of the book, we can find a man shading his eyes and gazing at a distance. The women display the joint struggle of the sorority in earning a livelihood. The faces of the women are not clear. The book is a sociological study on the joint family system in India by a taking single family, the Gowda
family, as the point of reference. But as the cover photograph illustrates, it has its emphasis on the role of women within the family. The collective toil and the chief responsibilities, which are manifest in their fight for survival, are undoubtedly illustrated in this picture. The title of the book, *Family Web*, printed on the cover is self-explanatory of the ensnaring network of the family and the institutional bonds that cage Indian women within the system. The man’s aloofness from the women, his non-participation in the joint labour, is also tell-tale of the segregation of the sexes and his non-involvement in the intensive labour which ballasts the women in the community. This cover illustration becomes the keynote of the book in which she explores India through the social institutions, like the family, present here.

In this photograph we can see the production of third world women to a target reader at home. By muting and blurring the bodies against a bright background, the women are photographed in action, implying the tale of a homogenous group caught in the web of oppression.

In another narrative, the author introduces us to her rendezvous with the ‘old man’ and the ‘old woman’ of the family she stays with for her study. In the family-tree Hobson gives details of all the names and the chronological details of the members of the family she had chosen to study. The photographs and the following verbal narrations are taken as instances of “bodyscaping” in this section. It is through these narrations that the author experiences her encounter with India. In the book she introduces the old woman as “a small wiry woman with a waspish face and fanatical eyes” (FW: 5). She introduces the head of the house, or ‘old man’ as she constantly refers to him, as “an old man with a shrewd shrivelled face: his lips were thin over toothless gums, his
cheeks hung over his jaw bone. Grunting a little, he manoeuvred both legs over the edge of the cot and slid mumbling to the floor” (FW: 6).

These pictures of ‘the old man’ and ‘the old woman’ (Fig. 7 & 8) are the opening portrait photographs, which appear after a brief description of the physical demeanour well as the mannerisms of the old couple. These pictures serve as the visual testimonies to the process of linguistic understanding. They are frozen in time and the black and white framework of the photograph gives them an antique gloss as characters who are, momentarily captured by the lens, caught in the spectrum of eternity. The old woman’s profile is represented in shades of grey, with a mane of dishevelled grey hair. Her eyes are closed frenetically uttering prayers. She has an incense holder on her hand and one hand is stretched in an imploring gesture to the divine. The fadeout effects of light and shadow project her high cheekbones and the wrinkles and folds of her body. Her mouth and eyes are lined by fine wrinkles. Her sari is
draped loosely on her body in sloppy untidiness. Along with the wrinkles that hang loose on her skin, we can find an assortment of bangles, which, are traditionally worn by married women belonging to the old lady’s caste in South India. The incense smoke spirals up in a quasi-mystic manner. In her body we can definitely read the trappings of a stagnant tradition.

As a rejoinder to this photograph, the author narrates an interesting piece of recorded information about the old woman and her religious beliefs. This piece may be coincidental, without any purpose of continuity, between the visual image and the written signs, but it definitely makes interesting reading.

The old lady stood in the corner before the gods, her hands raised to her tired old face, a joss stick smoking through her fingers.

“What are the gods, Ajji?” I asked.

“What does she know?” said Chikke Gowda. “She doesn’t know anything.”

“What do I know?” said the old lady with shame.... The old lady knew the gods by attribute, but she could not distinguish between their pictures, though she had seen them most of her life. ... “What do I know? I just fold my hands and say, ‘Lakshmi, do us good. Rama, Arjuna, Bhima, Surya Narayana, Ishwara, Nanjundeswara, Parvati, Parameshwara, do us good.’ That’s what I say. Am I educated enough to know other things?” (FW: 252-3)

The next picture (Fig. 8) is that of the old man taking his weekly bath. The old man is a thin, shrunken figure with long limbs and claw like fingers. His feet,
like talons, almost clasp the elevated-ground on which he squats in a lithe, athletic manner. He purses his lips in concentration, and light falls on his shaven head, which projects his large ears and highlights his hooked nose. He scrubs his arms and a small vessel for pouring out water is placed near him. A larger cauldron [probably full of water] is placed on an earthen fire place in the background. We can also see a calf in the muted and diffused backdrop. The old man wears striped shorts: the muscles of his calf, the veins of his arms, legs and the hollows of his chin and shoulder blades are fore grounded by the subtle play of light and shade. We can also see a rag near him. His eyes are cast down and rapt in attention. Though there are signs of the authority that is assigned to him, there is also an inkling of wizened weariness, vulnerability and fragility that is conveyed through eyes of the lens. The picture is self-explanatory, in the sense that the author justifies the photograph by giving us a glimpse into the breakdown of the power of the patriarch, i.e. the old man, within the joint family. Hobson’s book, in a way, chronicles the case study of a family, which is at the brink of breaking off into nuclear units. The old man is the symbol of tradition and its values; he single-handedly manages to support the institution of joint-family for long. She puts in scarps of the old man’s conversations together to demonstrate his eventual admission to the deterioration of the joint family system and the slow resignation to his fate.

(Of the joint family) “Its nice, but its not working very well. If we aren’t united, if we don’t co-operate with each other, how can we do anything? There should be unity if anything is to be done. Instead they fight with each other.”
“I feel so sad. Sad. That it should happen right in front of my eyes I feel sad about the family” (FW: 211& 213).

Here, the ‘old woman’ is shown as an epitome of religiosity coupled with ignorance and shrewdness; and the ‘old man’ as a helpless link of the crumbling order of a feudal joint family. They are also shown as trapped in tradition and superstition. The old woman’s picture shows an uneducated Indian woman’s obsession with religion, which is steeped in ignorance, and the old man is a symbol of the crumbling order of patriarchy.

The subsequent photographs (Fig. 9&10) are that of two mothers. Both women are the daughters in law of the family, which was under study. In the footnote of the picture, the author mentions that Susheelamma (Fig. 9) wanted to have a boy, instead she delivered a girl. Fig.10 is that of Madakka, the eldest daughter in law and the author mentions in the footnote that she tried to abort but she had a son. Both these women are picturized in their
specific roles as mothers. In the picture, Susheelamma purses her lips in wry askance and impatience as she lifts up the infant from her make-shift wicker cradle fastened with coir ropes. She has the pallu of her sari draped over her head. The sari borders are noticeably frayed. Light gently falls on her face and arms highlighting her youth and well-defined features. The infant is swathed clumsily from the head to the chest and her malnourished limbs can be seen from between the coir ropes. The next picture is that of Madakka (Fig. 10). She looks away from the frame with full eyes and an open mouthed despair as she nurses her baby on her lap. The sari folds fall off her emaciated body, displaying her almost flat, sagging breasts. In the background, a young boy plays on all fours on a wooden cot.

Sarah Hobson gives us a verbal portrayal of Susheelamma along with this photograph. “Susheelamma was handsome and her body gracefully proportioned with full hips and breasts; she was also sexily languid, dropping her arms over her stomach, bending her head close her eyes and to pout her mouth. Her face was soft and submissive and her brown eyes lacked curiosity” (FW: 32). Interestingly there is a gripping piece of narration about the way the author’s gaze lingers on the female body with a gynoerotic pleasure.

She stripped off her clothes and crouched shivering while water was poured over her hair, over her body, pot after pot till all water was finished. Her hair was long and black round her shoulders; her skin was sallow and firm except for the sagging stomach. She had a fine body with long legs, wide hips, a broad yet delicate back, and full breasts weighed down with the milk of pregnancy (FW: 22).
Here, by representing two women in the process of mothering, the pain and burdens of motherhood is clearly represented. They are represented as women with identical troubles and as homogenous subjects who are under the scrutiny of an all-knowing and all-encompassing gaze. This is also a gaze that internalises a scopophilic relish is loaded with desire. Hobson’s right of entry to private spaces gives her a direct access to the restricted chambers of Indian women’s lives. The description of Sushelamma taking is bah is an instance of her access to it and the ethnographical translation of the process of witnessing seen from the eyes of a privileged white woman. These verbal residuals are finely salvaged, represented and shared with the help of camera eyes.

![Figure 11: Nanjeswamy](image1)
![Figure 12: Rame Gowda](image2)

The book also contains photographs of other men in the family. Hobson, in fact, finds it hard to forge an intimate relationship with the men of the family. They are shy, formal or too distant. It was only when her husband Tony comes to the village with the filming unit, that men actually open up to her, that too
with a certain reticence. The pictures of men in Hobson’s book make an interesting study of how the male body is contoured by the female gaze. The first person whom Sarah meets in the village is Manager Nanjeswamy, who manages the finances of the Gowda family, and by doing so becomes the honorary head of the family. Hobson describes her meeting with him thus:

Another man of about thirty-five crossed the path in front of us with a wooden plough balanced on his shoulder. He had a handsome, sensual face and his black hair was greased smoothly into casual dropping waves; his shorts were bright from white and orange stripes; his vest outlined the contours of a well-formed chest (FW: 2).

After charting Nanjeswamy Gowda’s body map with a meticulous surveying eye, she goes on to describe his mannerisms. By looking at Nanjeswamy’s demeanour, Hobson allies his outwardly charm to his dominating behaviour. Her gaze encounters caution and Nanjeswamy’s desire to control rather than be the object of control.

He did not answer, and his face showed no expression in its tight mouth and sunken cheeks. Only his eyes were wary. He swung back his arms from muscled shoulders and took the lead as the path narrowed, forcing us into a single file... (FW: 2).

Nanjeswamy is shown to be talking animatedly, gesticulating strongly, his slick hair, cheek-hollow and well-defined features are highlighted. He has a vast, expansive backdrop of the fields behind him, which may connote his single-handed control over land and property. The next picture is that of Rame Gowda, Nanjeswamy’s brother, who is tending his son’s sores. The
A turbaned middle-aged man is careworn with downcast eyes in rapt attention and the child’s face is contorted with pain. There he is posited as Nanjeswamy’s opposite, engaged in an earnest act of spreading a herbal paste. These men are also caught in action. Nanjeswamy is photographed in an animated conversation that makes him the marker of the male authority that controls the patriarchal structure of the family Hobson was working on, whereas Rama Gowda is shown as less powerful in the male hierarchical system. Here, too the author turns out to hold the reins of agential power as she witnesses and translates these dimensions through her photographs.

Figure 13: Jayamma

Similarly, in the three portraits of Jayamma (Fig. 13), the camera eyes capture her in three different moods. In all the pictures she looks away from the frame. In two pictures, Jayamma is photographed from a three-quarter frontal angle. In the next one, her face is profiled as she tilts her head further. The first picture captures her in a mood of beatific cheerfulness in which looks as if she is absolutely unconscious of the camera eye. She gives a gummy smile through her slightly downcast eyes and through the outline of her aquiline
nose we can see the filigrees of her nose stud. On the prominently visible side, her conspicuously empty and perforated nose is emphasised. On her forehead her bindi is smudged. She has a sari draped on her rather untidily and her matted and dishevelled hair is drawn behind to a bun. Light falls on her face illuminating her chiselled features and her square jaws are suffused in an even shade. In the next photograph, Jayamma knits her brows and looks at a distance with a weary, worried frown. In the third photograph, the frown remains and her eyes are pensively downcast with an uneasy pout. Jayamma’s pictures, in her various moods narrate her entrapment in marriage [this is in fact discussed at length in the text]. Her disturbed life is narrated in a sequence that portrays her naïve sojourn into marriage and the oppression that came with it. Her smudged bindi as well as her unadorned nose also highlight this fact and also symbolically portray her struggle, hard work and poverty. The author focuses on her with a sympathetic bonding, illustrating her capacity to smile through her battles. Even in the text Hobson demonstrates her close association with Jayamma which was based on an instinctive affection.

She laughed again, carefree. She looked even more like her mother... a face which had suffering concealed in its youth and a pain mixed into its beauty. For she was beautiful with her eyes set wide apart in a vulnerable, sensitive head. A brightness, an awareness pervaded her presence, and yet she was only twenty (FW: 67).
Fig. 14 has the photograph of Bhadramma, the eldest daughter of the ‘old man’. Bhadramma is photographed in the field during moments of intense labour. In the first photograph, she arches her body, with her legs akimbo, and she concentrates at a distance in an unswerving manner. A man can be seen in the background, probably shovelling some dung. She waits for the empty basket to be filled. She stands at ease like a man, legs apart, where we get a glimpse of her calves, illustrating the author’s voyeuristic description, between her sari folds. In the subsequent pictures, she herself works with an iron-shovel and then she hoists her burden of dung on her head. In all these three pictures she screws up her face due to intensity of hard physical labour. The fourth picture is a three-quarter frontal portrait. We can see her full smile as she poses with the basket on her waist. The description of Bhadramma has strains of her personality congruent with photographs embedded in it.
By contrast, Bhadramma, the old man’s only daughter, was freer. She could make her own decisions, choose what to wear, organize her own routine, partly because her husband was old and incapable of running the household, partly because of her personality and not sharing her house with others. She had an imposing presence - proud, erect, honest- with a touch of flamboyance in her orange blouse and the display of jangling bangles she carried on each wrist - silver, glass, plastic of all colours, forming a solid band six inches deep. She looked young, unscarred by seven children, yet her face was wisdom which perhaps had come from her suffering; her eyes revealed tenderness, and the delicate structure of her bones showed sensitivity. But she was not sentimental or precious - her mouth was full and sensuous and frequently broadened into a powerful smile (FW: 61).

For portraits of Bhadramma and her daughter Jayamma, photographed in the fields, unlike other women who are picturised within their domestic spaces. Their stories are emblematic of woman’s struggle and misery. Bhadramma is a lone fighter who has little support from her husband and she is away from the joint family. Jayamma has a very unhappy marriage and she is physically fragile due to the effect of a few miscarriages. Both these women do not enjoy the kind of social acceptance that the other women in the family enjoy. On the one hand, Bhadramma is hard pressed; she anchors her family single-handedly, like a patriarch. On the other, Jayamma is childless and she bears the social and domestic brunt of her inability to perform her role as a mother. Besides that, the author strikes a special bond with both of them where she forges a relationship with them based on mutual understanding and
sympathy. They are also portrayed as smiling and cheerful to remind the readers to that even in their hardships; poverty and misery, there are attributes in them which seem to transcend their physical realities. They are portrayed as natural, artless and bruised. They are perceived as different from other women who meet the given parameters of womanhood in the community; they seem to stand out from the space of domesticity. Their artlessness, spontaneity and lack of sophistication compel the author to blend them with the natural surroundings.

**Figure 15: Sarah Hobson**

In the last picture, we can find Hobson herself participating in the name-ceremony of an infant in the family. This is an instance where the author is not behind the camera, but she is in front of it. She is watched by a group of curious onlookers. In this photograph, we can see her as someone on whom the gaze is directed, the photographic as well as the native gaze. But this photograph which is posited against the others bodies, is an excellent example of self-representation of the white woman as modern, privileged, at the same time, sensitive other cultures [notice Hobson in a saree, trying to fit into a ‘traditional’ Indian woman’s role in the ceremony] and having perfect control
over their selves and their sexualities. This picture can be treated as a self-reflexive one, because in the book, Hobson can be seen contemplating the intrusion of the camera gaze on the private sphere, here, in the case of the Gowda joint family. As she watches the filming of the family members by her husband’s documentary team, she realises the dangers of ‘objectification,’ that occasionally transgressed the rules and norms of the community as well as the privacy of the individuals.

The film unit paid a lot of attention to Jayamma, perhaps because of my interest, but also because of her story and the tragic loss of children. They asked her to draw water in pots from the pool near her fields and heave them up the rock face while her husband watered the plants. She didn’t dare refuse, and he did not object. It was later they recognised that this was the only job she never did when pregnant, as her husband fully recognised its dangers (FW: 161).

The agenda of the filming unit jeopardised Jayamma’s pregnancy. Hobson realises this with a pang. But she is no longer the controller of the activity of narration and representation. She can only be silent witness to it ruminating about the camera manoeuvre, which gives no agency to the objects represented. She expresses her annoyance at these deflections in a thoughtful narrative

I was so angry. I felt the [film] unit was trespassing in quarters where men didn’t go - certainly not strangers. How could they trample about like that, and treat Susheelamma like an object? (FW: 163)
This trespassing into woman’s private lives by the prying eyes of the camera seems to be unacceptable to her. The author finds herself to have lost her own agency after the arrival of her husband.

Through these bodyscapes, Hobson tries to map the history of a family and the plight of the women in it. As she tries to portray the women within the family, she also tries to bring in the entrapments of tradition and institutions with it. As she calls the book *Family Web: A Story of India*, she tries to takes the instance of the tenuous relationships within a particular family and she tries to bring in the trappings of power relationships within the system. By taking the example of one family, she tries to narrate her experience of India as well. In this instance, I would like to agree with Chandra Mohanty who analyses the representation of the third world women by Western women generally disseminates the notion of third world women as a homogenous category. She says:

> What is problematic about this kind of use of women as a group, as a stable category of analysis, is that it assumes an ahistorical, universal unity between women based on a generalised notion of their subordination...third women as a group or category are automatically and necessarily defined as religious (read: not progressive), family-oriented (read: traditional), legally unsophisticated (read: they are not still conscious of their rights), illiterate (read: ignorant), domestic (read: backward), and sometimes revolutionary.... (2003: 31 &40).
CONCLUSION

Here, from the three books examined hereto, some characteristics of landscaping can be arrived at. First, landscape and bodyscape are fused together as one and the same in the books that I am dealing with. As far as the topology of the landscape is concerned, the ideal landscape or the Place Fixed has an uncanny resemblance to the familiar landscape at home [For example, Coorg]. We can also notice that the process of visually scanning the landscape is almost identical to the traveller’s process of trying to become the ‘temporary resident’ of the ‘Place Fixed’. This process is carried out by the employment of auditory and visual images in a romantic fashion. Here, the traveller conjures up a space which renders the illusion of a ‘home-away-from-home’. To produce this effect, the synaesthetic metaphors, provided by the traveller in the narration, render the landscape a personified and humanised form. But, in these processes, we can also find certain departures. The departure is where we find the landscape more idyllic and exotic than at home. In this idyllic landscape, along with its beatific and becalming qualities, one can feel the sense of foreboding, menace and fear of the traveller. These feelings somewhat correspond to that of the experience of the ‘sublime’ and the ‘picturesque’. This bizarre and delusional fear of the traveller can only be explained as the traveller’s trepidation in confronting the ‘other’.

The metaphorical descriptions of the landscape also build up the heights of the dramatic narration of the landscape through which the author tries to establish the mysterious or exotic beauty of the Place Fixed, which inundates with an exotic beauty. It is at this point that the traveller tries to reinforce her position as the source of authentic authority and information. She tries to
establishes her credibility as the experienced informant/witness, whose first hand narratives enhance the authority and the weight of veracity and truth telling. We can find that the ultimate goal of place fixation through landscaping is to project the place fixed as the repository of natural plenitude, this fact is brought out by ‘landscaping’ and “‘bodyscaping’”. Through this fixation, or through the real and figurative exploration of the place, the traveller ultimately discovers herself through the land she explores.

In Place Fixation, as discussed earlier, the representation of spaces, through cartographies, family trees, etc, become necessary tools to import the idea of the ‘other’ for a reader at home. “Bodyscaping” is also one of the techniques of landscaping, mostly captured through the camera eyes. Bodyscapes, portrayed through the camera, which also are made to blend into the surroundings, generally comes with a verbal authentification of the visual phenomenon. There are places where the author tries to blur the boundaries of the verbal and the visual phenomenon, and in many cases, photographs remain narrative wholes. “Bodyscaping”, through photographs, serves as a terrain on which that authorial gaze lingers. Photographs subsume the objects that are portrayed and serve as tools that are ready for interpretation. Nevertheless, through acts of “bodyscaping”, which occur in the travel narratives I am working on, we can also see narratives that critique the position of the subject who objectifies images for readership. This critique of the gaze is very important, because it is the self that undergoes this scrutiny. This is a process of looking at others and seeing oneself. Through the exploration of spaces and through the conjuring up of real and imaginary landscapes, the travellers are travelling in space. They also travel in time through the narration history and
the related events. The next chapter deals with the act of travelling in time and how the women travellers analyse chronological time from their own subject positions.

1 Oxford Dictionary (2003) describes ‘landscape’ as: (1) the visible features of an area of land, (2) a picture of an area of countryside, (3) to improve the appearance of a piece of land by changing its contours, etc. Webster’s Dictionary (2005) describes the term thus: (1) the area and features of land that can be seen in a broad view, (2) a picture, photograph, etc of countryside, often depicting natural elements, such as trees, rivers, mountains, etc (3) consisting of landscape, having landscape as one’s subject, etc.

2 Susan Bassnet, in her essay, “The Empire, Travel Writing and British Studies” connects the medieval urge to travel and seafaring, states: “It cannot be accidental that the great cycles of European medieval poetry all concern travel - the journeying of Orlando and his fellow knights, the quests of King Arthur and the denizens of Camelot, the great sea faring journeys of the Norse saga men.” (Mohanty 2003: 23) Thus one can easily perceive the theme of quest as a predominant one during the medieval times and this persists even in the present times.


4 During the time of Queen Elizabeth, after her victory over the Spanish Armada, the theme of quest achieved the figurative sophistication of exploration, discovery and assimilation (control), thus embracing an expansionist view with in it. The imaginative conception of the strange, exotic lands took off into myriad, fanciful forms especially after the queen herself sponsored various journeys out of her own treasury. For Elizabeth and her coterie of literary men, this theme, both in its real as well as imaginative form, was a fanciful throw of sprat to catch a whale. Those were the times when England had dreamt and aspired to do some real ‘journeying and voyaging’ to reach the unexplored ‘nether’ lands. Some men like Sir Walter Raleigh really ‘made’ it and wide publicity for travel as a financially rewarding and highly adventurous enterprise was propagated in his book Discovery of Guiana (1595). These
figments of imagination provided the most opportune material for Shakespeare. He explored the ‘exotic netherlands’ not quite unproblematically, but he investigated the native/coloniser encounter in detail, thus drawing heavily from the scrappy tit bits left behind by the travellers of that time. In *The Tempest*, Shakespeare attempts at an unleashing of his own imaginative rendezvous with a situation where the people of his own race explore an exotic island, which was inhabited by spirits and cannibalistic savages (Caliban, for example). It was around this time that landscape had also become an abstraction. The strangeness of the land served as an additional indicator of the sinister atmosphere in the play. Thus, we can see the Elizabethans unravelling their imagination by glossing over the theme of quest, exploration and travel by adding a new dimension of the landscape to their writings.

5 Marvell’s “The Garden” (1681) is a typical example of how the nostalgic longing for a paradisiacal past was represented in literature though landscaping. Dryden took a step further by integrating the landscape with his knowledge of the exotic. “The Indian Emperor” (1667) and “Aurang-Zebe” (1676) are but a few examples, which explore the exotic with the help of the landscape.

6 He says that in the 19th century, (t)he reappraisal of the relative roles of reason and the imagination, the reaction against authority- academic, religious and secular- the preoccupation with liberty, the emphasis on the heroic and the struggle of man to overcome the hazards which threatened to thwart him in the attainment of his ideals, all these found expression in an upsurge of interest in the place of man within the natural order...thus Wordsworth concerned himself almost obsessively with man’s experience of nature. Coleridge stressed the interaction between the human mind and the perceived environment. Scott, like many nineteenth century writers after him, made topographical context an integral part of romance... (Appleton 1996: 36).

7 “In the 18th century, the Grand Tour was a kind of education for wealthy British noblemen. It was a period of European travel, which would last from a few months to 8 years. During the Tour, young men learned about politics, culture, art and antiquities of neighbouring countries. They spend their time sightseeing, studying and shopping. The Grand Tour was responsible for creating situated knowledges in a generation of young British adults. Italy with its heritage
of ancient Roman monuments became one of the most popular places to visit”. Quoted from www.wikipedia.com.


14 Carl Jung as quoted by Greenbie.

15 “My Lord Brouchner and Sir Edmund Pooly carri ed me down into the hold of India Ship, and there did show me the greatest wealth lie in confusion that a man can see in the world. Pepper scattered through every chink, you trod upon it: and in cloves and nutmegs I walked above the knees: whole rooms full. And silk in bales... as a noble sight as ever I saw in my life”.

16 “…that a common receptacle of all abandoned and undone men, the East Indies”.

17 “The man who has left behind him a number of works, in temples, bridges, reservoirs and caravanserais, for public good, does not die”.


19 Christopher Hurst, “A View from the King’s Street: The Lure of Portrait The Hindu. ” (Oct 1999)
While identifying distinctive idioms of photography, Pinney calls them the ‘detective’ paradigm and the ‘salvage’ paradigm (Karlekar:2005: 40).

I found it necessary to use the word as an equivalent of ‘homoerotic’ to specify the distinctness of the female experience.

Works Cited


Chapter II


**BOOKS**


