Introduction
Maps, Landscape Paintings, Travelogues: Spatial
Articulation and the Imperial Eyes

Just as none of us is outside or beyond geography, none of us is completely free from
the struggle over geography. That struggle is complex and interesting because it is not
only about soldiers and cannons but also about ideas, about forms, about images and
imaginings.

Edward Said: *Culture and Imperialism*¹

It has been some years since I have been forced to rethink the beginnings of
geographical identity of places and especially of nations. Questions about spatiality and
spatial origins first occurred to me when reading Brian Friel's plays *Translations* (1980) and
*Making History* (1988). That modern India as an insular geographical space born out of the
imperial project of permanent possession, is in effect, a corollary to the spatial
transformation in Great Britain, is an idea which crossed my mind on reading *Translations*
years ago. Set in Donegal, Ireland of 1833, the play centres around the nodal points of
spatial remapping and linguistic translation. While the Ordnance Survey 'standardised' Irish-
Gaelic place names, the newly introduced National Schools trained local students in
English. In using the motif of mapping, it is Friel's agenda to show that, in effect, both the
material and linguistic landscapes underwent a transformation and a translation of sorts
from native Gaelic to English. History is embedded in all kinds of local signs, symbols,
artifacts, performances and practices. These also go to make the underlying codification
'langue' which gets reflected in the 'parole' or the spoken language. A distortion affects the
other, as a result of which autochthonous local place myths are subsumed under the meta

¹ Said 1983. 7.
structure of imperial history. As place names are changed to English in the map, the consciousness of an entire culture is fractured by the transcription of one linguistic landscape i.e. Gaelic by another, i.e. English. This completely and irrevocably destabilizes and dispossesses the Irish of their language, heritage and history.

In the chapters that are to follow, I shall similarly examine the process of 'India' being discursively constructed as a geographical unit, as a specific nameable place on the globe. The representation of the land as text, as a picture or an image transforms the space into a place identifiable with a name and mensurable exactitude. My thesis is about the construction of space, in both imaginative as well as concrete terms, and whose meaning is located within the context of the British imperial enterprise. In this context, shall I discuss the processes and colonial practices of production of space.

**Imaginative geographies: discursive construction of spaces**

My entry point into the study of imperial practices of spatial representation is through the works of Edward Said, whose *Orientalism* (1980), as is well known, explores the ways in which racial identities are born through a Eurocentric geographical essentialism:

> [...] the notion that there are geographical spaces with indigenous, radically "different" inhabitants who can be defined on the basis of some religion, culture or racial essence proper to that geographical space.

Geography is a recurrent motif in Said’s writings and what he engages us in is an act of ‘rethinking geography’, as Derek Gregory mentions. His work introduces us to an understanding of the creation of geographies through recognition of imagined and symbolic territories discursively consolidated into real spaces. He charts the intersectionality of power, knowledge and geography inscribed within the imperial practices. What he calls the ‘imaginative geography’, also was the key to the consolidation of the two polarities, the ‘Orient’, or the East and the ‘Occident’ or the West, as concepts as also spaces, “by dramatising the distance and the difference between what is close to it [Europe] and what is far away”. In *Orientalism*, Said traces the triangulation of power, knowledge and geography through Foucault’s conceptual analytic structures of the carceral archipelago and the order of things in the “historico-geographical specificity of the congruences between bodies and spaces put in place by particular constellations of Orientalism”. This depends on

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2 Said 1978. 322.
3 Gregory 2000. 302.
4 Said 1978. 55.
5 Gregory 2000. 313.
the ordered, systematic and differentiated arrangement of place. The similarities between the methods of Foucault and Said can be further developed through the identification of three points: division, detail and visibility. These three methods in European fields of scholarship formulated the exclusionary scopic regimes of the West and the East. The construction of the bipolar world depended heavily on a discursive construction of exclusionary and divisive geographies of the Orient and the Occident. The construction of each of these spaces is a constitutive function of the construction of the other, for, discourses of Orientalism not only essentialized the Orient but also essentialized the Occident. Categorization and detailing, which were primary characteristic methods in scientific discourses framed the two conceptual spaces into definitive grids of identification. Inventories were drawn up in order to specify features of the East as against the West in format of tabulation, which formulated these spaces. The concept of the scopic regime with its detailing is dependent on visibility, or the way spaces are designed to be seen in particular ways. It is Said's project to show how in the nineteenth century the European representations of the Orient as a theatre of magic gradually gave way to the Orient as "tableau, a museum and a disciplinary matrix". 6

**Colonial gaze and the ocular space**

In India the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries are of special significance in relation to the colonial regime and its agenda for spatial production. According to Bernard Cohn:

> [...] metropole and colony have to be seen in a unitary field of analysis. In India the British entered a new world that they tried to comprehend using their own forms of knowing and thinking. There was widespread agreement that this society, like others they were governing, could be known and represented as a series of facts. 7

The British looked at the Indian landscape, its features, and its elements through a rigid disciplinary gaze, which subjected its society, time and space to rigorous partitioning and hierarchical structuring. 'Gaze' is here used to reflect the prolonged contemplative act of observation implemented on vision engendering a certain aloofness and disengagement. 'Gaze' also bifurcates space between fore ground and the distant panorama – the space of the observer, in this case the coloniser, and the space of the observed, i.e. of the colonised. Matthew Edney points out the two distinctive 'gazes' employed by the British in looking at

7 Cohn 1997. 4.
India: the ‘scientific gaze’ and the ‘picturesque gaze’. However, both were engaged in achieving a certain amount of precision and were part of what Bernard Cohn calls the ‘investigative modality’. There were of course, according to Cohn, a criss-crossing of several modalities, the ‘historiographic’, ‘observational/travel’, ‘survey’ ‘enumerative’, ‘museological’, ‘surveillance’ and ‘investigative’, all of which were employed by the British in constructing an epistemological territory. The scientific gaze involved the examination, recording and the graphic representation of the alien landscape. It was driven by two assumptions as Edney explains:

That an exact image of the real world is impressed onto the mind; and, that the viewer cannot help but be "intently engaged by the aggressive identity of a particular object". 9

The scientific gaze was most obvious in the colonial enterprise of surveys. When conjoined with the picturesque gaze or a principle of aesthetics, the object of representation, the landscape, results in topographical drawings. The proliferation of representations of the landscape of India during this time took different forms. For this, all the empirical sciences including geography and anthropology were employed. As Lord Curzon, the erstwhile Viceroy of India, told the Royal Geographical Society in 1912, geography had been promoted from being a “dull and pedantic” science into “the most cosmopolitan of all sciences […] the handmaid of history”. 10 Michel Foucault, in his essay, ‘On Geography’, points out the inevitable inter-linkage between the discipline of geography and historical processes of establishment, institutions and power:

[...] to trace the forms of implantation, delimitation and demarcation of objects, the modes of tabulation, the organisation of domains meant the throwing into relief of processes – historical ones, needless to say – of power. 11

Clearly, thus, geography served as the primary means of the colonial purpose of accumulation of information, wealth and power. To return to Said, then, geography needs to be re-situated within a political and strategic sphere of the colonial mission. Much has been made recently of the nature of geographical inscription. The Greek roots of geography as ‘writing the earth’ has been taken up in an interrogation of the nature of geographical texts and other writing/ etching/ representation of space, place and landscape. 12 The texts talked of here are, as is discernable, not only the traditional written bit, but following Roland

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8 Ibid. 11.
10 Quoted in Moran 2007. 167.
11 Foucault 1980. 70.
12 Ogborn 2004, 296.
Barthes\textsuperscript{13} and other literary theorists and cultural anthropologists, the expanded concept of the text, including all other cultural productions such as paintings, maps, landscapes, journals, as well as social, economic and political institutions.\textsuperscript{14} Lefebvre's 'spatial architectonics' is thus relevant here in order to reassemble knowledge disseminated by partial disciplines of ethnology, ethnography, human geography, anthropology, history and sociology so as to excavate processes of spatial production at this juncture in history. In other words, these can be seen as constitutive of reality rather than as re-presenting it.

It is no exaggeration to state that maps are a form of discourse, that they represent viewpoints, aspirations and statements to their readers for maps are scarcely only representation of facts but carry ideological and rhetorical devices. J.B. Harley describes maps as "part of a visual language by which specific interests, doctrines, and even world views were communicated" and as "spatial emblems of power in society".\textsuperscript{15} Even before cartography was imposed on colonies to articulate imperial space, maps and related iconography first concretized the idea of Europe, which was rather loosely developed in the Middle Ages. The emancipatory force of Renaissance Humanism first permitted the triumphal celebration of Europe in the written texts and graphic images. New discoveries, the paradigm shift from a Ptolemaic to a Copernican conception of universe, new sea and land routes, new continents, all these provided the impetus towards an enhanced accuracy for maps of both Europe and the world. Theological and ideological changes also allowed an emancipation from the metaphysical straitjacket of medieval cartography. Somewhat paradoxically, these changes initially appear rather tiny in comparison to the rest of the world. But new mathematical techniques were employed to alter projections through which Europe was placed in the central and the most dominant position on the map. Europe also appeared larger as its border with Asia shifted eastward. To explain the iconography attached to the map of Europe I quote from Michael Wintle's brilliant research in this area:

Habsburg ambitions lent a new triumphalism to the portrayal of Europe, which was increasingly depicted as unitary figure, usually a young woman, more noble and regal than the female figures which were also regularly used to personify other continents. The iconography of Europe was enthusiastically adopted and refined by Renaissance cartographers who incorporated the map of Europe into the physical shape of a queen, and decorated geographical texts with images of the 'noble' continent lording it over her

\textsuperscript{13} See Barthes 1986.
\textsuperscript{14} Barnes and Duncan 1992. 5.
\textsuperscript{15} Harley 1985. 300-3.
'sisters'. Europe's tentacles stretched around the earth, and the other parts of the world brought her willing tribute on bended knee.¹⁶

Thus was the beginning of Eurocentrism. And it is interesting to see how the very royal figure of the image of Europe shall, before long, be transferred onto the map of Britannia playing a key role in garnering the idea of British nationalism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In what John Pickles calls propaganda maps and Judith Tyner calls 'persuasive cartography'¹⁷, the map is seen as a subjective form aiming to persuade large groups of people to believe something or act in a way that they otherwise would not. Maps, such as the one talked about above, are a sophisticated technique in seeking to manipulate relationships in order to persuade people about particular truth claims or in other words, to perpetuate hegemony.¹⁸

The early maps of uncharted territories like South America, Africa and Australia, were often works of art and imagination rather than of objective scientific fieldwork of later times. These maps were populated with drawings of imaginary monsters, pygmies and animals as substitutes for gaps in topographical knowledge. From the Renaissance onwards, maps came to be valued for their objectivity, because claims to accuracy had now become politically and economically important as new trade routes opened up. But this did not make the maps 'neutral' in any way. For example, as mentioned earlier, the Mercator projection, which was used since the sixteenth century, distorted the size of the land masses so that Europe and North America appear bigger than they really are. The huge proliferation of number of maps in circulation in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries was directly connected to the colonization of the rest of the world by European powers. The process of 'discovering' land and promptly appropriating it as part of colonial territory, were accomplished with the help of cartography. Cartography became a way of textually appropriating spaces and renaming them as it naturalized culturally created boundaries and power arrangements such as occupation of adjacent spaces by rival European nations. A range of work in human and historical geography has discussed naming and mapping as reflections of social power. Some amount of critical attention has been paid to authority and naming in an historical context, in relation to the extension of British colonial power and the mapped expression of that power. For North America, for example, several scholars have considered the contact between European settlement and colonial expansion in terms of

¹⁶ Wintle 1999. 159.
¹⁷ Tyner 1982, 140-44.
exclusion of native names, even native peoples, from the toponymic and mapped representation of the ‘new’ colonial space. K.G. Brealey has discussed the ways in which maps helped “actualise the territorial dispossession” of the Nuxalk and Ts’ilhqot’in peoples of what is now British Columbia and demonstrated how European maps both ‘contained’ and ‘represented’ natives according to the world view of the colonizer. The same has been the trajectory of many other native groups in North America such as the Sioux of northern United States and the Inuits of the Arctic. In his spatial and cultural history, Paul Carter seeks the origins of Australian civilization in journals, letters home, unfinished maps and other narratives by explorers and soldiers and emigrants including hearsay and tales of escapes of convicts who helped settle the new place. The transformative power of naming is demonstrated here in Captain Cook’s renaming of Botany Bay. Paul Carter explains that initially this bay was called Stringray Bay, which James Cook renamed the Botany Bay when he visited it in 1770. Cook’s revision altered the bay’s meaning placing it within the context of Cook’s entire journey and his experience. Researches undertaken on Australia, New Zealand, Haw’aii and the south Pacific Islands have discussed the cartographic inscription of what was, purportedly, Terra Nullius, the empty expanse of wilderness first encountered by colonial explorers and mapmakers who named and transformed them into inhabitable space. In fact even within Britain, places like Scotland and Ireland were mapped through surveys, targeted to incorporate them into the larger geo-body of ‘Great Britain’. Charles Withers shows how the Ordnance Survey in the nineteenth century Scottish Highlands undertaken by the English transformed the Gaelic landscape of the natives. An examination of the Ordnance Survey’s Original Object Name Books is used to explore how the landscape was ‘authorized’ or rewritten.

**The empire of the gaze: surveys and maps**

With reference to India, Matthew Edney points out the complex process of compilation of data, where locations were to be fitted to the rigid mathematical framework of longitudes and latitudes. This involved a process of translation of native astrological vocabulary into a European system of meridians and parallels. The translation itself was dovetailed with the incorporation of native knowledge into the British archive. This signified not only the conquest of the physical space of the Indians, but also, the

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19 Brealey 1995.
21 Withers 2000.
appropriation of an epistemological space, and what Cohn calls epistemological conquest. The image in the cartouche inscribed on the first edition of the James Rennell’s *Map of Hindoostan*, (1782), depicts this surrender of native knowledge in the form of the Brahminical sourcebook, the Vedas, as tribute to the superior imperial nation of Britannia personified as a queen. The map symbolized the combined act of military, geographical, cultural and epistemological conquest, for, the British made themselves the intellectual masters of Indian landscape. Side by side, most importantly, cartography in India, as in other places, in defining the colonial territory, laid down the boundaries of a future nation state.

However, cartography did not merely pertain to the production or representation of spaces but with the help of what can be called ‘anthropometric’ or racial cartography, also charted the bodies which inhabited those spaces. Cartographic representations of race were situated within the context of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Britain. Such constructions of race tended to dwell on photographic and museum representations. In trying to look beyond the apparent, natural sciences like botany and zoology tried to seek the real causes of species, language and development. Mary Louise Pratt traces the prevalence of the scientific scrutiny in travel narratives as being a part of the emergent ‘planetary consciousness’ during the time period, 1750-1800. This attempted to systematize, catalogue and classify all existing species occupying the surface of the earth, “into sequence of a descriptive language”. In being engaged in discovering the so-long hidden system of nature, the natural historians, as it were, led to “a new field of visibility being constituted in all its density”. Early 19th Century botany, zoology and anatomy cannot be understood without this attempt to seek out remote fields for the collection of as yet unknown specimens in order to bring them into relation to the overarching classifications of the natural history. The definition of a scientific ‘object’ was usually central to the politics of colonial anthropology. Such anthropological knowledge production was not limited to discourses alone, but was fundamentally linked to vision and to exhibition. In this context the importance of photography as document privileged this artifact, which had a clearly articulated role as embodiment of cultures, catering to the visualist bias of Western ethnological fieldwork. In India, colonial officials posing as amateur photographers took up a number of such photographic enterprises, such as Herbert Risley, J. Forbes Watson and

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24 Michel Foucault *Order of Things*, 1970. quoted in Pratt 1992. 28
25 Ibid. 29.
John William Kaye, to name a few. The colonial photographic enterprise in India can be seen as another ‘form of knowledge’ working in tandem with British anthropological writings of the 19th Century. Photography was taken up by colonial officials, sergeants and anthropologists with ‘scientific’ agendas in studying the Indian people in their plurality and diversity. There was a need to record the exact number of human ‘specimens’ to be found in India claiming adherence to race, tribe or caste, which could be clearly tabulated in photographic encyclopedias.

Surveying and mapping were important aspects of the technologies of state formation even in Early Modern Europe, which were replicated during the period of colonial expansion all over the world. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw an upsurge of surveying and mapping activities all across the colonies. The British in India in the late eighteenth century, commissioned surveys, which were meant as exploration of the natural and social landscape. The survey in India encompassed a wide range of activities apart from mapping, like collecting botanical specimens, recording of architectural and archaeological sites of historical significance and land surveys for revenue and taxation. It should be remembered, however that this was the age of the Enlightenment, the age of reason, science, progress and discoveries. As Nicholas Dirks observes:

Reason made discovery the imperative of Western thought, [...], colonialism provided a critical theatre for the Enlightenment project, the grand laboratory that linked discovery and reason. Science flourished in the 18th century not merely because of the intense curiosity of individuals working within Europe, but because colonial expansion both necessitated and facilitated the active exercise of scientific imagination. It was through discovery – the siting, surveying, mapping, naming and ultimately possessing – of new territories of conquest: cartography, geography, botany, and anthropology were all colonial enterprises.26

The picturesque gaze

The systematic knowledge so collected, not only restricted itself to written documents but permeated into exhibitions and picturesque representations. Where maps were constructs that combined assorted observations into a unifying image of a space, the landscape paintings of the period added perspective to views, the images then standing in lieu of the world. Strangely, enough, science and the aesthetics joined hands together as the “Europeans were actively constructing both the picture and the picture-like quality of an

26 Dirks 1994. 211-212.
East that was still for them, [...] a moving image". Just as the surveys aimed to unfold universal and objective truths, so also:

the picturesque conventions of aesthetic transcription worked to constitute India as a place where reality itself was defined as presentation, all the while masking the brutality of conquest, justifying the British military presence, and in the end defining India as a place where time had stopped and culture had given way to nature. 28

It is argued that landscape implies the denial of process. Landscape, as discussed by Cosgrove, is based on a reading of the concept's historical emergence that emphasizes its visual, painterly dimensions. Landscape in this interpretation is a restrictive way of seeing which privileges the 'outsiders' point of view, while sustaining a radical split between the outsider or the seer and the insider or the seen: between those who relate directly to the land and those who relate to it as a form of exchange value. 29 The division talked of here is between that of Lefebvre's 'representation' of space and 'representational' space in the contrast that comes about in the artistic form, the gardens and estates and the space that exists as a part of the every day social practice. The scholarship in this field has generated an opening up or 'unpacking' of the concept of the landscape in denying the related concepts of space/place, inside/outside, original, image and representation of a precise closure. The general idea here is that there is no 'absolute' landscape and the relationship between place and space, inside and outside and image and representation are cultural constructs and dependent on historical processes. The organization of space is always already coded in the way it is experienced, and the 'visual', considered the primary property of pictures, too needs to be unchained from restrictive practices to turn our attention to 'ways of seeing' that mould the experience of space and through which space itself is moulded. 30 Further, landscape paintings of the colonial moment talked of here, involves a materially located process of perception and identification that work to shape forms of social identity.

In talking of the 'world as picture', Christopher Pinney invokes Heidegger to speak of it as a typically modern capability. Heidegger traces a resultant alienation out of scientific pursuit from Descartes onwards which allowed the world to be seen as a picture – an object to be viewed and seen rather than to be lived and experienced. The 'Cartesian perspectivalism', the outcome of Cartesian dualism, of that which is experienced by the

27 Ibid. 227-8.
28 Ibid. 229.
29 Hirsch 1995. 22.
body and that which is perceived by intuition, led to claims of certainty of representation. The modern epoch places the world as picture in the realm of man’s knowing:

There begins that way of being human that mans the realm of human quality as a domain given over to measuring and executing, for the purpose of gaining mastery over that which is as a whole.\(^{31}\)

On the other hand, the act of reading a pictorial representation involves, as Louis Marin explains, the dual achievement of pleasure and power:

pleasure, for in a representation, the theoretical desire of identification is achieved, the reflection of representation on itself where the subject is constituted in truth; power, since by mastering the appearances painted on canvas, the subject dominates and appropriates for itself its vision in theory, occupies fictively and legitimately the position – without position – of God.\(^{32}\)

In the same tune, Gillian Rose explains the colonial ‘frame’ when she perceptively identifies what she calls “the uneasy pleasures of power” with the view of the Orient-as-woman reclining before the scopic virilities of the masculinist spectator.\(^{33}\) As discussed before, the paradigm of visibility is quite obvious in British representations of their empire. It is as it were, literally, what Foucault called ‘the empire of the gaze’, as colonisation designed spaces to make things seeable in certain ways. Timothy Mitchell speaks of Orientalist knowledge as markedly pictorial. In the same vein Said suggests that colonial inscriptions of the orient were constituted panoramically. In demonstrating this, Derek Gregory talks of the production of Description de l’Egypte (1809-1822) by the orders of Napoleon.\(^{34}\) In analysing the image in the frontispiece to the original French compendium, Gregory points out how in “a view through the portal of a stylised temple on to the monumentalised landscape of ancient Egypt, all signs of life or contemporary inhabitants of Egypt have been erased. This “memorialised landscape” signified “a union of power, knowledge and geography” which inscribed its surveyors in “positions of power and prominence”. The Description itself was remarkable in its sheer detailing. At each site the inventory begins with an eagle’s eye view with topographic maps locating the antiquities, which are then


\(^{33}\) Rose, Gilllian 1993. 86-112. However, critics have pointed out that the sexual politics implicated in Orientalism was by far more complicated than a simple equation between Orientalism and masculinism to be confined to a heterosexual imagery.

\(^{34}\) Description de l’Egypte (English: Description of Egypt) is a comprehensive scientific description of ancient and modern Egypt as well as its natural history. It is a publication that is the collaborated work of about 160 civilian scholars and scientists, known popularly as the savants, who accompanied Napoleon’s expedition to Egypt in 1798 to 1801 as part of the French Revolutionary Wars, as well as about 2000 artists and technicians, including 400 engravers, who would later compile it into a full work.
displayed in panoramic view giving way to perspective views, which in turn dissolve into close-up detail of reliefs and inscriptions. The detailed representation and ethnography were not merely a way of claiming empirical authority in the sense of ‘being there’ but invested the colonial regime with legitimacy of presence. However, pictorially, it insists upon the ‘imaginative geographies’ of Orientalism. It superimposed the abstracted space or Lefebvre’s ‘represented space’ of the coloniser onto the concrete place of the native in presenting it as an essentialized and timeless setting.

The Indian picturesque is precisely imperial landscape. The semiotic features of landscape, and the historical narratives they generate, are tailor made for the discourse of imperialism as the very genre metaphorizes an expansion of landscape which is understood here as an inevitable outcome of colonisation:

Empires move outward in space as a way of moving forward in time; the ‘prospect’ that opens up is not just a spatial scene but a projected future of development exploitation.

The ‘picturesque’ was an ideal; and only through art and the active agency of the artist/viewer could a natural scene be converted into the picturesque. The British found the ‘picturesque’ to be the perfect intellectual tool for imagining the landscapes of South Asia. Just as India served as a laboratory to various disciplines, for painting and fine art, it provided the sites of naturally occurring beauty that could be carried back to England and owned by means of replicas as the Daniells, the professional painters to India remark:

Science has had her adventures, and philanthropy her achievements; the shores of Asia have been invaded by a race of students with no rapacity but for lettered relics; by naturalists, whose cruelty extends not to one human inhabitant; by philosophers, ambitious only for the extirpation of error, and the diffusion of truth. It remains for the artist to claim his part in these guiltless spoliations, and to transport to Europe the picturesque beauties of these favoured regions.

However, the picturesque in India was manipulated and manufactured. It was also highly selective and the natural had to fall into the rigid aesthetic schema of the ‘picturesque’ as understood in Great Britain. The ‘picturesque’, as a way of seeing was highly in fashion by the late eighteenth century. By 1780, ‘picturesque’ beauty referred in general to scenes, which recalled two different kinds of paintings – on the one hand, the ideal classical

37 Daniell and Daniell 1810. ii.
landscapes of Claude Lorraine, Gasper Poussin and Salvator Rosa, on the other the naturalistic views of Ruysdael, Hobbema, Gyp and Van Goyen. During the 1790s three books provided a working aesthetic: Richard Payne Knight’s didactic poem, The Landscape (17940), Uvedale Price’s ‘An Essay on the Picturesque’ (1794), and Humphry Repton’s Sketches and hints on picturesque gardening, (1795). Apart from these there were the rules of the ‘picturesque’ simplified and laid down by Dr. William Gilpin who produced a series of guides between1782-1809. These trained and educated artists to look at landscapes in a certain way. And if that was not all, there were special scientific instruments to produce a picturesque scene, such as the special lenses called ‘artists’ vieweres’, the convex mirrors called ‘Claude Glass’, the ‘camera obscura’ and the ‘camera lucida’, all of which solved various problems of size, form perspective and view.38 R.R. Reinagle’s letterpress to Turner’s Views in Sussex, stresses on the ‘science’ which lies behind the apparently natural effects that master artists achieve:

Science alone, aided by genius, can do this. These are the high qualities that can enslave and enchant the eye. It is the science of the art so little known, though never failing in the works of those who have been crowned by the praise of the world, and successive ages, that is constantly overlooked and mistaken for art only. The art is imitative; science produces choice; and entangles and entwines itself within the former so carefully, as to be unperceived.39

The cult followed with ardour in England, and artists flocked to India which served as suitably rich material, to be ‘captured’ in paintings. Therefore, Gombrich observes that the Western tradition of painting has been “pursued as a science” through a process of “ceaseless experimentation”.40 As many Marxist critics have pointed out, landscape paintings were produced for use primarily in urban spaces and it was by far a class based aesthetic invoking a feudal attitude to land against the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries’ backdrop of emergent capitalism which can be extendable to imperial attitude to colonial lands.

Spatial metaphorics

The concepts of spatial production or the ‘imaginative geography’ that are being talked of here, involve the assignment of systematic and differentiated attributes to places in order to designate in one’s mind a familiar space which is ‘ours’ and an unfamiliar space.

38 Archer 1969. 1-56.
40 Gombrich 1962.
which is 'theirs'. This requires what Gregory calls the 'spatial metaphoric' or the practice of 'poetics of space' whereby a space acquires emotional and even rational sense by a kind of poetic process through the help of language, and the vacant or anonymous reaches of distance are granted meaning with an attachment of figurative or imaginative value. It is imperative for us to understand how emotions like anxiety, fear, desire and fantasy enter into the production of imaginative geographies. For this, it is important to analyse topographies as represented through writing and literature, which describe them through metaphors. Richard Rorty claims that metaphors have no meaning other than their literal one, which is nonsensical. Precisely because metaphors are literally nonsensical, they are the 'frisson' that makes us see the world in a different way, a way that could not be imagined before the metaphor was used. Metaphors create new angles on the world once they are “savoured rather than spat out”.

Metaphors are socially and culturally constructed within the literary sphere as they act as tropes for reducing the unfamiliar to familiar, by translating the unknown through already known frames of references. For our concern metaphors can be subdivided into 'big' and 'small'. Big metaphors are those that lie behind general research methods and school of thought, while small metaphors are used as ornamentation in pieces of writing, and surely the two are connected. Both are used as persuasive and rhetorical devices in representing the unknown in known language. Hayden White equates historiography to a literary activity when speaking of the historical narrative as extended metaphor which evokes the familiar and thereby persuades by likening the events reported in them to some form with which we are already familiar through the literary culture. Writings which represent space, employ similar metaphorics which invoke a recognisable narrative unity.

Geography and the craft of penmanship also go hand in hand. Connections between polite writing and geographical knowledge were [and still is], part of eighteenth and nineteenth century imperial and domestic politics. Travel literature, journals and travelogues are narrative accounts of eyewitness records during voyages and stay in foreign countries constitutive of this very geographical knowledge talked of. In Dennis Porter's words:

From the beginning, writers of travel have more or less unconsciously made it their purpose to take a fix on and thereby fix the world in which they found themselves; they are engaged in a form of cultural cartography that is impelled by an anxiety to map the

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41 Rorty 1989. 18.
42 Barnes and Duncan 1992. 11.
globe, centre it on a certain point, produce explanatory narratives, and assign fixed identities to regions and the races that inhabit them.44

Travel literature, however, is an inherently interdisciplinary form because of its cross-generic status in its intermixing of fiction, autobiography, history, reportage and natural history. Factually, the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries Britain saw the highest proliferation of travel literature which is indicative of its connection with the empire. As Mary Louis Pratt, observes, travel literature during this period is fundamentally linked to the colonial gaze. It is engaged with the metropolis’ obsession with presenting and representing its peripheries and its others to itself. In this it constructs not only the space of the "contact zone" but also the metropolis itself.45 Travel writing thus also involves a mapping, a production of an imaginative geography which turns the experience of an unfamiliar place into narrative. In this it employs all the literary devices and tropes which grants it a complex mix of fact and fiction, of objective reality and subjective experience. The journal format of the travel account has attracted critics to reading it in terms of autobiography, as a technology of individuation or writing the self. The act of writing the self, of course, implies also, the act of construction of identity, and in the case of colonial travelogue, it is the imperial self that gets articulated through the construction or representation of the other. On the other hand, as a spatial practice, it tends to become the representational space that Lefebvre talks about as it employs descriptions of one’s own experience and lived reality. However, the flux and the locomotion which characterizes the travel narrative where the writer-protagonist sequentially moves from one to another foreign land and places are seen in fleeting glances, restrains it from becoming a full fledged representational space and remains, therefore, a representation of space. It is after all an outsider who visualizes and writes of a space.

For the European Renaissance traveller, writing was an integral part of the activity. In the face of rivalry among European nation states, political or commercial documents and maps would have to abide by codes of secrecy. It was only through travel writing that public interest in foreign lands was kindled. As Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs point out, this public interest aroused by stories of faraway places was an important way of attracting investment and, settlers, once the colonies were established.46 For Francis Bacon, who prescribed travel as a form of education for creating an ideal Renaissance man, the travellers of the
Renaissance had discovered ‘new continent’ of empirical truth which defeated earlier speculations of the ancients. John Locke, founded his observations on the world and nature of man, on numerous travel accounts he collected about various places. Although travel in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was exclusively opportunist and commercial, from the eighteenth century onwards there emerged new kinds of travellers, implicated in the rhetoric of science. These were natural scientists such as biologists, botanists and geographers who were initially sponsored by the European nation states, but then gathered momentum on their own, with the Royal Geographical Societies spearheading the movements. The expeditions of geographers and natural scientists provided some initial instances of travel writing such as Darwin’s *The Voyage of Beagle* (1840), also draw on the conventions of the ‘anti-conquest’ by which Pratt refers to the “strategies of representation whereby European bourgeois subjects seek to secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert hegemony”.47 While disguised as often innocent activities, the White explorer-spectator enforces colonialist assumptions in their romanticization of exoticism and primitivism. For example, travellers, explorers and missionaries talk of the lands of Africa, Caribbean islands and Australia in similar fashion as infested by strange animals and primitive black men. Likewise, India of these fanciful travel accounts was:

- a land of “castellated elephants”, “proud rajas” and “melodious bulbuls”, of silks, muslins, precious gems, of “white cities”, “gilded minarets”, and “glittering scimitars”, of “snorting arabs” [...] and the “dar-eyed daughters of the east”. It was a place of “tall palm trees and browsing camels, rose gardens and citron-groves”.48

David Arnold talks of a specific literary style, akin to British Romanticism, which evolved through these travelogues, could at once be identified as Orientalist or associated with tropical writing. The land and environment of the spaces described, acquired a visibility through this language, which Gregory calls the ‘metaphorics of space’.

**Word, image and the printed space**

The combination of maps, pictures and written documents, not only play a definite role in providing geographical knowledge, education and entertainment, these also, most importantly construct a territorial space as it is to be seen by the colonial force, influencing future decisions and policy making. This combination was characteristic of the technique of copper-plate engraving which, unlike letterpress printing, could readily and elegantly

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48 Quoted in Arnold 2005. 120-121.
combine words and images on one plate in many different ways. The same combination carries on in map production in the sixteenth century, where the same copper-plate engraver’s burin could inscribe both the linework and the lettering, along with elaborate pictorial cartouches, to achieve a unified stylistic effect where word and image coexisted. In the eighteenth century, too, engravings integrated text as accompanying poems, speech bubbles, or identifying notations.⁴⁹ The same was noticeable in the depictions of newspapers, books, broadsides and manuscripts of the nineteenth century continuing to the present. The combination and synchronization of graphic and textual images constitute the organization of knowledge of a space in vivid terms: a map shows the place in its totality, the landscape paintings depict individual scenes from vantage points, and the travelogue fabricates a story of a journey through these spaces representing daily life, flora and fauna in its minute details. Thus the collaboration of the ‘god’s eye view’, ‘the bird’s eye view’ and the ‘ant’s eye view’ has the power to conjure up a space ostensibly ‘real’.

The first chapter titled ‘Philosophies of space and Spatial Representation introduces the theoretical framework for interpreting spatial representations. It explores the evolution, trajectory and complexities in thinking about space. Here I discuss the major thinkers who have dabbled in ideas of space. My understanding of spaces and creation of space is influenced largely by three major thinkers in this field: Henri Lefebvre, David Harvey and John Urry.⁵⁰ All of these thinkers start from the basic premise that space is an artificial construct created as the consequence of human actions. Lefebvre speaks about space as a social product in the same way as Marx talks of products and services involving the sources and factors of production. David Harvey speaks of power relations embedded in space and the transformations it underwent as a consequence of industrialization and late capitalism. His ideas have immensely helped in my own understanding of representations and spatial organizations, especially in cartography from pre-Renaissance to contemporary modern times. On the other hand, John Urry’s exposition of consumption of space and tourism are extremely helpful in understanding colonial consumption of space through travel and other representations consumed as objects in the metropolis. Most significantly, his idea of literary construction of certain areas as tourist destinations in the United Kingdom, has been crucial in determining the function of cultural expressions in engineering space and forging spatial identities. The chapter ends with a possible framework in interpreting constructions

⁴⁹ Ogborn 2004.
of spatial hierarchies applicable to India as a colonial space manifesting in British representations.

Chapter Two, ‘Gardens, Enclosures, Landscapes: The Material Mystic Place in British Paintings’ explores the theory and conventions of art, specifically landscape art. The landscape paintings which catapulted into becoming a most popular genre in spite of its low status in the hierarchy of art forms, can be seen as entrenched in ideas of land, property and agronomic relations of the times. The theoretical expositions of the ‘picturesque’ and the ‘sublime’ configure at a crucial time in British history when Britain was forging its identity in visual terms. On the one hand, where landscape paintings were practiced by professional Royal Academy members and exhibited in elite hubs of Academy exhibitions, the landscapes became a crucial ingredient in the popular sphere of entertainment. Landscapes served as stage scenery, as locational setting for the action in the narrative, as spectacular illusions of the immensely popular media of the panorama, diorama, or the cyclorama as ornamentation in pleasure houses and dinner boxes. In all these, landscapes are utilized to recreate and bring home distant and faraway spaces through the circulation of art objects in the culture economy. As British landscapes become extra European and increasingly outward gazing, the landscape paintings act as metonymic representations of those exotic lands which imperialism envisaged as its own property.

The chapter also explores crucial factors constructing the gaze such as the science of perspective and its bearing on representation, especially of space. The all encompassing gaze eschews and demonstrates a principled gnostic drive pervading the visual and literary culture of Enlightenment Europe. The chapter is given to the conviction that landscape paintings contributed in crucial ways in constructing the geography of Britain in an age which was rife with nationalist impulses where the twin concepts of country and countryside collapse into each other.

Chapter Three ‘Framing India’, revolves around the representation of the South Asian subcontinent through paintings. The chapter also explores the dynamics of the passage of professional artists from Britain to India and the general opinion about the prospect of painting Indian scenes as a lucrative enterprise. Whether this idea was a myth is debatable, but that the Indian and tropical scenes were a great favourite with the public of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries can be discerned from the profusion of stagecraft in theatres of the times which dealt with India as their locale. Similarly, India featured regularly in other popular media in spaces of public entertainment in the metropolis which
led to a figuration of the idea of India, its topographical appearance and demarcation in the popular imagination. The imagination superseded existing space in all its variations and vibrancy and replaced it with artificial essences culled from a homogenizing process achieved through repetition and reiteration of certain devices whereby certain scenes were seen as characterizing the essence of India.

As spoken of earlier, this chapter provides an assessment of the efforts of professional and amateur, of famous and not so famous British painters in India during the colonial period in ascribing a visual identity to the region represented. As the medium got entrenched in the scientific discourse of objectivity and realism, the representations stabilized a version of Indian landscape in terms of the existing aesthetic principles in the British art world.

As part of the second section, Chapter Four 'Place and Identity in the Making of Britain', discusses the central issues governing representation of space through the writing of travel narratives or travelogues. The chapter revolves around the role of travel and its literature in forging an identity of a space and thus transforming it into a place. In this chapter, I have concentrated on the idea of construction of a distinctly British national space through travel literature. I have looked at and discussed a range of literature spanning across centuries from the sixteenth century onwards and tried to locate the general growth and development of nationalist sentiments traceable in the narratives of travel. As the age of Grand Tour came to an end it was replaced by eager travels within the British Isles which were undertaken simultaneously with romantic travels into distant exotic lands. Travel literature gradually imbibed aspects of ethnography as it emerged out of being merely chorography. Such narratives represented space along with its resident human society as also aspects of ecology and nature descriptions. As travel spilled far and wide, narratives of travel gradually became ingrained with scientific rationality which determined the aesthetic, visceral and physical response to particular places and often got codified by science academics as practiced during the age of Enlightenment and empire. However, despite the presence of other kinds of responses to spaces, travel narratives were imbued with an element of survey and scrutiny. Therefore travel was mediated by the ocular centrism which pervaded the age. They conveyed views through language by straddling both scientific and poetic discourses popular at the time.

In Britain, travel narratives had a unifying effect in forging a national geography as it involved features of seeing, knowing and recording, all of these being significant in
respect to governance and rule. It generated a bonhomie among so long rival territories such as Scotland or Ireland as these regions got transcribed in a language of romanticist nature travel. Before constructing its empire, it is my argument, that travel first constructed and produced the domestic geography and defined its identity.

Chapter Five 'Writing India', deals with the representation of India in imperial travel narratives in the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. It is an attempt to look at the similarities in the act of configuring regional and territorial identities through the narratives of travel in the imperial home nation and the colony. After recounting a brief history of British writing about India before the onset of the colonial regime, I move on to studying narratives by British travellers in the second half of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century. What I found in the course of the study is that, ideas and essences in circulation in this rubric of literature in earlier European writings on India, also dominated later perspectives though they were by now instilled with the pervasive psychology of scientism. In this chapter, I have studied the narratives of William Hodges, Bishop Reginald Heber, James Baillie Fraser and Joseph Dalton Hooker. What is noticeable and most remarkable if read in a sequence is the progressive permeation of contemporary scientific discourse of rationality and observation in the narratives which strove to portray a dynamic space. With Hodges, a first generation artist who visited India in the late eighteenth century, the narrative recounting of his selections of scenes as aesthetic subjects for paintings is interspersed with nascent scientism, even though predominated by aesthetic framing. This scientism becomes much more formulaic and obvious by mid nineteenth century, as for example in Hooker's narrative, which tries to unravel the inherent nature of the region through an interpretation of its eco-system, and a scholarship based on the classification of its existing flora and fauna.

Following the same scheme of spatial articulation in Britain and India, Chapter Six, 'Maps: Cultural Apparatus of Space Economy', the first chapter in the section on cartography, deals with its conventions and practice in Europe in general and England in particular. Along with a brief outline of general history of cartography, the chapter tries to coalesce issues of its ongoing debate with aesthetics, in spite of its origin in fine art.

The chapter delineates the socio historical backdrop behind the emergence of map-making as a popular medium in eighteenth century Britain. The motivation for survey, scrutiny and mensuration was generated by various economic and political factors. The ideology which presupposed mensurable land was a product of the eighteenth century land
and property relations in a growing agronomic market and land economy. Moreover, land was loaded with cultural and economic significance which also determined social hierarchy of its owner. Maps therefore, at a smaller lever, became the cultural tools for demarcating territory. At a greater level, cartography demarcated the space of the nation. After the suppression of political unrests in various regions in Scotland and Ireland, rigorous mapping and survey enterprises were undertaken in those regions to bring them under the national compass. As maps brought regions under its scopic radius they also generated a notion of rebel free landscape as they also homogenized differential spaces under a totalizing framework. I have taken the example of the Trigonometric Survey in Great Britain and looked at its role in appropriating dissenting spaces and stabilizing the shape of the nation in its modern image. The Survey was extended to the oceans circumscribing the British Isles to demarcate and determine the domestic waters.

Chapter Seven, 'Mapping India', the final chapter in the thesis, deals with British cartography in India from the latter half of the eighteenth century onwards. The project of colonial cartography in India can be viewed as akin to its practice in Great Britain. Where in Britain, it served to demarcate the extent and boundary of a nation, in South Asia, it served to establish the British dominion through the most concrete of forms, the map. Though the boundary of the colony constantly shifted further towards the north and north west with military insurgencies and surveys, the boundaries demarcated the knowledge realm. Mapping, therefore, is both an instrument of knowledge and power. As I trace the continuity of the practices in the metropolis and the colonies, it can be inferred without inhibition that the two couldn't have been inimical categories existing as capsular entities. Ideas and responses spilled out from each to the other but impacted on the two geographies in similar ways. In the case of India, I take also, the instance of the Trigonometrical Survey yet again in order to study the ideology behind the practice with reference to the colony and the scheme of translation of spaces through inherently European sign systems. A study of the work and activities of certain established professional practitioners are crucial in this respect. In the Indian chapter, I have discussed the memoirs and missions of two most significant cartographers in British India: Rennell and Lambton, and tried to initiate a comparison with their counterparts at home. Similarly, the marine surveys in the coastal regions contributed to the fixing of boundaries in the south, where in the north, the Himalayas continued to be engulfed in mystery, infested with mysterious and rebellious
people which increasingly asked for cartographic surveys in order to subordinate the regions under the British gaze.

For the coloniser, the work did not stop, of course, at the level of conjuring a space in the colonial consciousness, but goes further to transform the space for inhabitation and settlement. A reading of the town planning, sanitation and architecture in order to 'modernize' native villages into colonial quarters, would complete the understanding of the process of production of space. Through case studies in the later chapters, I shall study the process of evolution of the idea of India as a self referential entity during the period of British rule. But before that, there is a need to explore the concept of space as has been understood over time. The genealogy shall then help to critique older conceptions of space as always already existing. It shall justify my embracing a more socially relevant idea of space as a human artifact, encoded with numerous cultural, political and economic forces.