Conclusion

It has been the purpose of this project to reflect on the formation of spatial identity of India under the British. In this context, as India became the staging ground for numerous exploratory and survey activities, the region also received the defining feature of boundaries. The forging of British India as a political entity, however, had far reaching consequences. As the colony was brought under cartographic surveillance, it also received an autonomous existence as a geographical unit on the globe. In later years, the geo-space thus shaped, became a core edifice for nationalist movements. Studies of Benedict Anderson, Manu Goswami and Sumathi Ramaswami show the later sacralization of the boundaries and the consolidation of the geo-body through print images of the map. If one is to trace the continuity of the colonial imagination, that certainly is the afterlife of the effects of the cultural practices discussed in the chapters. Clearly then, sentiments were tied to but were also products of the myriad practices which evoked the sense of the space. The stabilization of the geo-political identity of the space, therefore, needed to be closely investigated. It is in this context, I have looked at the construction of the idea of India through the cultural apparatus wielded by the empire. I have tried to test the philosophico-epistemological basis of construction of India, where the mental realm comes to envelop the social and physical dimensions. Therefore, I have studied the theoretical practices which have given birth to this space in the mental realm, first in the imperial consciousness and later in the collective awareness of the inhabitants of the region. This mental realm may seem extra ideological, but as has been seen from the study, it is invariably linked to ideologies. This is, thus, also the study of, on another hand, the dominant ideas of the dominating order of the empire, which also becomes the central reference point of knowledge. The process is circular, where epistemology provided the basis for knowledge, knowledge defined the basis for epistemology. Attached to this was the artistic and scientific credentials promoted by the age. It is through these theoretical practices that mental spaces identity acquired identity with physical and social space. The articulation of colonial space
which worked with representations became a crucial feat in sustaining the bases of power, control and governance first of the empire and later for the nation. As I had talked of in the Introduction, the process of production of space engendered a process of significations which subsumed it. The product and the process of production may pose as two separate ideas, though they are inseparable. I have in my work, tried to look at processes which sought to transform space from without, by imposing an external design to it, a design which was imbued with the codes and conventions of the socio-cultural climate of the place of its origin. Yet, any production of space is not complete and present, if not changed and transformed from within. By this, I mean those practices which are not merely theoretical. The two kinds of constructions are not two separable ideas. The next step in the process of production is to study how space is transformed within through the direct actions upon it which irrevocably altered existing space and established a new place.

Though landscape paintings, travel narratives and cartography were important cultural artifacts which consolidated the idea and appearance of the colony, confronted with the question of colonial space, one cannot ignore, however, the aspect of architecture, which ultimately transformed native space irrevocably. British architecture, spatial planning and urbanism, especially in the Indian presidencies, ushered the final eradication of the lived space of the inhabitants to mark the complete take over, occupation and super-imposition of the representational space of the empire. The symbolic space thus constructed, also marked the hierarchization of space and imported the relations of the urban-rural divide which characterized the contemporary European societies. The initial basis of that transformation is, of course, the natural or physical space, which acts as the material for the empire to inscribe upon it its power. Upon these are superimposed networks tangible in form such as roads, paths, telegraph posts, railways along with state buildings and such other structures, acting as properties to reorder and to redefine space. This new colonial space is an expression of power.

Having said that, it should also be pointed out that no existing space is completely annihilated even with its transformation. Traces of each space survive even after repeated reworking. There is thus also, the space of latent violence and revolt, of struggle over space which bodies inhabit and which ideologies aspire to root out. Therefore, though it sought to be, colonial space, could never be absolute and left out pockets for challenging the construction. As Lefebvre points out, rhythms in all their multiplicity interpenetrate one another through body's inventiveness deployed in space. It can therefore be validly pointed
and that during the time period about which I have dealt, there have been interventions of another sort, which sought to challenge and disrupt the figurative and discursive constructions of space as undertaken by the imperial order. The translation could never be complete and absolute and left out pockets of dissension and resistance. Also, a study of the policy decisions which varied from area to area in the entire south Asian belt only demonstrates that. It only followed that in their implementation, the ideologies which were tested and put to practice in Great Britain got re-figured and configured in unprecedented ways, often resulting in policies completely new. However, in this present study, it has not been my purpose to investigate the minute practicalities of government administration. I have only looked at the cultural aspect in the production process of space, and dealt with the outlook of mentalities whose importance, however, should not be undermined: for it was the very basis for the empire firstly to imagine itself for colonial governmentality and future inventions and rhetorics in nativist nationalism.