Wild nature, forests, skies, mountains and seas got associated with the word 'landscape' as late as the eighteenth century. And it was around this time too, that images of landscape scenery and nature became identifiable with its specific locale. Kenneth Robert Olwig in his fascinating book reveals through a historical study of the etymology of the word 'landscape' how the idea of landscape got defined as the scenery of a geographical body or 'country' while simultaneously enmeshing itself with the idea of country also as a polity defined by political legal and ethnic criteria. This apparent unity created by the identification of a political community with the physical bounds of a geographical body and its scenic surface can therefore mask a contested terrain or conceal rifts among differing ethnicities and polities. The scenic splendour of landscape paintings diverts attention from and disguises these very politically charged connotations in pictorial terms.

The common assumption is that in Europe the term 'landscape' emerged in the sixteenth century to mean a painting which dealt with natural scenery. However, the term has had a life even before this. 'Landscape' in various early Germanic languages as also in old English usage commonly designated an area or region. Paintings or scenes from such a landscape were also called landscape. However, the first paintings from the sixteenth century which came to be called landscapes depicted not merely the scenery but depicted life and culture of a region or an area of activity. In order to understand the transition of meaning and reference of the word, it is important to look further into relationship between the form of representation and the content of that which is represented for to talk about landscape is, after all, to talk about representation.

**Landscape: the place of the body politic**

Landscape as a scheme of representation, no less than the cartographic scheme of map making, is an artifice which is entangled in a host of codes. Historically, however, the
two have differed as landscapes have not served pragmatic purpose as have maps. Landscapes have existed in an entirely different aesthetic realm altogether conveying a complex web of desires while carrying references to a whole set of notions and traditions in art. However, in moving forward with the central idea of spatiality which underlies my study it is necessary to engage with questions of how pictorial meanings (in landscape paintings) are manufactured and manipulated 'in a milieu of enacted or invented painterly marks'.

For this, of course, what is required is a recounting of the genesis and historical evolution of this genre while locating it in the discourse of contemporary aesthetics. This would bring us back to evolution of the larger meaning of landscape and the ways in which these have been used to define country and the place of the body politic. Olwig talks about the construction of a unique geographical identity through texts both written and pictorial with respect to anglophone cultural geographies, or of Britain as conveyor of geographical and material changes occurring elsewhere such as in America. By this means, place is imagined and conceived through a level of abstraction which a quantitative cartographic and geometrical logic can only supplement and concretise.

Though the common perception of landscape is associated with painting, Olwig shows how landscape derives from the "ideas of custom, law and community expressed in 'Sachsenspiegel' and Scandinavian bodies of 'landscape law'”. Therefore the paintings of early Dutch landscape painters like Pieter Brueghel (c. 1525-69) often depict the customs of the time although often portrayed in imaginary settings, in what was called the 'proverbs', a contemporary artistic genre. Today, Brueghel's paintings would be seen as a combination of both 'landscape' and 'genre', concerned with the everyday existence of common people. This everyday world of common customs and traditions got inscribed into the material world in landscape paintings therefore emphasising lived space, for art at the time was then seen as a medium of preserving and transmitting the social and geographical knowledge. The validation of this idea comes from the writing of Henry Peacham, a sixteenth century English landscape painter who admired the Dutch landscape paintings of the time. Art, according to Peacham:

"bringeth home with us from the farthest part of the world in our bosoms whatsoever is rare and worth of observance, as the general map of the country, the rivers, harbours,"

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79 Benjamin 1993, 296.
80 Olwig 2002, 23. Sachsenspiegel, or Saxon Mirror was the most famous written body of germanic customary law. Spiegel is the Germanic word for mirror and is also related to the English word spectacle showing the interlinkage of the concepts of landscape and spectacle.

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Staging landscapes

According to Olwig, landscape, in Renaissance Europe referred to a particular notion of polity rather than a territory which steadily underwent a transition to become markable in a world of scalar fixation. Olwig, hereby, employs the metaphor of performance, spectacle and staging in order to understand the process of place-making. Other scholars like Roger Benjamin too endorses this idea of landscape as staging a place:

What is needed is a view of landscape conceiving place as achieved through a process of staging rather than transcription. The term "staging" suggests landscape as a play of artifice more than an engagement with brute fact.82

Whereas, what is quoted above refers to the idea of staging as an interpretive tool in order to look at landscape art, Olwig gives the idea a historical legitimacy by relating landscape art to theatrical devices and activities of stage design. It won't be a deviation here to point out that the popular imagery of the world as a theatre used in Renaissance drama, was reciprocated in the titles of atlases and maps produced at the time, for example, John Speed's Theatre of the Empire of Great Britain. The construction of landscapes according to principles of theatrical design and stage conventions soon followed suit.83 In going back to the early seventeenth century, Olwig talks about the theatrical innovations in the masques performed in the court of the newly crowned king James I of England who was James VI of Scotland. This was a crucial juncture in the history of Great Britain undergoing transitions at several levels. It was the time when England and Scotland were not yet politically united as one country and the throne of England had just passed from the House of Tudors to the House of Stuarts of Scotland. It was also the time of tussle regarding who represented the land – the parliament or the king. The English parliament constantly resisted James's attempts to unite Scotland and England although he was the king of both. According to the English parliament, the country of England was manifested as a polity through its representation by parliament, as legitimated by age old conventions and customs. The parliament would not have the same legitimacy when it came to Scotland and therefore it resisted the union. This was also the time when the conflict between court and country

81 Peacham, Henry. The Complete Gentleman. (1622). Quoted in Ibid. 25.
82 Benjamin 1993. 296.
83 Harvey 1989. 246.
operated at political levels as two distinct ways of life. This conflict found its way into literature of the times in the pastorals and plays which celebrated rustic life as one of authentic natural life and condemned the court as corrupt and artificial as Duke Senior says in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*:

> Hath not old custom made this life more sweet
> Than that of painted pomp? Are not these woods
> More free from peril than the envious court?
> Here feel we but the penalty of Adam,
> The seasons' difference; as, the icy fang
> And churlish chiding of the winter's wind,
> Which, when it bites and blows upon my body,
> Even till I shrink with cold, I smile and say,
> 'This is no flattery.' (2.1.2)

The idea reiterates itself not only in the dramatic texts but also in the conceptualisation of the theatre space itself. As early as in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Sebastiano Serlio's book on stage architecture show illustrations of the two out of three types of static scenery that Serlio based on Roman theatre. The two are the *scene tragica* or tragic scene and the *scene satirica* or the satiric or comic scene. The *scene tragica* had an illustration of an inside of a castle whereas the *scene satirica* was illustrated with an outdoor scene which consisted of trees and gardens. The power of the idea of 'country' lay in the way it embodied the memory of the rights that constituted people's place and community identity. This was related to the idea of landscape as the word 'landschaft' was translated as country, region or province. On the other hand, the monarch himself or herself ought to have been the very embodiment of the polity or body politic. This dichotomy could only be resolved through spectacle. The Stuart court, for this purpose, made use of the masque which already held political and social power as a customary tradition. The masque operated at an elite level in the court in the same manner as rustic rituals and festivities operated amongst the commoners in order to forge a sense of community solidarity. Various stage mechanism like the stage scenery constructed an illusion of natural habitus of a community of people, literally the stage upon which the court and the king could enact and perform power:

> In the masque, however, custom was replaced with costume, a matter of design and style, just as, through the representation of landscape as perspective scenery

84 The romantic idealism of the country and nature later resurface in the philosophy of the Romanticists such as Jacques Rene Rousseau whose idea of the 'noble savage' reiterated this harmonious union with nature to regain human being's innate goodness.

85 Serlio 1555.
unchanging geometrical principles replaced the evolving laws of custom. In the masque
the landscape ceased to be the 'habitus' of a people, an environment shaped through
customary practices and bodily activity; instead, it became the scene upon which the
personages of the state performed their roles under the authorial gaze of the ruler.86

**Perspective: constructing the view**

A discussion needs to be undertaken at this point regarding the science of
perspective and its capability to engineer space before engaging ourselves with the
demonstration of stage scenery in drama and performances which materialised a given
geographical location, imaginary or otherwise. In fact, perspective has played a very crucial
role in the history of paintings, especially topographical and landscape paintings, in pre-
programming sight or vision. According to Erwin Panofsky, perspective is the central
component of Western 'will to form'. It is an expression of a schema linking the social,
cognitive, psychological and technical practices of the Western culture.87

It all started with the early fifteenth century Florentine painter, Filippo Brunelleschi,
who used standard surveying techniques, calculations and triangulation for his drawings.
Once rationality became the maxim which defined processes of representation, art slowly
moved to the realm of certainties. Epistemological principles took over and it became
irrefutable that the 'real' could exactly be plotted in space which entailed also, the formulae
for representing and controlling space. Mathematics, for the first time defined fine art which
would reach frenzied heights by the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries especially in
Britain. The new European academic tradition embraced an expressive dimension which
was aimed at inducing a sense of high philosophical principles and a formal dimension,
which required scientific exactitude in execution. Nothing could be arbitrary with respect to
these formal requirements, for example, the appearance of an object would depend on the
tangents of the planes of the forms in relation to the eye of the spectator, the angle of
incident light and its distance.88

Numerous experiments to create illusion of space were undertaken since the time of
Brunelleschi and perhaps even before him. However, Brunelleschi was the first to use the
scheme of linear perspective to construct a form of peep show to heighten illusion.
Brunelleschi's techniques of creation of an imagined space which could serve the artist's

86 Olwig 2002. 61.
88 For an extensive exposition of the philosophical and intellectual traditions in the evolution of perspective
and perspectival science see Kemp 1990.
need were later exhausted by future artists. Renaissance was also the time which initiated the first representations of architecture and buildings in drawings and paintings perhaps as an influence of Brunelleschi in order to exploit his innovations in the science of perspective used in the projection. This in turn, not only provided a cue for painting townscapes but also led to conceptualising the inner space of the building. Initial innovations in theatrical scenery attempted to reconstruct the inside of these buildings as setting for action on stage. Such spatial architecture, then, slowly travelled from indoors to portraying outdoor scenes to depict townscapes/landscapes as the backdrop of theatre action which Inigo Jones would perfect in the seventeenth century. Interestingly, this transition in the depiction in the backdrop followed an opposite trajectory of theatre performances moving from outdoors to indoors. As theatre moved from open spaces to enclosed space, usually the court, the perspective too changed from multi-point perspective of common people to a single point perspective of the head of the state whom the play was to entertain. Therefore, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the theatre scene was a topos catered to the taste and devoted to the cause of the monarch. This, along with other similar kinds of innovations like the peep box structure facilitated topographical and geographical representation in several ways.

**Staging the nation: landscapes in stage scenery**

Getting back to the masquing tradition of the seventeenth century, Olwig talks about the first traces of a premature idea of Britain as a nation emerging out of such practices. For example, in Ben Jonson's *The Masque of Darkness* first performed in the Stuart court in 1605, the symbolism of the nation state was all pervasive. The masque was famously stage designed by Inigo Jones:

First, for the scene was drawn a Landschap [...] which falling, an artificial scene was seen to shoot forth, as if flowed to the land raised with waves which seemed to move, and in some places the billow to break, as imitating that orderly disorder which is common in nature [...] The scene behind seemed a vast sea, and united with this that flowed forth, from the termination or horizon of which (being on the level of the state, which was placed in the upper end of the hall) were drawn by the lines of perspective, the whole work shooting downwards from the eye [...] So much for the bodily part, which was of Master Inigo Jones his design and act. 89

89 Jonson 1969. 510.
The focal point or the convergence of the lines of perspective was the eye of the monarch, in this case King James I, seated on an elevated throne above the general public. The geographical body of Britain was defined by the circumferential seas which while separating it from the rest of Europe, gave it a unique identity. This was obviously possible only when England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland came together as a consolidated territory. Here, the very abstraction of a unified geographical body was embodied represented by James I as it was him who brought about this unification by virtue of his blood and his marriage to the princess of Denmark, through which part of Scotland's disputed territory called the Orkneys was settled as dowry. This was the first time when the British Isles was addressed as a single geographical unit. In the masque the geo body of Britain is female which is united through marriage to the king. Numerous maps in Renaissance England and iconography in general, depicted the British territory as female. The tradition gathered even more currency during the reign of Elizabeth I when it was only but natural that her feminine body would be identified with the British empire. Her figure was visualised as Astrea, the goddess of justice and natural law and the Stuarts inherited the same tradition. Also, it is essential to mention at this point the predominant belief of cyclical renaissance of empires corresponding to the cyclical rotation in space. This spatial movement followed the solar cycle, by the logic of which, empires would at various historical moments be translated to a point west from its previous location. The Romans had believed that their empire had been transferred to the west from its previous Greek seat, and during the Renaissance, Britain was thought to be the location of the golden empire translated further west. According to Olwig:

The unified geometric space of the map, as well as the landscape scene, facilitated the ability to imagine that these historically and geographically diverse 'countries' made up a single country at the grand scale of Britain — masking the divergences between them by reducing qualitative differences to a question of quantitative scale. Distinctive places, each with its own history and customs, were thereby reduced to locations within the spatial coordinates of the map.\(^{90}\)

For a people the very act of inhabiting a characteristic and historically allusive native landscape evoked a sense of belonging and therefore resolved the problem of legitimacy without altering allegiances and loyalties to local provinces. The landscape evoked also an earlier Britain and tried to obliterate the memory of contemporary disunity.

The seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries witnessed the rise of the theatre as a vehicle for grand spectacle in the whole of Europe along with Britain. Princes and noble

\(^{90}\) Olwig 2002. 85.
families directed vast funds into the staging of courtly productions, well aware of their propaganda value. It had long been conventional for European theatrical settings to include symbols of heavenly figures, or a monarch in an elevated position, or both. In the Stuart court, this symbolic position of a monarch controlling space from above was not only exploited to the full but in cases also supplemented by that of a monarch controlling the illusory horizontal space of landscape scenery. The staged perspective, like the one in The Masque of Blackness, could create through the depiction of the scenery of Britain's landscape, an illusion of a spatial entity suggesting the state which the monarch controlled. What is identifiable here, is a Ptolemaic chorographic impulse for while laying down the geographic space of Britain, it simultaneously marks out the boundary of the state for choros technically means the boundary of the extension of some thing or the container or receptacle of a body. The period also saw a great upsurge of cartographic activity in Britain which strove to give it a clear demarcation and identity as rivalries with other European kingdoms/nation-states increased.

**Enclosures, estates and the cartographic gaze**

The unspoken relation between maps and landscape becomes still more visible in the eighteenth century. As Stephen Daniels points out:

> The rise in landscape painting in Britain during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries coincides with a renaissance in British cartography. [...] Cartography emerged as a specialist, but not entirely separate, discipline. [...] the remapping of Britain was part of a broader re-visioning of the country by travel writers, antiquarians, landscape gardeners, and landscape painters.

The phenomenon can be read as an all pervasive cultural movement during this time. This requires an interrogation of the social history of land ownership during the time. The Glorious Revolution of 1688, also called a 'bloodless revolution', was a bourgeois revolution which did not overthrow the monarchy and create a republic. It merely overthrew James II and installed monarchs who would accept the authority of the Parliament and function as per parliamentary jurisdiction. This was the triumph of, we should remember, a Whig-dominated Parliament - the landed gentry. Landscape once again became the centre of attention from this time on to the eighteenth century as the country-seats of an oligarchy of great estate owners. This caused obvious repercussions in the way landscape was perceived.

91 Ibid. 85.
92 Daniels 1994. 61.
For the first time also, the concept of enclosure evolved as a means to demarcate property. In the Middle Ages there was no large scale manipulation of the landscape in the display of personal status. It was only with the evolution of private property that the landscape began to be deliberately and extensively shaped for social and aesthetic purposes. The social elite, in this manner displayed power over land and inscribed their property with their own preferences. The dissolution of the monasteries in the 1530s under Henry VII and Anglican Reformation, ushered in a period of massive landholding. Previous to this there existed little or no trace of privately owned land as land was generally owned either by church or the monarch. After the dissolution of churches, vast acreages were suddenly more or less up for grabs. Although the Crown initially took over the estates of the monastic institutions, most of these lands had passed into private hands in order to raise revenue to fund continental military campaigns. This resulted in a hyperactive land market where property was sold and resold rapidly. It was the local gentry which benefited the most though great magnates of national importance also took over a huge portions of the land.93

**Landscape art in the age of the 'picturesque'**

Whereas the former Renaissance gardening a century back appeared to be an extension of the architecture of the mansion, the arcadian landscape gardens of the following century were oriented toward the surrounding countryside and were consciously blended with it as 'natural'. The boundary between the garden and countryside was deliberately blurred by erecting a fence in a ditch below eye level so that there seemed to be no barrier between the garden and the outside world. The subterfuge obliterated boundaries and helped create the illusion of a pastoral golden age. Though the image of the land estates disguised their dependence on non agricultural forms of income, it indicates the tremendous cultural importance of landed property in the eighteenth century. As English society became increasingly dependent on commercial and industrial wealth, the possession of land became an ever more powerful symbol of social status. The upwardly mobile class who profited from either trade or other sectors aspired to own land which symbolised social status. These were cordoned off from the rest of the labourers and field workers with enclosures and hedges which limited their access to the estates. The great estates flourished in the areas where land could be acquired easily and relatively cheaply. By the nineteenth century, the great land owners had taken control of vast portions of upland moorland areas which was

relatively of poorer quality and meant usually for grazing rather than cultivation. Only some of this was improved and converted to farmland upon acquiring, while most of these formed elaborate landscapes. Extensive planned landscapes such as these form a striking contrast to the landscapes that have been shaped and moulded by innumerable hands over the centuries. The boundary provided the opportunity to shape the landscape and display aesthetic taste. The grandly formal, geometric landscaping was based on the principles of Le Notre imported from the court of Louis XIV. Both in England and France these landscapes were seen as symbolic of the power of the landed elite. The avenues and alignments running out into the landscape showed the areas under the owner's control and emphasized the country house as a pivotal point in the landscape. Most of these landscapes were inspired by continental landscape art and paintings. It had been a part of fashionable and elite cultural and educational practices of the time to despatch young Englishmen on what was called the 'Grand Tour' to places like France and Italy. The places were seen to be rich in culture and these gentlemen, exposed to highly influential landscape paintings of Salvator Rosa, Claude Lorrain and Nicholas Poussin, brought home ideas of the 'sublime' and romantic scenery. Freshly back from the European tour and deeply impressed by the paintings of the grand masters, the youngsters sought to inscribe similar designs on the land of their own estates.

In the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries there came about the advent of another movement directly related to landscape in paintings and architecture called the 'picturesque', its main proponents in architecture being Uvedale Price and Richard Payne Knight. They believed that landscapes and gardens should imitate nature in the raw and parks should attempt to capture the true spirit of the Italian artists especially Salvator Rosa, like whose paintings, the landscape gardens would have drama and ruggedness that would serve to inspire awe. Accordingly, in many of the estates there were planted conifers and other exotic trees to make the scene suitably wild. In some estates rocky slopes waterfalls and fountains were artificially created. Within these rugged landscapes, a host of ornaments in the gothic and rural style were created. The consciously archaic style of these features romanticized rural communities of the past and their ability to survive in a hostile untamed landscape.

The lengthy and extensive discussion on landscape art was necessary here in order to understand how social changes materially constructed landscapes as private property, and secondly, how art, specifically continental landscape paintings influenced the aesthetic response to it. Both of these have a bearing on the construction of space/place. Whereas on

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94 Ibid. 143.
95 Ibid. 144-5.
the one hand these created space for the elite landlord and marked the region out as his
property, simultaneously they constructed and altered entire geographies to be identified
with a name. Later on in the chapter I shall return back to this point when studying
types perspectives on colonial space and its representation in pictographic terms to see how
similar the processes of spatial construction in the two different parts of the world have
been.

The 'country house' portrait and the 'garden conversation' piece

The theory of spatial technology thus suggested can further be explored when
looking at the cartographic and pictographic representations the period triggered, as has
already been mentioned before. Map itself, was admired as a work of art as late as the
eighteenth century before finally surrendering itself irrevocably to the realm of absolute
physical science. And as works of art, the maps commissioned by estate owners, often
served as ornamental show pieces proudly displayed in country houses. As has been
generally observed by numerous scholars, the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries saw
an unprecedented upsurge in landscape paintings. These too found their place on the walls
of manors of wealthy landlords as Humphrey Repton, a noted architect in the primary
decades of nineteenth century, observed that paintings and sculptures had lost their original
didactic purpose and came to be valued as wealth, furniture and ornament:

\[
\text{for whatever might be the original uses of pictures or statues, they are now only}
\text{considered as ornaments, which, by their number and excellence distinguish the taste,}
\text{the wealth, and dignity of their possessors.}^{96}
\]

Thomas Gainsborough's famous genre painting 'Mr and Mrs Andrews' (1749), probably
commissioned for the same reason, contains in it a demonstration of the socio-economic
values of the times. (see Fig. 6) As many wealthy landlords liked to get their estates painted
along with themselves as proud owners of these, there emerged distinct by products of
landscapes: the country house portrait and the garden conversation piece. Such paintings
often commissioned by the sitter or the landlord himself would be displayed in the manor as
pictorial miniature of all that he controlled. In 'Mr and Mrs Andrews', a newly wed couple
pose before the trunk of a mighty oak. The depiction of Auberies their estate, with its fields,
meadows and trees, takes up more space than the double portrait itself. Andrews represents
the upwardly mobile class as he poses as a member of the landed gentry, the free holding

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96 Repton, H. 'Sketches and Hints on Landscape Gardening' (1795), in The Landscape Gardening and
class of squires and recent peerage, who not only owned most of the country but had parliament in their hands, too. Without their consent, George II could neither impose taxes nor raise an army. The view from the garden bench gives the appearance of a boundless idyll in tune with the ideal park land proposed by the famous propagators of landscape gardens discussed below. It even includes an occasional cluster of trees aesthetically indispensable for the all too natural interruption of vision of vistas that would otherwise seem too wide, or too symmetrical. Andrews’ real source of income from his financing business in London is carefully concealed as land and agriculture seem to be his source of livelihood and position. The fields, the agricultural produce (symbolised by the piled up haystacks), the dogs, the seated wife, all of these appear to be subordinated by Andrews’ erect figure, gun in hands, master of all that is seen in the portrait. The painting meant as a wedding portrait also epitomised the correct match or wise marriage of the times as marriage happened to be the most significant way of merging and consolidating land and estates.

**Spaces of art and science: maps and landscape paintings**

Stephen Daniels remarks on the symbiotic influence cartography and landscape paintings had on one another. The socio-cultural reasons for the large scale production of the two in England have just been discussed above. While the two media complemented each other, they also on the other hand, competed against each other. While surveyors gazed through theodolites, artists and painters pondered on elements of correct perspectives and representations according to principles of the ‘picturesque’. Theorists of the picturesque however considered cartography or for that matter, any topographic or panoramic view as inferior in nature and a brazen display of power (over property). They lobbied for a cultivation of taste and advocated representation of short focus views which would evoke the sense of drama of the great landscape painters. In 1805, Henry Fuseli, as professor of the Royal Academy, denounced maps, saying:

*The landscape of Titian, of Mola, of Salvator, of the Poussins, Claude, Rubens, Elzheimer, Rembrandt and Wilson, spurns all relation with this kind of map-work.*

However, even with these strictures, landscape artists continued to get influenced by map work and often their work was recast according to survey and activities. Stephen Daniel speaks of how two of England’s most important landscape artists, John Constable and

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97 Quoted in Daniels 1994. 62.
J.M.W. Turner were influenced by the visual model of the map in expanding their horizon to be able to accommodate a gamut of geographical informations, knowledge, associations and references. Constable was influenced by other scientific and meteorological texts and diagrams, for example in his famous series of studies of cloud formation many of which he incorporated in his landscape scenes. His paintings of the Stour Valley were influenced by the large scale Ordnance Survey that went on at that time including one by his father. As Daniels says:

If we are seeking parallels for Constable's documentary style – its elevated views of sites from various angles, its use of landmarks for orientation, its even focus, its detailed differentiation and integration of features, its specification of these features' form and function – we should look beyond painting to maps and manuals of surveying and military drawing.  

Constable's paintings were so noteworthy for their accuracy and details that he was offered the post of drawing master to cadets learning to depict terrain at the new Royal Military College at Great Marlow. Though he ultimately desisted joining the service, the fact bears an important reference to the nexus between survey and art, between science and aesthetics. Another acclaimed topographical painter of the eighteenth century, Paul Sandby, credited with popularising the scenes of Scottish Highlands began his career as a draftsman of the military survey of Scotland. J.M.W. Turner too, made a two-month sketching tour of the West Country on a commission to produce watercolours to W.B. Cooke's *Picturesque Views of the Southern Coast*. In this series of paintings, Turner embraces the prospect or elevated view which is a conventional feature of topography and maps because of its capability of scalar transformation of a huge space into a small space while accommodating a great deal of detail. For these paintings, Turner closely observed the physical and human geography of places and also consulted a detailed gazetteer on the region, from which he made notes on its history and antiquities, geology and manufactures. According to Daniels, these paintings were influenced by the maps of the Ordnance Survey of the area which were published in the first decade of nineteenth century. The final engravings of these maps, according to Daniels:

...do convey the substance of the landscape. Through graduated hachuring and fine delineation of rock formations (of coastal cliffs and moorland tors), the West Country emerges as a three dimensional, physiographic image, as a landscape with a structure as well as a surface.  

98 Ibid. 62.
99 Ibid. 67-9.
Another painter, Robert Dawson, who was a contemporary of Turner and Constable, said to have influenced these drawings, perfected the genre of topographical paintings. He worked as an instructor at the Royal Military College before joining the Ordnance Survey. He developed a characteristic style of drawing relief that used precise elevation points called 'spot heights', brush and watercolour and hachuring. It soon was upheld as the 'British National Style' originally borrowed from the French manual, Memorial topographique et militaire. Dawson talked of his paintings as applications of “natural-history-principle of drawing”. In these sorts of paintings, the physical features and geological structure along with the foundation of the land needed to be first understood before representation.

Gombrich argues that in the western tradition painting had been pursued as a science through a process of “ceaseless experimentation”. As if to match those very words, Constable asserts in one of his lectures:

Painting is a science, and should be pursued as an enquiry into the laws of nature. Why, then, may not landscapes be considered as a branch of natural philosophy, of which pictures are but the experiments?

In an age where representation was an epistemological exercise, it was bound to be incorporated within the paradigm of science for paintings deal with visual facts which are reported by the eyes and recorded by the hands. Martin Kemp talks of the concept of imitation of nature based on scientific principles which found inspiration in two branches of optics – the geometrical science of perspective, already talked about earlier, and the physical science of colour. The act of reproduction of nature was from the eighteenth century onwards, implicated within an existing arena of technical jargon. It was, after all, an entire action not only of picture-making but also of view-making.

**Travel and landscape paintings: new ways of seeing**

As mentioned earlier, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw an unforeseen profusion of landscape paintings. Much of these paintings were the direct outcome of the socio-historical background related above. The continental tours popularly called the Grand Tour undertaken by young gentlemen acted as an important reason behind the production of landscape paintings. These served the purpose of pictographic records of memorable views, more or less the same purpose that photography would serve from the second half of the

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100 Gombrich 1962. 29.  
102 Paris 1947.  
103 Kemp 1990.
nineteenth century onwards. Therefore these paintings had a strong connection with travel and recounting. As a popular periodical says, acknowledging the bond between travel and landscape paintings:

The great encouragement which has been manifested of late years for the cultivation of landscape drawing, has originated principally in the love which has been evinced for making tours, to explore the beautiful scenery of our island; [...] the merit of having created so general a love for travelling. 104

Here, the magazine talks also about the touring books written and popularised by Reverend William Gilpin, the chief proponent of the 'picturesque' which had become a cult by the nineteenth century in Britain. During the 1790s, three works provided an aesthetic and instigated this movement: Richard Payne Knight's didactic poem The Landscape (1794), Uvedale Price's An Essay on the Picturesque (1794) and Humphry Repton's Sketches and hints on picturesque gardening (1795). The 'picturesque' of course had a host of jargon and techniques of its own. Almost certainly, tour guides and watercolour instruction books trained the public about the conventions of understanding and appreciating nature in situ which increased the value of the painting manifold in comparison to those done purely from imagination. For the first time, therefore, first hand factual observation became more important than imagination. All kinds of technical and optical devices surfaced in the market which aided the view-making and the factual observation. These were called 'artists' viewers' and comprised of small lenses like pocket magnifying glasses, the 'Claude Glass', a type of convex mirror, the camera obscura and the camera lucida. 105 These instruments helped the untrained and the amateurs to first of all recognise a scene as characteristically aesthetic and thereby reproduce the same in drawings according to the rules and prescriptions laid down by the professors of the 'picturesque'. The art of seeing nature,

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105 The lenses when held up to the eye showed a reduced image of the entire landscape which provided the artist with a ready suitably composed scene. The Claude Glass is a round or oblong convex mirror, four inches broad, backed with dark foil and bound in leather like a little pocket book. This eighteenth and nineteenth century popular device could be held up to reflect the view and the dark foil gave greater depth to the shades and lowered the tone. The resulting diminished picture looked like one by Claude, as Gilpin noted: "It gives the object of nature a soft mellow tinge, like the colouring of that great master."

The camera obscura is a box like device open on one side. On the top were bellows with a convex lens and an adjustable plain mirror in which an image of the landscape could be seen as in the view finder of the camera today. A sheet of paper was laid on the base, and by optical refraction the image was thrown onto it.

The camera lucida was a long stalk fitted at the end with a prism and a group of lenses fixed at eye level reflecting the landscape below. The artist could see both the image and the pencil point at the same time when drawing complicated subjects.
according to Constable, is “as much to be acquired as the art of reading the Egyptian hieroglyphics.” According to Gombrich:

... stimulated by the rise of science and the new interest in factual observation, questions of vision were much debated by artists of the nineteenth century.\(^{106}\)

Moreover, Gombrich draws our attention to a new edge to this utterance which was targeted towards the general public rather than the trained artists. He identifies a slow but steady journey which unfolds over centuries culminating in the nineteenth century. This, Gombrich calls, a progress towards visual truth, motivated to disentangle what is seen from what is already known. Hence such guided observation would be tantamount to enquiry into the hitherto unknown laws of nature invoking a scientific objectivity.

New experiments with ways of viewing also mark the age. The relationship between art and science during the age gearing towards Enlightenment did not stop with the process of painting itself, it also stretched beyond it to modes of exhibiting them. Though there were debates centering on true art and that which was merely illusion, a number of optical machines thrived in the arena of entertainment which made use of these paintings. It is difficult to say which was the more popular and most visited - the exhibition hall or these special theatrical spaces which made use of pictures in innovative ways. Artists themselves were divided in their opinions towards these innovations. Constable himself in a letter written in 1820's, comments on a new invention called the diorama which is Greek for 'through view':

It is in part a transparency; the spectator is in a dark chamber, and it is very pleasing, and has great illusion. It is without the pale of the art, because its object is deception.

The art pleases by reminding, not by deceiving.\(^{107}\)

On the other hand, that such devices were indeed considered of worthy attention of serious artists is shown by Gainsborough's 'show box' in circa 1781-82, with its beautifully painted transparencies.\(^{108}\) Gainsborough's show box is said to be last of the descendants of Dutch peep shows. The static and relatively sober effects of such boxes were slowly going out of fashion to be replaced by a myriad of new technologies capable of creating sensational results and on a much larger scale such as Philipstal's phantasmagoria and the the dioramas

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\(^{106}\) Gombrich 1962. 12.

\(^{107}\) Ibid. 34.

\(^{108}\) Gainsborough's show box is equipped with a movable eyepiece containing a lens, and a sliding carriage for the changing of the transparencies. Rear illumination is provided by a series of lamps diffused by a silk screen. The light radiates through the glass on which the images are painted, to produce striking effects of chiaroscuro.
which established the early reputation of the French inventor of photography, Daguerre. In this, Gainsborough is said to have been influenced by the great theatre showman, Philippe de Loutherbourg.

Panoramic images of cities from high viewpoints which first appeared in the sixteenth century, became quite widespread in the seventeenth century. The unrolling of an all round view on to the flat surface required a series of perspectival and geometrical experiments in which the camera obscura proved to be handy to produce a serial image of a wide prospect. By the early nineteenth century it was recognised that the camera obscura was indispensable for the “delineators of that beautiful representation called the Panorama.”¹⁰⁹ By this time the panorama was at the height of its popularity as a public spectacle. (see Fig. 1) The large scale panorama as a step in spectacle was invented by Robert Barker in Edinburgh. While Robert Barker's idea of 360° painting had a certain novelty of value: It was his conception of the painting as large scale exhibition mimicking nature that was his most original and influential contribution. He called the proposed exhibition 'la nature a coup d'œil' or 'nature at a glance' later renamed 'panorama' in Greek meaning 'all' and 'view'.¹¹⁰ He chose the vantage point of Carlton Hill, from which he took a series of views, all from a single perspective which could be arranged in a semicircle and later around a complete circle. He patented it and in 1789 exhibited his panorama for the first time to be soon followed by new premises in Leicester Square, the most popular of them being the Colosseum. When Robert Barker exhibited his first panorama in Edinburgh, he portrayed himself in the advertisements not as an inventor of innovative amusement but as a radical artistic innovator who had swept aside the conventions of landscape paintings. He wanted himself to be viewed as an emancipator of landscape art and his pictures as "Improvement of Painting, which relieves that sublime Art from a Restraint it has ever laboured under".¹¹¹ The views which soon became popular ranged from sights of London from the top of the dome of the St. Paul's Cathedral, scenes of military campaigns and battles won by Britain in various places across the world, views of continental hot spots and places and regions across the globe. (see Fig. 5) They soon became in John Constable's words “all the rage”.¹¹² The panorama and later joined by the diorama kept the flame of touristic impulse alive in the heart of the imperial metropolis which gazed with awe and

¹⁰⁹ Quoted in Kemp 1990. 213.
¹¹⁰ The word 'panorama' was first used in 1791 for the advertisement of the picture of London. See Hyde 1988.
¹¹¹ Ibid. 21.
¹¹² Quoted in Ibid. 20.
wonder at various known and unknown scenes. The coming of photography shortly afterwards in 1839 added to the vogue of the optical machines which now attempted to reproduce two eyed vision. The diorama originated from the same source from which photography too originated. The name of the person is Louis Jacques Mande Daguerre, formerly a decorator, manufacturer of mirrors, painter of panoramas and theatrical stage illusions. The diorama was a popular theatrical experience viewed by an audience in a highly specialised theatrical set up. People poured in to view landscape paintings which would steadily change its hue over a time of ten to fifteen minutes after which the audience on a massive turn-table would turn to see another view of the same nature, and then a third. It worked purely by creating an illusion, a make believe world as it were, of natural eye witness experience. The hyper realism thus involved invigorated the idea of travel and movement across places.

The public consumption of sceneries and landscape paintings by now had acquired a theatrical status. And like the seventeenth century masques, they reappeared once again on stage to entertain audiences only this time equipped with far advanced technologies of stage craft. By the late seventeenth century the stage hands usually had a painted canvas dropped from above, perhaps by rollers, similar to a curtain. Numerous examples attest to the attention given to “scenes” and the means by which they were made impressive. When Pepys visited Drury Lane while it was closed by the plague in 1664-5, he talked of the paintings as being “very pretty”, and Prince Cosmo III in his visit to the London theatres when travelling in England says, “The scenery is very light, capable of a great many changes, and embellished with beautiful landscapes.”113 In the early eighteenth century what had emerged were techniques of painting angular asymmetrical perspective. Bibiena’s innovation of a flexible scheme was introduced on London stage, resulting in the impression of diagonal placement of scenic architecture, opening the stage up to new loftiness and vastness of space. There was a growing tendency toward elaborate scenes and props depicting specific places. On 22 May 1736, Francis Hayman, the designer and painter at Drury Lane, brought out “A new Entertainment after the Manner of Spring Garden, Vauxhall with a new scene representing the Place.”114 According to Sconten, during this time:

113 Avery 1968. lxvii.
in addition to spectacular eye-appeal was added the pleasure of recognition. The theatre has always been the home of illusion, so the scene painter's fancy continued to give local habitation on canvas to imagined scenes from the poet's descriptions... 115

By mid-eighteenth century, the nature of the place depicted in the theatre scenes changed. In place of imaginary or universal landscapes these now demanded precision and accuracy. A vogue developed of sending stage painters to specific locations to sketch materials for stage scenery. For Example, Colman sent scenery painters Richards and Dahl to Stratford on Avon to sketch the amphitheatre there in 1769 for using in the plays Jubilee and Harlequin's Jubilee, and Dahl was sent on a trip to Windsor in 1771 to sketch scenes to be used in the Fairy Prince. Sheridan allowed Loutherbourg £ 35 to travel to Kent and Derbyshire to make sketches for scenes for The Camp (1778) and The Wonders of Derbyshire (Drury Lane, 8 January, 1779), which was a pantomime entirely built round scenic views of that country. This also initiated the culture of employing a number of Royal Academician landscape artists for the painting of stage scenes.116 In the eighteenth century, actors were said to perform in front of the scenery and not within it. The box set, complete with three walls and a ceiling, did not come into use until the early 1830's. The wings were placed in the groove that, in each of the sets, lay furthest downstage. The number of the sets of grooves corresponded to the number of the wings which, in Drury Lane and Covent Garden, were usually ten, i.e. five to a side.117 Wing after wing were laid in diminishing perspective until the painted scene was seen at the very back of the stage.

Attempts at rendering the scenery more realistic, at heightening the illusion, were constantly being made, notably by the most eminent scene designer of the late eighteenth century, Philippe James de Loutherbourg. He was the first artist to effectively use cut out scenes. In Omai (1785), a play whose stage craft will be dealt with in detail later, a single view of the frozen ocean was said to contain forty two separate scenes. (see Figs. 9 and 10). He painted a great many transparencies by means of which he was able to achieve a three dimensional picture. Here he broke away form the standard format of Restoration stage. The illusion was also maintained by the fact that the floor of the stage in all the theatres was raked, the slope upwards from the footlights towards the rear being sometimes fairly steep. John Kemble undertook the actual construction of buildings with towers, battlements, drawbridges and archways on stage. These scenes were placed not frontally but at an angle.

115 Ibid. cxxii.
117 Hogan 1968. lix-lxiii.
on the stage creating a neat perspective. William Capon, working on improvement in the same principle, insisted upon exact archaeological detail. 118

As the nineteenth century progressed there evolved a very different conception of the stage: the stage space was not simply decorated but also shaped. Specially painted scenery, upholstery, built out scenery, modeled scenery practicables, extensive use of objects, combined with improved lighting techniques provided the stage with a radically new plasticity. Acts, which were increasingly set in foreign and usually eastern lands cashed in on exoticism while the staged spaces celebrated their new found materiality under the criteria of 'visual truth':

The physical stage was now asked to create place – or, rather, to recreate place – to a degree that was never before expected. The stage became the in situ display, the perfect reproduction that stood in metonymic relation to an Eastern totality. The theatre's re(created) geography developed in tandem with its new sense of the physical possibilities of the stage space. 119

Certain geographies developed as imagined space existing outside the field of vision. These were the geographies which, though not seen, were being fervently mapped at this time. Though this process transpired at various points in the society, for a sizeable number of Britain's population, these new spaces existed on the stage and other forms of spectacles. Britain's developing conception of the exotic 'new world' were inseparable from technological changes in the processes of reproduction which were employed in theatres and other places of popular entertainment.

Sybil Rosenfeld talks of the same taste, which was catered for in the panoramas, being mirrored on the stage. 120 It was de Loutherbourg who really established and popularised topographical scenery through theatrical practice. He exploited the emerging excitement with the 'new world' and for the first time introduced it on a grand scale on the stage. De Loutherbourg's and John O'Keefe's enormously successful pantomime Omai: or A Trip round the World performed in 1785 provides an example of representation of colonial space and colonized peoples. Omai has been read by scholars as:

a translation into entertainment of ethnographic moments in which the European strangers confronted the otherness of the Pacific island natives, tried to describe that otherness and in that description possess them. 121

118 Ibid, lxiv.
119 Ziter 1997.
120 Rosenfeld 1981, 33.
121 Quoted in O'Quinn 2005, 74.
It can be said that de Loutherbourg's experiments with exotic settings reached its culmination in *Omai*. (see Fig. 8) Much before *Omai*, faced with the challenge of representing an Egyptian setting for *Sethona* (Drury Lane, 1774), de Loutherbourg consulted Montfaucon's voyages and F.L. Norden's *Travels in Egypt and Nubia* (1757).\(^{122}\) *Omai*, which was first performed in Drury Lane, was described in one opening night review “as the stage edition of Captain Cook's voyage to Otaheite (Tahiti), Kamchatka, the Friendly Islands [Tonga] &c, &c.”\(^{123}\) The lavish costume and stage design were scrupulously overseen by John Webber, Captain Cook's chief illustrator on the Third Voyages. Webber's involvement was required to produce an effect of ethnographic authenticity. According to O'Keefe's *Recollections* (II, 14), de Loutherbourg also took his designs from the prints and drawings of by William Hodges, who too had accompanied Captain Cook on his explorations.\(^{124}\) Loutherbourg's costume, prop and stage design were also influenced by Ashton Lever, who owned an extensive collection of souvenirs and antiquities from Cook's voyage.\(^{125}\) Speaking of the pantomime's closing spectacle, a reviewer comments:

A procession of the natives of different islands and other places visited by Captain Cooke is here introduced. The music preserves the characteristic airs of different people in the procession as much as science can approach barbarity. The APOTHEOSIS of Captain Cooke closes this most admirable assemblage of curious views.\(^{126}\)

However, reviewers have commented about the superiority of the paintings themselves in comparison to the pantomime itself in which it was presented:

Such a picture – in point of all that constitutes the sublime of the art – the drawing and disposition of the figure – the well expressed countenance [...] such a picture will immortalize the author as the subject of it – and were there no other merit in the pantomime would hold forth the attractions of an EXHIBITION in itself.\(^{127}\)

As the century progressed, more localised scenery were shown and were accompanied by the demand for greater accuracy of representation. However, it was not

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\(^{122}\) This is an early example of the taste for Egyptian backgrounds which were rampant later. De Loutherbourg's scene of the legendary Ninus's tomb was inaccurate and faulty as it depicted a pyramid for the tomb. The same scenery, however, came in handy later for the performance of *Semiramis* (Drury Lane, 1776).

\(^{123}\) Quoted in O'Quinn 2005. 74.

\(^{124}\) Rosenfeld 1981. 34.

\(^{125}\) Sir Ashton Lever's Museum, which was otherwise known as the Holophusicon, had an extensive collection of South Sea materials from the Cook expeditions. These were on display next door to Loutherbourg's work shop. Loutherbourg almost certainly used various objects, vestments and head dresses from the collection as models for his design.

\(^{126}\) *Town and Country* (December, 1785). Quoted in O'Quinn 2005. 75.

always necessary and neither was it feasible to send scene painters to the spot to faraway places, specially to the East which was increasingly gaining prominence and popularity over the banal English castles and forts or European scenes such as the Pantheon, Marseilles or Venice. In such cases pictures made for other purposes were copied for stage scenery. (see Fig. 3) As in the case of Omai, such imitations were the only feasible method when performances were based on the Orient, India or the South Seas. (see Fig. 2) This expansion of the appeal of landscape imagery forms part of an ongoing process of imperial agenda in which, as Captain Cook's first biographer Andrew Kippis put it in 1788, "new (are opened up) for a poetical fancy to range in". According to Roskill, this process persists until the territory in question (in the above case, Tahiti) is finally occupied and its aesthetic and "poetical fancy" subordinated under commercial and military interests.128 Theatre's relationship to colonialism emerged over time due to theatre's inherent locality and spatiality. By such means, the oriental and the exotic were presented to an audience whose tastes were becoming more and more antiquarian and romanticized. Steadily in the nineteenth century, the world existed as a picture or an exhibition to see and possess. This triggered a nuanced and dual process of representing not only the ever expanding British Empire but also the effects of it through theatre's propagandist truth claims that it projected a real place and that the representation itself, was authentic and real.

The preceding exposition prepares a groundwork through which we can now view Indian landscapes in British art. The study of the development of social, cultural and intellectual (scientific and mathematical) climate which conditioned the response to nature and landscape in Britain itself will now help understanding the distinctive way of "seeing" Indian landscape, and thereby of possessing it and shaping it. Seeing is transformed into an active intervention, for, through seeing, land is 'discovered' and won. We have already explored the ways in which representations of landscapes in visual culture along with cartographic activities constructed the idea of a unified Great Britain as a nation commanded by a single head and later the commonwealth. It was premised on visual mastery over a given space. The same paradigm could in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries be re-implemented to express a unified territory, (which Edward Ziter calls 'theatrical geography') which existed primarily in the colonial consciousness as part and property of the British Empire.

128 Roskill 1997, 104.
I shall look at the reception of Indian-oriental landscapes in the sphere of public entertainment and popular culture in the following chapter which I also reserve for the study of landscape art as practiced by the British in India. Indic themes, motifs and ornamentalism have existed in European visual culture ever since the two regions came into contact. Travelogues of visitors to India already existed in Elizabethan and Jacobean England. However, India in landscapes was a much later phenomenon. It emerged at around the same time as continental landscapes thrived in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with a rampant touristic impulse propelling it. From the late eighteenth century onwards, India existed in the imperial metropolis not 'in' but increasingly 'as' spectacle.