THE GEOGRAPHY OF EMPIRE IN ENGLISH LITERATURE
1580–1745

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Illustrations

Introduction: productions of empire

Nothing could be more political than just the way objects are spatially distributed.   Eagleton in Ross *Emergence of Social Space* xiii

I prefer to call this generative doubt the opening of non-isomorphic subjects, agents, and territories of stories unimaginable from the vantage point of the cyclopian, self-satiated eye of the master subject. The Western eye has fundamentally been a wandering eye, a travelling lens. These peregrinations have often been violent and insistent on mirrors for a conquering self – but not always.
     Haraway *Simians* 192.

This book is about the production of space. More particularly, it explores the production of an empire, the creation of "Englands out of England" (Purchas *Hakluytus*, I.xxxviii). The expansive multiplication of certain (extremely unstable) spatial and ideological formulations was as much a question of imagination and myth as hard-nosed calculation and economic realities. My intention is to expose the innards, the facts and fictions, of a society and culture that by 1745 had coalesced into an empire that stood for liberty and commerce. In this project I hope to reinforce Edward Said's contention that the "major ... determining, political horizon of modern Western culture [is] imperialism" (*Culture* 60). I have, perhaps, taken the risky step of applying Said's thesis to the very beginnings of what became, though not inevitably, the British empire. The 1580s is a time when imperialism clearly had more to do with far-fetched dreams than with far-flung territories. In light of this, I will follow the useful distinction made by an historian of Empire, between "Imperial Britain" and the "British Empire." The former "indicates the informing spirit" or "consciousness" that aids and abets, sometimes precedes and often falsifies the territorial materiality of the latter (Cramb *Origins and Destiny* 5). Nonetheless, in the last decades of

the sixteenth century the fairy tale of an English imperium began not only to gather pace but seriously take up space.

1580 was a ground-breaking year for "Imperial Britain." As Lesley Cormack has shown in *Charting an Empire*, it was a year that saw the creation of new geographies based on imperial designs. Edmund Spenser's short trip across the sea to Ireland coincided with Drake's triumphant return from circumnavigating the globe. Drake's achievement, and booty, ignited a frenzy of financial and literary speculation (far more of the latter than the former) and attempts at colonizing the New World. The new confidence, though short-lived as far as the Americas were concerned, rejuvenated England's pursuits in the Old World. A precursor of the East India Company, the hugely successful Turkey/Levant Company was founded in 1581, while Pet and Jackman set off to find the North East Passage to China. The world appeared to be within England's grasp, even if its nearest colony, as Spenser discovered, remained a world away. Spatial relations were rapidly being reconfigured through the dreams and nightmares of a renewed global and imperial sensibility – a sensibility given keener definition in the face of the annexation of Portugal by Philip II of Spain. New ways of organizing space on the ground as it were, whether the rise of the slave plantation in Brazil or of an environmentalism in England centred on country estates and progressive agricultural techniques, also mark 1580.[1] The aftermath of Drake's return brought these developments into focus under the lens of England's desire to replicate the success of the Spanish and Portuguese. The next century and a half saw this desire gain systematic form, territorial domination, and cultural legitimacy. The narration of this history is the subject of the following pages.

This book then explores the relationship between "Imperial Britain" and the evolution of the "British Empire" – the former often being at odds with the reality of the latter. Its design is to lay bare the sinews connecting the cultural imaginary to that multifaceted and uneven spatial production, empire-building. One early example of these sinews is the relationship of Thomas More's *Utopia* to the New World. If More was inspired by Spain's exploits in the New World, in 1531 Vasco de Quiroga began to build two cities for Indians in Mexico based on *Utopia* (Benevolo *European City* 119). Spain's experiments in the Americas later spurred England into imperial activity with the second invasion of Ireland and forays to North America. It is this type of transaction and its repercussions within the Atlantic world of European imperialism that this book seeks to examine. But as in the case of *Utopia* there is often a

crucial twist to this Eurocentric flow of information. If More's utopia springs from the knowledge produced by Spanish conquesting in the Americas – Vespucci's name appears in the book – then it is more than likely that Amaurotum's urban layout (essentially a square) derives from, as Hanno-Walter Kruft points out, "the influence of the pre-Columbian town plans of Central America" (*Architectural Theory* 229). Was Vasco de Quiroga simply returning to Mexico a Europeanized version of a Central American spatial form, one seen in Europe as original to an Englishman's inspirational vision?[2] Thus, the relationship between literature and colonialism is not only part of Europe's Atlantic world. It is also infused by a transcultural exchange with the colonized, although the latter's influence is usually relegated to a marginal, dependant role, if not erased altogether. My goal, therefore, is similar to that advocated by Gauri Viswanathan when she remarks, "with sustained cross-referencing between the histories of England and its colonies the relations between Western culture and imperialism will be progressively illuminated" (*Masks of Conquest* 169).

More's and Vasco de Quiroga's utopian schemes were part of a growing belief in the ability to manipulate nature and thereby improve the design of the human environment and its productive capacity. New ways of evaluating the environment were, as David Harvey points out, based on a "Cartesian vision of fixed property rights [and] of boundaries in abstract space" (*Justice* 265). Colonialism was the cutting edge of this ideology. Keith Thomas has shown that by the late sixteenth century and with the rise of Natural History nature is no longer seen as something solely to be dominated (*Man and the Natural World* 51). Economic exigencies, the acquisition of social status, and agricultural advances meant that nature was seen more in terms of the market than mayhem or the mysterious. Political changes also led to the production of a new nature. The abolition of feudal tenures and wardships, for instance, and the resultant greater security of landowners at the expense of copyholders, made "possible long-term, planned estate management" (Hill *Intellectual* 288–9). These interdependent forces, fuelled by England's political maneuvers and sense of providentialism, led landowners and merchants to harness and profit from resources in competition with other European powers. Under new structures of investment, speculation, and exploitation nature became a valuable commodity: a piece of property to be secured, a space of control, and the proper distribution of assets. Increasingly segregated and specialized, by the end of the sixteenth century the selling of space, both domestic and

exotic, began to unify the British Isles and propel England overseas. As the exploitation became systematic the idealization of the land increased.

Such changes in England lent themselves to the ideology of a natural, hereditary, and meritocratic order, usually sanctioned by God and overseen by a benevolent ruler/landowner. We can trace the benefactors, at odds with the crown but acting as a local monarch, from Jonson's "To Penshurst" to Fielding's Squire Allworthy and Richardson's Sir Charles Grandison. The legitimacy of this superintendent rule was embedded in the space it presided over, most often a landscape centred on an ancient residence, and what Pope describes as "Nature Methodiz'd" ("An Essay on Criticism" *Poetry and Prose* 40). A political and aesthetic methodizing of nature went hand in glove with its economic re-formation by landowners. As Fernand Braudel points out "Cultures . . . are ways of ordering space just as economies are" (*Perspective* 65). Spatial structures were to reflect the subordination of nature to the cultured. Literature became replete with ideal versions of space. Lauro Martines's writing on the fifteenth-century building boom of *palazzi* in Florence is pertinent here. He argues that the elites' awareness of being able to extend and renew their power through spatial forms resulted in an interest in ideal cities and landscapes. Martines sees this as a "politically conservative conception, a response to the rising demand by princes and urban elites for grandeur and show, order and ample space, finesse and finished surfaces" (in Twombly *Power and Style* 17). Finished surfaces were only the most obvious display of the determination of elites to control the theater of social relations. Imbedded in these spatial morphologies is the crucial question of who are the subjects of history and geography, and who are the objects.

Culture, however, has the ability to transform subjects, to elevate or debase them. In other words "Imperial Britain," whether seen through the lens of literature or architecture, transfigures the brutal realities of the "British Empire." As Viswanathan argues, "the split between the material and the cultural practices of colonialism is nowhere sharper than in the progressive refinement of the rapacious, exploitive, and ruthless actor of history into the reflective subject of literature" (*Masks of Conquest* 20–1). The self-conscious, expansionist subject who must wrestle with the nefarious plots that threaten to steal away a civilized, Protestant, and English identity populates culture's empire. Further, "science," art, and literary culture were awash with an imperial mentality. The partnership of the mathematician Thomas Harriot and the

Figure 1 Frontispiece, Thomas Harriot *A Briefe and True Report* London, 1590.

artist John White in the settlement of Roanoke amply displays such a culture. Fittingly, the frontispiece to Harriot's *A Brief and True Report of ... Virginia* (1590 edition) exemplifies the way in which Europeans and the culture of the elite framed those it sought to dominate. The classical triumphal arch is decorated with Indians who are clearly players, if

marginal, in the narrative plot situated at the centre. As ornaments the Indians enrich an English set and design; they may loom large as characters within Harriot's text, but they are subordinates within the world-historical theatre of the English and their vision. The structure neatly embodies the relations of empire mediated through culture, in this case an illustration which invokes the masque, theatre, and classical architecture. Whether in Harriot's scenario or in the masque – both of which portray the bringing of order to confusion – the actors are part of the taming of nature, the transformation of perspective whereby the imperial English self is left in control of space.

As if commenting on the frontispiece, Bruno Zevi states that "architecture is environment, the stage on which our lives unfold" (*Architecture as Space* 32). Colonialism more urgently foregrounded the link between control over the environment and the actors. The theatrical metaphor used by authors like Pope to describe spatial relations and used by spatial designers like Inigo Jones to buttress the power of royalty and patrons points to the constructed and tenuous, even illusory, nature of elite rule. Nevertheless, space was the surest way to ensure control over opposition real or imagined. By studying spatial design – especially in the case of the English, who concentrated on legitimizing imperialism via the occupation of space rather than the subordination of other peoples – we can learn a good deal about the ideologies and conflicts within colonial and metropolitan society. As theorists of architecture from Vitruvius onward have recognized, social order rested on spatial design and vice versa.

The process of culturally framing or coordinating resistant populations for specific economic purposes was however undermined by colonialism itself. As it produces itself, colonial society threatens to unravel because its "natural order" is constantly questioned by the proximity of and interchange with other societies. Its inevitable cross-cultural and territorially uncertain character means that the colonizers' social order is in constant jeopardy. The constructedness of colonial society, hence its flaws and failings, are exposed as it attempts to conceal them in the interests of presenting a natural, coherent, and controled society fit for rulership. Edmund Spenser recognized as much through his years in Ireland: "how quickly doth that country alter men's natures" (*View* 151). Hence, central to the colonial enterprise is the project of working up a dominant hegemonic order which invalidates, dismisses, and renders unimaginable the possibility of counter-hegemonic sites, systems, and societies. As Stephen Saunders Webb has demonstrated, from the

beginning England's colonial ventures were as much military as they were mercantile in nature. The military, no matter where they were stationed, carried out disciplinary measures to ensure loyalty to the monarch and subservience to colonial rule (*Governors* xvi–xvii). In order to keep the vulnerable subject in a constant state of check the theaters of war and culture are inextricably bound.

If counter-hegemonic rumblings upset Spenser and the New English in Ireland, the military also had to put its foot down on the other side of the Atlantic. In 1610 "*Lawes Divine, Morall and Martiall*" had to be instituted in the early Jamestown colony in order to dissuade insubordination by colonists (Morgan *American Slavery* 74). It was not only Indians who needed to be set within the proper standards of behaviour. The laws were mainly directed at the blurring of socio-spatial categories by colonists who defected to the Powhatan confederacy. The "natural" rule of the authorities is radically undermined by the "generative doubt" or the "unimaginable," as Haraway puts it in the epigraph above, created by the interaction of different cultural systems. Under such propitious circumstances colonists chose to cross from their own into the space of the Other. Whether in the colonies or in the British Isles, cultural spaces were contested, interactive, and were viewed strategically by all competing groups. Essentially the contest is over resources. As Carole Fabricant puts it, unsettling prospects concerning socio-spatial mobility and stability "inevitably revolv[e] around the question of who has access to land and on what terms" (in Nussbaum and Brown *New Eighteenth Century* 255). Thus Vasco de Quiroga's plans, like those of Thomas More, colonial leaders, and landowners, sought to "improve" land so as to rid it of conflict and disorder; those who did not or refused to be bit players in the drama of Europe's manifest destiny were casualties of history. Because so many resisted becoming casualties, the ideal or paradisal and the fortified are inseparable. Colonial utopias, which are so often invoked in one form or another in the texts studied in the following chapters, plot the great master-narrative of (benevolent) imperialism battling numerous "great master-mischief[s]." In Edmund Burke's day these were identified as Jacobinism coupled with that timeless imperial illness "Indianism" (*Works* VI, 58).[3]

The authors and texts that I examine exemplify the interaction between literary culture and the developing world of Britain's first empire. Few of the major authors during this period did not invest either financially,

politically or bodily in colonial ventures, and this must surely tell us something about who became established writers, how they saw themselves as writers, and what constituted literary subject matter and culture generally. Edmund Spenser, John Milton, Aphra Behn, Mary Rowlandson, Daniel Defoe, and Jonathan Swift (as well as a slew of other "colonial surveyors") imagine, interrogate, and narrate the adventure and geography of empire. Yet more than being inextricably part and parcel of an imperial culture these particular writers have a personal stake in colonialism: as colonists (Spenser, Behn, Rowlandson, and Swift) and as enthusiasts or ideologues (Milton and Defoe). Their investment is especially significant given the canonical status of many of the texts they penned, and serves to underscore the central question of my book: how does literature function in relation to imperialism?

I argue that a great deal of national culture during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was imbued with a geographical imagination fed by the experiences and experiments of colonialism. In *The Staple of Newes*, for instance, Ben Jonson reproduces Captain John Smith's description of Pocahontas verbatim. As Anthony Pagden has pointed out, culture was shot through with the "language of empire" (the core of which changed little over the centuries), the sense of a new geography, and the lure of the Americas (*Lords* 6). This imaginary, which effectively normalizes empire, brought the sight and sound, if not the touch and taste, of imperial adventure into everyday circulation. Hence when Charlotte Smith, in the 1780s, wants to celebrate "Harriet" and her "friendship's cheering light," she does so via the recounting of a captivity narrative set in North America, where, like Mary Rowlandson, the English captive, pursued by "torturing, savage foes" and "reptile-monsters" of the "waste," finally "hails the beam benign that guides his way" to a fort and civility (Smith *Poems* 50). Empire was the stuff of common sense as well as daydreams and infinite possibilities, casually conjured up by members of the colonizing nation: "he dreamt of becoming a trapper in America, of entering the service of a pasha in the East, of signing on as a sailor" (Flaubert *Sentimental Education* 101).

The empire did not capture the collective imagination of British literary culture. The cultural imagination was never outside the geopolitical development of empire. Indeed, as will become clear, some of the great works of English literature are inconceivable without imperialism. Referring to imperial "structures of location and geographical reference" within which culture is always-already situated, Said argues that "these structures do not arise from some pre-existing . . . design that the

writers then manipulate, but are bound up with the development of Britain's cultural identity, as that identity imagines itself in a geographically conceived world" (*Culture* 52). To argue for the existence of an imperial culture is not to reduce imagination to a reflex of imperialism. On the contrary, imagination is active, as much agent as antagonist. The point is that the development of British culture is inseparable from that historical project and seemingly unending source of wealth, both in goods and knowledge, known as planting abroad. In other words, English (and after 1707 British) culture only came to knowledge of itself through the accumulation and "cultivation" (economically and culturally) of territory inhabited by populations deemed backward, inferior, or worse.

Imperialism is the global extension of and solution to the driving and often dissonant forces of early modern capitalist society forever in search of markets and profit margins. Spurred on by an unstable and ever-evolving ensemble of forces (most of which were unique to England in the seventeenth century) – new agricultural practices, urban expansion, population growth, property rights, a centralized state, and mercantilism – imperialism reproduces and reinvents spaces for capitalism, its managers, soldiers, and labor. More than this however, imperialism produces the naturalization of thinking about space in a certain way.

Culture uses the volatile arena of colonial space to air pressing social issues, and at the same time colonialism *structures* culture with its imaginative and material results. Space undergoing the uneven, fraught, and never complete process of colonization offers up to inspection the most naked forms and forces of the metropolitan society's development, just as it seems to provide amelioration for social problems. It provides a discourse for evaluating and imagining, as well as re-forming society, its progress, success, and ills. A constellation of forces from providentialism to empiricism fuse in the hothouse of colonial space, producing material perfect for the analysis of questions of authority, property, and individual rights. This occurs as English society moves from a late feudal society of deference and obligation to the mercantile and agrarian capitalist order of individual autonomy and the values of the marketplace. Imperial expansion was the very hallmark of progress and was eagerly affirmed by the cultural elite. Rev. Samuel Purchas couched his 1625 collection of colonial and trading narratives in the following terms: "here Purchas and his Pilgrimes minister individuall and sensible materials (as it were with Stones, Brickes and Mortar) to those universall Speculators for their Theoricall structures" (*Hakluytus* I.xl). My project

interrogates this kind of analogy between discourse and building materials, between cultural and concrete spatial productions.

Culture, as Said has argued in *Culture and Imperialism*, has often been the vanguard for empire, preparing the ground, providing the conceptual apparatus and imaginative repertoire, and predisposing the metropolitan pioneers for the tasks and territory that they encounter (9). Although literary culture voiced criticism of imperial designs, empire was often viewed in a progressive light, its magnetism throwing established orthodoxies and institutions into disarray. Spurred on by the potential to form "new" societies from scratch, the literary imagination explored the notion of sovereignty within the auspices of nascent capitalism, working through the different spatial scales ranging from the autonomous individual and the "primitive," to the nation and its colonies. The question of how to parcel out rights and how to control them, who fits the bill and who is to foot the bill is a central theme within the literature I analyze.

As post-colonial studies has shown, the often progressive nature of imperial culture, as it promoted utopian plans (from More to Coleridge), economic and social mobility, individualism, the communication of ideas due to inter-national trade (Lefebvre *Production* 217), and the rationalism of the Enlightenment, presented the colonized peoples with the short, sharpened end of the stick. Radicals at home were often imperialists abroad. The imperial culture which presented new realities and subjectivities, and critiqued the old, was underwritten by several assumptions. England's status as the chosen nation destined to export liberty and commerce was seldom questioned. Nor was the central legitimation for English colonialism seriously challenged. The Roman law or "agriculturist" argument known as *res nullius*, which rendered unimproved and unowned land (by English standards) empty and thus available for colonization (Pagden *Lords* 76–9) was rarely critiqued. That the Spanish bloodily imposed "colonies" while the English acquired "plantations" (though they were capable of slipping into Spanish behavior) became a sort of catechism. Empire was a fact of everyday life or, to use Raymond Williams's evocative phrase, a "structure of feeling." It was a way of life, its definition and future open to debate but not its existence. Not only were the English self-conscious heirs to the classical empires, but Christian providentialism, whether as guiding beacon or as the power behind Britannia's throne, remained the "ideological taproot" of England's national and imperial character (Marshall *Eighteenth Century* 233).[4] Like God, empire was a force akin to the "direction of *nature nurturing*," to appropriate a phrase from Defoe (*Best of Defoe's Review* 126).

At the end of his essay entitled "Empire as a Way of Life" William Appleman Williams states, "I think often these days about the relationship between those two words – imagination and empire – and wonder if they are incompatible" (102). He concludes that they are and exhorts us to imagine our way "out of the imperial idiom" in which both the US and Britain are mired. As I have argued above, imagination can never be exempt from empire because empire is intrinsic to our way of seeing, and in order to combat the imperial idiom, with its race, class, gender, ethnic, and national inflections, we must recognize empire's pervasiveness within our lives. At the same time we must recall from history and try to imagine in the present, along with Williams, a reality that counters the systems, technologies, and logic of imperialism. To this end, my project foregrounds the imperial idiom and imagination; it defamiliarizes or makes strange, as Brecht might put it, empire's presence in the literary and public sphere of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century transatlantic world.

If at the time of writing *Orientalism* Said could argue that a "serious study of imperialism and culture is off limits" (13), since the late 1970s the topic of empire has become an increasingly popular and fertile area of study.[5] This has prompted Michael Sprinker to speak of "an explosion of writing about colony and empire and their aftermath," and an awareness of the "need to come to terms with imperialism as a phenomenon that continues to dominate, often in occult ways, our understanding of culture both theoretically and empirically" (in De la Campa, Kaplan, and Sprinker *Late Imperial Culture* 7, 1). The "field" of post-colonial and transnational cultural studies has established literature's participation in the service of colonial expansion and domination.[6] Said's magisterial *Culture and Imperialism* is his answer to the academy's blind eye to the legacy of empires past and the lethal presence of imperialism in the present. Reaffirming Said's work, the editors of *Cultural Readings of Imperialism* argue for the significance of "how imperialism generated altered metropolitan modes of apprehending time and space, which impinged on perceptions of the domestic geography, inaugurating an exorbitant lexicon to construe an imperial mission and destiny, and stimulating new tropological ruses to explain, validate and enhance the west's global reterritorializing project" (24). Cultural theorists such as Mary Louise Pratt and Robert Young have forcefully analyzed imperial eyes and desires, and the way the colonial experience is imbricated in the culture of the metropole, whilst Laura Brown's *Ends of Empire*, Moira Ferguson's *Subject to Others*, Felicity Nussbaum's *Torrid Zones* and the

Margo Hendricks and Patricia Parker anthology, *Women, "Race," and Writing in the Early Modern Period* explore the role that women, gender, and sexuality played in imperialism and its ideological make-up. The editors of *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture* support the "recent tendency to periodize around the concept of the 'Colonial' rather than the [Early] 'Modern'" (de Grazia, Quilligan, and Stallybrass 5). Arguing that the imperial constitution of US culture has been by and large neglected, the editors of *Cultures of United States Imperialism* set as their goal "the multiple histories of continental and overseas expansion, conquest, conflict, and resistance which have shaped the cultures of the US and the cultures of those it has dominated within and beyond its geopolitical boundaries" (Kaplan and Pease 4). Gauri Viswanathan and Simon Gikandi have shown how colonized cultures helped to invent Englishness, its traditions, and dissemination. Thus empire-building, with its constituents of colonial and post-colonial resistance, the inter-infiltrating relationship between different cultures, and the West's capitalist, patriarchal, and racial overdetermination of the body and knowledge, is firmly on the agenda.[7]

Yet this work has focused primarily on the "high" imperialism of the nineteenth century or on colonial discourse.[8] When it does deal with empire, New Historicism, for instance, favors the exploration of labyrinths of power and symbolism, where the real meaning ultimately resides on a psychological level. While a growing number of studies explore how the novel or a particular author and text relate to empire they fail to explore the ways in which metropolitan writers and their equivalents in the colonies engage with the material practices and forms created by the project of building new societies or reforming the old. In this project I go beyond existing studies of imperial relations by demonstrating how the forms and fantasies of early English/British culture are saturated with the geopolitical designs and daring-do of colonialism. I do this by studying how that culture envisions geographical space at home and abroad. Although critics such as Douglas Chambers, Simon Varey, John Bender, and John McVeagh have examined the relationship between literature and space in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, the "First British Empire" up to 1745 has yet to be fully incorporated into an understanding of literary culture's spatial politics.

Aijaz Ahmad has critiqued Said for implying that imperialism is "*mainly* a cultural phenomenon to be opposed by an *alternative discourse*" (*In Theory* 204). Although Ahmad misrepresents Said's goal of showing how culture, hand-in-glove with economic imperatives, helps build

empires, he is right to bring to our notice a general over-emphasis on discourse as opposed to a more materialist theoretical approach – the privileging of the cultural subject over its economic sibling. Keeping in mind Marx and Engel's dictum that "The nature of individuals … depends on the material conditions determining their production" (*German Ideology* 42), I have tried throughout to refer the symbolic (re)formulations of contested territory to the material productions and processes within Britain's first empire. In doing so I assume (as did many an imperial ideologue or city planner) that the way space is regulated and reproduced is central to a hegemonic and expansionist culture. Further, the process in which hegemony is "continually … renewed, recreated, defended, and modified" as well as "continually resisted, limited, altered, [and] challenged by pressures not at all its own" (Williams *Marxism* 10) is one that often takes place in the spatial realm. As John Urry notes, "some class conflicts are in fact caused by, or are displaced onto, spatial conflicts" (*Consuming Places* 14). Conflicts stemming from colonialism and its ideological ramparts are of course inherently predisposed to be spatial. Hence my attention to geographical information, architecture, rural and urban design, networks of places, groups, and ideology, aesthetic representations of the natural world, and to the narratives organizing space into the categories of the Godly, civilized, and productive as opposed to the temptational, degenerate, and wasteful.

My approach owes a great deal to two general and inter-related areas of theoretical work: feminism's focus on the colonization of the bodies and subjectivities of women and the gendered differentiation of public and private space, as well as the rise of cultural geography, which has also hugely benefited from feminist scholarship (while not always incorporating its major concerns). Derek Gregory points out that even the most exemplary literary theorists writing about empire and geography, like Edward Said, Timothy Mitchell, and Paul Carter, have often given far too little attention to gender or to non-European agency in the face of colonialism (*Geographical Imaginations* 175–7). Contested geographies are synonymous with contested/contesting bodies. Moreover, it is far more unsettling when whoever lurks or wanders outside empire's design – be it native, rebel, defector, or hapless colonist – is female. If, as Barbara Duden says, "the geometrization of space in the seventeenth century [is] expressed in new body disciplines" (*Woman* 32) and "the human body," as Harvey observes, "is a battleground within which and around which the focus of production of spatio-temporality are perpet-

ually at play" (*Justice* 279), the struggle for clear lines of demarcation most often takes place within and over the female body.

Feminist geography, through the work of Doreen Massey, Gillian Rose, and Alison Blunt among others, has complemented, and often critiqued, the better known representatives of cultural geography like Edward Soja, Neil Smith, and David Harvey.9 Combining the insights of this general interdisciplinary scholarship allows us to map "metropolitan nature." I use this phrase to indicate four interdependent spatial relationships: first, it refers to the environment and ideology of countryside or colony that serve both city and imperial centre. Secondly, it refers to how the colonizer and colonized interact as "*inter*-societal systems" along "time-space edges" (Urry *Consuming Places* 16). Thirdly, it invokes how the imperatives of property and capital accumulation produce socio-spatial relations. Finally, I take "metropolitan nature" to involve the processes through which the masculinist project of empire uses the female to signify coveted property as well as the covert danger posed by unruled space. In many of the texts that I analyze women represent the ebb and flow of empire, its lightening conductor and handmaiden, its Britannia as well as its Errour and Sin.

Felicity Nussbaum defines "women of empire" as encompassing "European women in their complicity in the formation of empire *and* in their being scapegoated as the focus of luxury and commercial excess" (*Torrid Zones* 2). And Laura Brown sums up women's status, whether as antithesis of masculinist adventure or pioneer herself in the following terms: "as figures of difference, women are connected with sexual insatiability, class instability, natives, the colonized, and the potentially threatening, unassimilable other" (*Ends of Empire* 19). Writing in the late seventeenth century Ned Ward confirms Nussbaum and Brown's thesis of how interwoven misogyny and imperialism are. He describes London's prostitutes as "Beasts of America"; their disorderly ways and life-threatening, sexual voraciousness are similarly embodied by a devilish "*Negro Woman*, and an *Irish Woman*" that the London Spy discovers at St. Bart's Fair (*London-Spy* 42, 244). Degeneracy, seduction, and chaos are the prime negative coordinates that conflate women, the colonized other, excessive consumption, and the hellish. Indian women are particularly fond of torturing captives, Catholic Irish women pose the greatest danger to the English colonist, whilst the honor of the English woman abroad legitimizes domination but, being more prone to fall for the extravagances of empire, she is also a figure of possible degenerative contamination at home. These issues are specifically explored in chap-

ters two and four. As Mark Wigley points out, referring to the Renaissance spatial theorist Leon Battista Alberti, the female and feminine, like colonized peoples generally, represent a fluid and disruptive force; a force that transgresses civilized boundaries and hierarchies ("Untitled" 335). Alberti pits harmony – all things assigned their proper place – against ornament, mobility, and disengagement from the controlling socio-spatial regime. Yet even when domesticated or "housed" this (feminine) excess threatens to "imprison" the patriarchal order and blur the most personal divisions of spatial power. The female colonist and native, the potentially emascualting realms of country house and wilderness, and the anxieties over luxury, independence, and exchangeability, particularly as it impacts on or is exhibited by women, are concerns and characters populating the narratives from Spenser's cast of women warriors and wanderers through to the irrepressible female of the Swiftian imagination.

However gendered, the threat to civility at home or overseas emanates not just from the corrupting wealth and social mobility produced by the empire, but also from the undisciplined spaces of the laboring and unemployed poor. As chapter four argues, England itself came to be known through imperial eyes. If the countryside had always been a colonial space, the cities, as they mushroomed, were soon represented as *terra incognita* and thus in need of tactics learnt abroad. Again Ned Ward provides ample evidence in his secret surveillance of the capital. "[E]very two or three Steps," he informs us of the area between Salisbury Court and Fleet Street, "we met ... *Corrupt Carcases*: for nothing could be Read but *Devilism* in every Feature. *Theft, Whoredom, Homicide,* and *Blasphemy*, peep'd out at the very Windows of their *Souls*." Ward "fanc[ies]" the inhabitants of this wilderness "a Colony of *Hell-Cats*, planted here by the *Devil*, as a Mischief to Mankind" (*London-Spy*, 156–7). This reverse colonialism is also to be found in the area of White-Fryars near the Temple, which is mapped as "the very *Theatre of Sin*" and "*Infernal Territories*" (160). Ward invokes a fundamentally colonial spatiality where the Devil's territory abuts civilization (with its all-seeing, all-roving imperial private-eyes), tempting the obedient into "Mischief." This is the world, examined in the following three chapters, that Spenser, the Puritan colonists, Milton and Rowlandson inhabit, and Behn problematizes. We might also keep in mind the words of Defoe's Preface to the first volume of the *Review* in February of 1705: "My design is plain: to tell you the strength of your enemy that you may fortify yourselves in due proportion" (*Best of* 4).

If we are to fully understand how imperial and hegemonic culture negotiates or manages, what Terry Eagleton calls, "a rebarbative world which threatened to unmask Britain's own civility," we need to insert this "secret materialist history" (*Heathcliff* 8–9) into "the *long history of space*" (Lefebvre *Production* 116).[10] If, as Henri Lefebvre contends, "ideologies . . . intervene in space in the form of *strategies*" (101–2) then I would like to posit that the authors analyzed in this project are *strategic writers*. That is to say, they are relational to, situated, and invested in the flows of knowledge, power, and opposition that course through the capillaries of Britain's empire. Recognizing the "role of space, as knowledge and action" (Lefebvre 11) means we explore how a work like *Paradise Lost* and its global subject(ivity) is involved in the production of the spatial politics of an imperial world. It is a stratified world, to use Lefebvre's formulation, produced as a "tri-faceted institutional space": it is *global*, where issues of sovereignty predominate; it is *fragmented*, where space is differentiated in order for it to be controlled and negotiated; and it is *hierarchical*, where space is made up of the "lowliest places to the noblest, from the tabooed to the sovereign" (282). If the social sciences and humanities have of late become rife with spatial metaphors and issues of mobility, positionality, hybridity, encounter, translocation, and so forth, this project attempts to go beyond both metaphor and situated identity politics to a more materialist and historical understanding of space and its ideological forces. In other words, I try to present a different spatial history to that of "imperial history," which, in the words of Paul Carter, "reduces space to a stage, that pays attention to events unfolding in time alone" (*Botany Bay* xvi).

Three general, interconnected cultural and historical forces underlie the following chapters and play a significant role in the naturalization of empire: the ideology and economic theory of mercantilism, the Horatian ideal and spatial politics of the country house, and a republicanism stemming from James Harrington and the English Revolution. With his vision of colonizing and collecting the knowledge of a finite world for the glory of God and England, Francis Bacon unites these three forces when he states: "certainly the great multiplication of virtues upon human nature resteth upon societies well ordained and disciplined" (*Essays* 116). The great multiplication of virtues – the expansion of knowledge, trade, material wealth, and Christianity – stemming from the discovery of the New World and the potential for its exploitation had to be worked into the general but unstable outlook dominating the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries known as English mercantilism. In

The Contours of American History William Appleman Williams argues for the hegemonizing force of this "*Weltanschauung*" where agrarian and mercantile capitalism were to be kept in check by traditional religious and social customs. Underwriting the set of ideas and policies making up mercantilism

was the Biblical injunction to promote the general welfare and common good of God's corporate world and its creatures. The second [theme] was the growing propensity to define God's estate as the civil society in which the individual Christian resided. In this fundamental sense, therefore, the rise of mercantilism is the story of a struggle to retain and adapt an original Christian morality during the dynamic secularization of a religious outlook as an agrarian society was transformed into a life of commerce and industry. (33)

With the state as the none-too-invisible hand assuring some sort of balance between commonweal and capitalism, it became clear that "the best – if not the only – way to get wealth and welfare was to take them away from somebody" (35). Corporate Christian welfare, under the pressures of modernization, the evil of other (Catholic) empires, and the necessities and enthusiasm behind imperialism slid into a zealous internationalism to spread the bounty of England's innate liberty and enlightening trade practices. Drawing upon just this sort of potent brew, that inspired imperialist Philip Sidney legitimizes "Plantation," according to Fulke Greville, as "not like an *Assylum* for fugitives, a *Bellum Piraticum* for *Banditi*, or any such base *Ramas* of people; but as an *Emporium* for the confluence of all Nations that love, or profess any kinde of vertue, or Commerce" (*Life* 118–9). As the fugitives and pirates went about founding the English empire, Sidney's notion of an emporium dispensing universal beneficence carried down to the English Revolution and James Harrington's influential ideas, including the notion that "the buds of empire . . . with the blessing of God, may spread the arms of your commonwealth like an holy asylum unto the distressed world" (*Political Works* 323). Conflating the notion of patrician stewardship of the corporate welfare so dear to the country-house ethos with that of the world, Harrington further states that "if the empire of a commonwealth be patronage, to ask whether it be lawful for a commonwealth to aspire unto the empire of the world is to ask whether it be lawful for her to do her duty, or to put the world into a better condition than it was before" (328). This statement unites the essentially progressive and general outlook of Milton, Defoe, and Swift. Republicanism can be traced out of the feudal ideologies of the country-house ethos, which as Virginia

Kenny shows has at its core a concern "for the right use of wealth" (*Country-House Ethos* 211) in the face of rapid social change, and out of mercantilism's combination of patronage and expansion.

Mercantilism, Republicanism and country-house ideology: the focus of all three is the regulation of liberty and property, both landed and mobile, in the interests of those who are virtuous and labor as opposed to those who are unpropertied, idle, and/or insubordinate. If the independent, liberty-loving, and propertied yeoman farmer stood as the backbone against tyranny, then the (idle) poor, who rarely made it into the category "the people," were only an ever-present danger to the social order, a "multitude of People which in England Cheat, Roar, Rob, Hand, Beg, Cant, Pine, and Perish" (quoted in Morgan *American Slavery* 320). Edmund Morgan has shown how the rise of Republicanism coincided with a growing contempt for the poor (381). Along with the other and the colonized, the poor always represented tyrannical forces that, if they were not to sweep away civility, had to be kept in a permanent state of regimentation and active ideological bombardment. The "scumme" and Indians and Africans were effectively excluded from the commonwealth and the "protectorate" of empire since they secured little or nothing for its welfare by their own virtue. Forever deficient in virtue and civility, they must pay the price and labor under their social/racial superiors. As with the dispossessed today under capitalism's commodifying domination of global space, the "scumme" must defer to, if not disappear for, those who, in the words of the Patent for Virginia in 1606, "shall have all the Lands, Woods, Soyle, Grounds, Havens, Ports, Rivers, Mynes, Minerals, Marishes, Waters, Fishings, Commodities and Hereditaments whatsoever" (Purchas *Hakluytus* XVII.401).

In light of the Virginia Company's spectacular failure to deliver anything worth writing home about for twenty years, the patent's wishful vision of total domination needs to be set alongside the realities of England's "empire" and the rather more profitable trade with Europe, the Baltic, and the Far East. As I signaled by beginning with the distinction between "Imperial Britain" and the "British Empire," empire is a problematic term. Indeed, words such as empire, colonialism, space, mercantilism, and Britain are so heavily freighted with variable meanings, and they can loom so large and abstract that historicity suffers.[11] Can one really talk of the English having an empire before the eighteenth century rather than a sprinkling of colonial outposts and

privateers who roamed high seas ruled by the Dutch to feed off the Spanish empire? If one argues in the affirmative, aren't we simply looking back through the chauvinist-tinted spectacles of the Victorians? By pursuing empire's beginnings in the period between 1580 and 1745 are we in fact simply chasing a chimera?

An "empire nowhere"[12] interpretation of early modern English history highlights the failures, the lack of territory and economic returns, and the compensatory literature that is full of anxiety masked by a thin layer of bravado. To write of a colonial empire before 1700 would be to privilege the big talk of a small group of dreamers and desperadoes; it would be to privilege the illusionary over the real. However, as Patrick Brantlinger cautions, "the invented fictions of nationalism and imperialism have had ... very 'significant material consequences'" (*Fictions of State* 20). Obviously, I do not subscribe to an "empire nowhere" thesis; it strikes me as both a misreading of what constitutes an empire and a misreading of history, specifically Britain's unique evolution. It *is* all too easy to play fast and loose with these terms, subsuming all under the rubric of a totalizing, ahistorical colonialism without recognizing contradictions. One aim of this project is to show that colonialism is not a bulldozer leveling or shaping everything in its path. Another aim, underlined by the book being framed by Spenser's Ireland and the Jacobite Rebellion, is that imperialism and colonialism begin and end at home.

A complex web of strategy, adaptability, chance, and exchange as well as appropriation developed between the different groups involved. The cultural spaces of indigenous populations were not simply buried into the ground of English rule. A spatial history challenges any tendency toward an undifferentiated colonialism. For example, the reverse side to the exploitation of agricultural "improvement" in England and abroad was a concern about its ecological costs. This complicating of blind colonization (which always had its detractors on ethical grounds) should not prevent us from the larger picture. As Richard Grove admits "nascent environmental anxieties were soon overwhelmed by ... rapacious capitalism, contemporary medical prejudices and the dictates of an imported landscape fashion" (*Green Imperialism* 70). Moreover "conservationist ideology," however it may counter "monolithic theories of ecological imperialism" (7), had more to do with sustainable exploitation than a wholesale critique of what Carolyn Merchant calls a "colonial ecological revolution" that mortally wounded Amerindian socio-environmental practices (*Ecological Revolutions* 2).

Just as literary theorists have traditionally been loathe to place Spenser or Milton, Wordsworth or Austen in an imperial context, there has been opposition to the notion that England was imperialist before the eighteenth century. Writing in 1979 Stephen Saunders Webb argued that generally historians had been reluctant to see Britain as imperial before 1763, preferring to argue that "England's had been a 'commercial and colonial policy'" before that date (*Governors* xvi). Yet can trade, internal colonization, and the piecemeal colonial expansion to the west really be separated from empire? Webb convincingly argues that "from the beginning, English colonization was at least as much military as it was commercial." He shows how the military under the "governors-general" knit together a coherent system under their "imperial influence": "the empire that they organized originated almost two centuries before 1763" (xvi). Their imperial ethos was introduced to Jamestown through the "*Lawes Divine* . . ." (in 1610). Webb equates empire with garrison government imposing upon others the prerogative of metropolitan power and monarchy. The process of conquering began at home: "to the army's domestic police function and its American ambition [which was inspired by witnessing Spain's power during the wars in continental Europe], the reconquest and colonization of Ireland between 1550 and 1622 added agrarian and societal duties" (437). The soldier-farmer settling a plantation under garrison government was exported to the Americas. However small and unprofitable, an outpost like Plymouth – a "village" fortified and patrolled by Captain Standish – was exactly that: an outpost of a military and imperial system bent on the "spread of crusading Christianity and English authority over conquered territories and 'native' people." It is within this system that Webb uncovers the "elements of empire" (438).

To these elements, that indeed constitute an imperium, we can add others. Although England was obsessed with duplicating the Spanish empire it nevertheless was forced to evolve in quite a different fashion through a process of experimentation, interloping, ideological groundbreaking, domestic cohesion, and in competition with the other European powers. This process began in earnest with the Great Fishery and the flood of literature promoting New World colonies. As D. W. Meinig states, "the English had formalized competitive imperialism in [North America] by laying claim to Newfoundland in 1583" (*Atlantic America* 64). The steady colonization of the Atlantic ocean spawned the "long revolution" of England's empire where privateering and outposts, fully backed by the state after 1650, gelled into a well-equipped navy and

merchant marine that finally surpassed the Dutch by the last decades of the seventeenth century. As one historian puts it, "the sea war of the 1580s and 1590s helped forge the tools of Empire, developing the ships, men, and capital needed for seaborne expansion" (Appleby in Canny *Origins* 68).

Yet, one might argue that pompous claims, pirates, and precarious outposts pale into insignificance next to the profits of trade. This line of argument somehow disengages commerce from the requirements of capitalism to seek and *control* new markets. It also begs the question of how to define "trade." Michel de Montaigne conflates trade and conquest: "Whoever else has ever rated trade and commerce at such a price? So many cities razed to the ground, so many nations wiped out, so many millions of individuals put to the sword, and the most beautiful and the richest part of the world shattered on behalf of the pearls-and-pepper business! Tradesmen's victories!" ("On coaches": *Essays* 344). Raleigh argued that "whosoever commands the sea, commands the trade; whosoever commands the trade of the world, commands the riches of the world, and consequently the world itself" (Hill *Intellectual Origins* 150). The shift around 1600 to a preoccupation with trade as integral to national power, and therefore the need to be less reliant on other nations, coincided with the forming of the Virginia Company and other similar ventures. Colonialism was seen as intrinsic to trade and national sovereignty. Exemplifying this view, Matthew Craddock, one of the merchant princes, added colonial trade to his Levant and East India investments.[13] Many a court masque and Lord Mayor's Show celebrated trade through symbols of imperial domination. Seventeenth-century political economists like William Petty, Thomas Mun, Edwyn Sandys, and Josiah Child agreed on two points. First, according to the dictates of mercantilist theory, in order to sell more to strangers than one buys from them and be self-sufficient in a world of finite resources one had to colonize other markets. And second, one should invest in colonialism. Shaftesbury "launched a campaign to consolidate the affairs of commerce with those of the colonies and produce an integrated and balanced system" (Williams *Contours* 54). Locke took it a step further essentially arguing that individual freedom and wealth depended upon imperial expansion. By 1700, Linda Colley informs us that the benefits and "cult" of trade were inextricable "from Britain's ruthless pursuit of colonial markets" (*Forging the Nation* 56). Hence, John Gay repeats Raleigh's dictum in a more succinct fashion: "Be commerce then thy sole design, / Keep that, and all the world is thine" (quoted in Colley