**Figure 2.3** Advertising images from the nineteenth century (think about what discourses are drawn upon in these images, what kinds of global geographical connections were being made, and what are the relationships between the product, race and morality?)
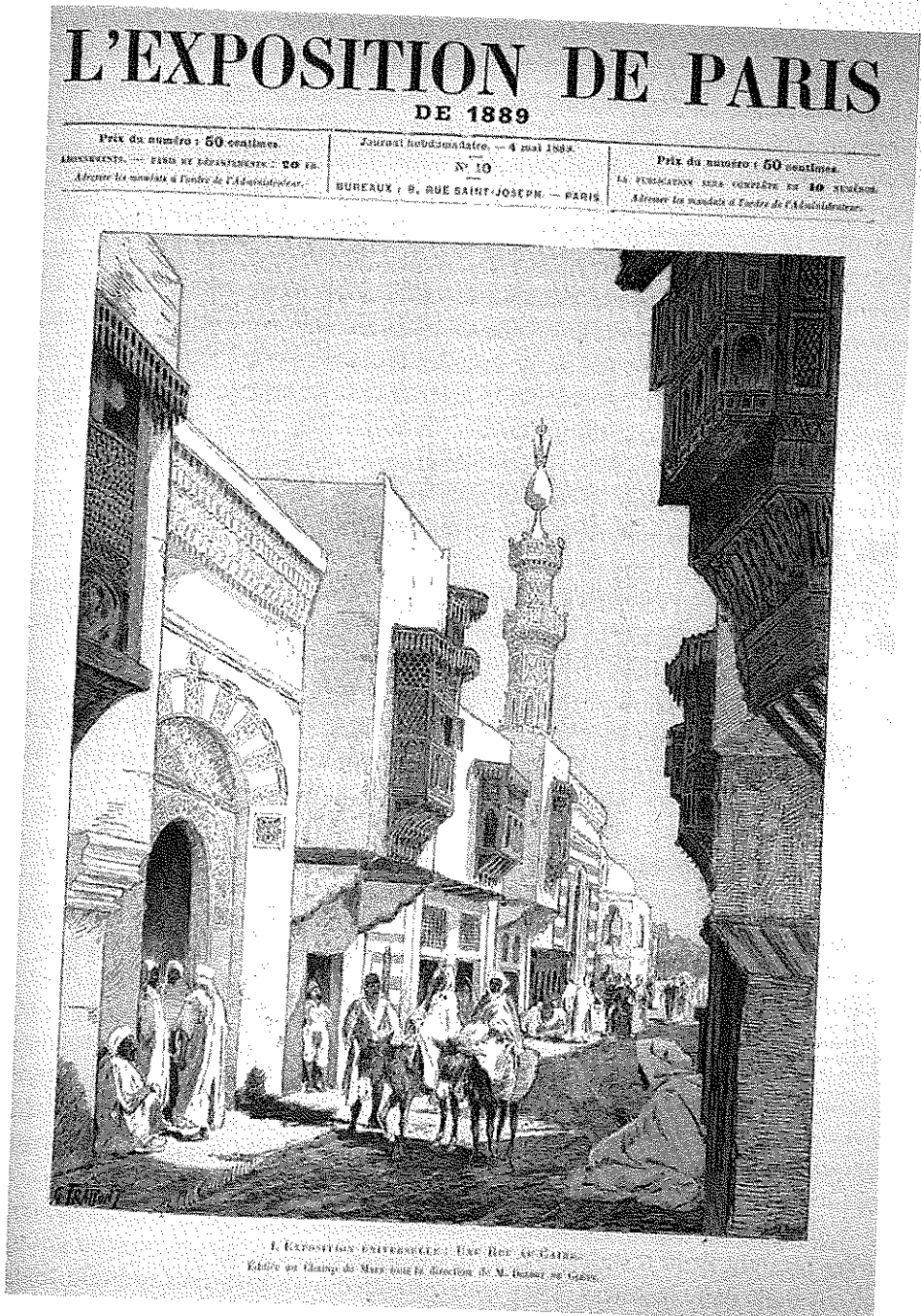


**Figure 2.4** Cairo street scene at the Exposition Universelle, Paris, 1889

Entire landscapes were reconstructed to let visitors experience different places. Compare this with the 'reality effect' of the Orientalist paintings discussed in the previous chapter.

different parts of the world were constructed for people to wander through in order to learn about the newest parts of their nation's empire (see Figure 2.4). This allowed the display of information in a way that people would understand. It was structured to inform and entertain, to improve their taste and morals – a kind of amusement without excess. The Eiffel Tower, built for the Paris *exposition universalle* at the end of the nineteenth century, was not only a symbol of the technical achievements of the age but was also a pleasurable distraction. A variety of entry fees was charged (at different times and on different days) to encourage as wide a range of people as possible. The mix of entertainment and imperial propaganda glorified and domesticated empire, making it meaningful for the home populations and giving them a stake in it. The juxtaposition of achievements in science and technology with evidence of colonial acquisitions, alongside the national flag, must have provided important reasons for national identification. National identity was tied in with imperial possession so that World's Fairs represented the greatness of, say, Britain vis-à-vis other countries, thereby showing the population how good it was to be British.

The geography of the fairs was arranged in one of two ways; either colonies were grouped in relation to trade with a metropolitan country, or they were organised in evolutionary terms. In some cases of the latter there was an overt sense of the progression of the human species, so that the pathway through exhibits at the Buffalo Fair in 1898 took visitors on a trip through human time. In others, the juxtaposition was more implicit but no less subtle, as Greenhalgh (1988: 97) indicates for the Paris exhibition in 1931:

> The Eiffel Tower leaned over the site of the [African and Asian] native villages, casting its shadow over them like a giant triumphal monument. A culture/ nature juxtaposition of terrifying simplicity, the vast, gaunt tower represented the power that had enabled the imperial take-over of the lands the villages stood for.

The 1890 French Exhibition at Earl's Court had Arabs act out various scenes, including races, duelling and the kidnap of distressed white maidens. These performances of stereotypes of empire worked to reinforce Orientalist ideas because of the apparent authenticity of the performance (just as the realism of Orientalist paintings had also done).

But it was 'the village' that was of most interest. From 1889 to 1914 people were brought from distant parts of the empire to these fairs to be seen going about their daily business. They were provided with materials to build their own dwellings and raw materials for meals and to produce clothes. There were up to 200 people per village, although the figure was more usually around 50. Again this was important for nation building as well as education and entertainment, as the public saw what 'belonged' to them in a simulated natural state. It was an attempt to provide a total view of life. This drive for

authenticity of the object, collected through scientific endeavour and not plunder, was important to the discourses of the fairs (and museums). For example, for the 1901 exhibition in London a Sudanese village was advertised as providing an 'unequalled opportunity of studying the customs of our dusky fellow subjects in their homes and habits, as they could formally be observed only by the African traveller'. For a Zulu village at another exhibition, explorer Henry Morton Stanley endorsed the veracity of the experience:

> Your 'savages' are real African natives, their dresses and dances, equipments and actions are also very real, and when I heard their songs I almost fancied myself among the Mazamboni near Lake Albert once more. (quoted in Coombes, 1994: 88)

Unlike the solidly built pavilions to industry in Europe, the villages were temporary and obviously part of a performance. They were based on everyday life rather than anything more important and lasting, again drawing out the differences between the timelessness of Oriental life and the dynamism of Europe.

The images that some exhibitions provided were, however, more complex. Religious and missionary societies both promoted and criticised imperial and colonial policy throughout the period. They held their own exhibitions to demonstrate the important work being undertaken by religious figures in the colonies. One important reason for this was to raise money! This proved successful as even the poorest in Britain were reminded that however bad their lives were, others were in a worse state of godlessness. In the 'Orient in London' exhibition in 1908 the working classes were called to feel for the injustices faced by others and forget their own. As well as the usual exhibits, there were talks and debates on 'Religion and fetishism in West Africa', 'The liquor traffic in West Africa' and 'Slavery in West Africa'.

Religious exhibitions still presented a spectacle of Africa, the colonial world-as-exhibition, and included such things as displays of Africans at work. But rather different images were projected – these were not of simple savages, but of skilled artisans who would benefit from the teachings of Europeans. Rather than wallowing in timeless backwardness, these were redeemable 'noble savages' (those who were seen as 'backward' but who had a nobility in their simple lives, and so were regarded as redeemable if they could be guided by Europeans). This image served to underscore the importance of funding missionary works to help develop industry and morality amongst these people.

## FRACTURES IN THE REPRESENTATION

As we have seen, one of the critiques of Said's *Orientalism* was that it saw representations of the Orient as being unitary and coherent, changing little over

time. Some critics have suggested that this is because of his focus upon the official representations of statecraft, academics and high culture. As the example of female travellers has already suggested, however, the image of the Orient was not quite so coherent or singular. This chapter will conclude with a consideration of both class and national differences. Gender and sexuality were not the only challenges to the singular representation of Orientalism.

## Class

Once into the nineteenth century, the middle classes had a greater and greater influence on the dominant representations perpetuated in education and governance. Their lack of understanding of the working classes amassing in the industrial cities led to a fear not dissimilar to the colonists' fear of unknown natives. There was a particular anxiety regarding uneducated working-class people being vulnerable to political agitators, especially communists. It was thus considered important to educate the working classes in the values of the middle classes, particularly sexual morality, self-control and self-improvement. This 'social imperialism' was established through the introduction of museums and the situating of statues in public spaces of those worthy people to whom the working classes should aspire. There was a belief that exposure to objects of civilisation and high art in museums and to examples of civic statuary would improve the working classes, as if by osmosis through close proximity.

While this culture was undoubtedly influential, and is still in evidence in the city centres of European cities today, this was not all that comprised working-class culture – less permanent, and perhaps undocumented sources of culture were also very important. For instance, the music halls of the nineteenth century Britain were incredibly popular and contained humorous and often irreverent songs and jokes about the ruling classes, as well as colonialism and the empire, mixed together with nationalistic passions. While there were certainly Orientalist representations of those outside Europe then, the colonial officers and rulers fared little better. We might consider a twentieth century equivalent to be a film like *Carry on Up the Khyber*, which represented the colonisers as considerably more irrational (and sexually deviant) than the natives (see Figure 2.5). A large part of the film's narrative is organised around challenges to the strong masculinity usually associated with the British colonial project and this is thoroughly sent up through symbolic emasculation via (a) their weapons, (b) their enjoyment of cross-dressing, and (c) a parade which demonstrates that their famous hardiness (wearing kilts without underwear in the freezing climes of the Khyber Pass) is based on a lie. In one of the film's most celebrated scenes, the famed British 'stiff upper lip' is also sent up (d) as a dinner party continues, following all the 'proper' rules of manners and politeness, despite the fact that the building is being shelled.
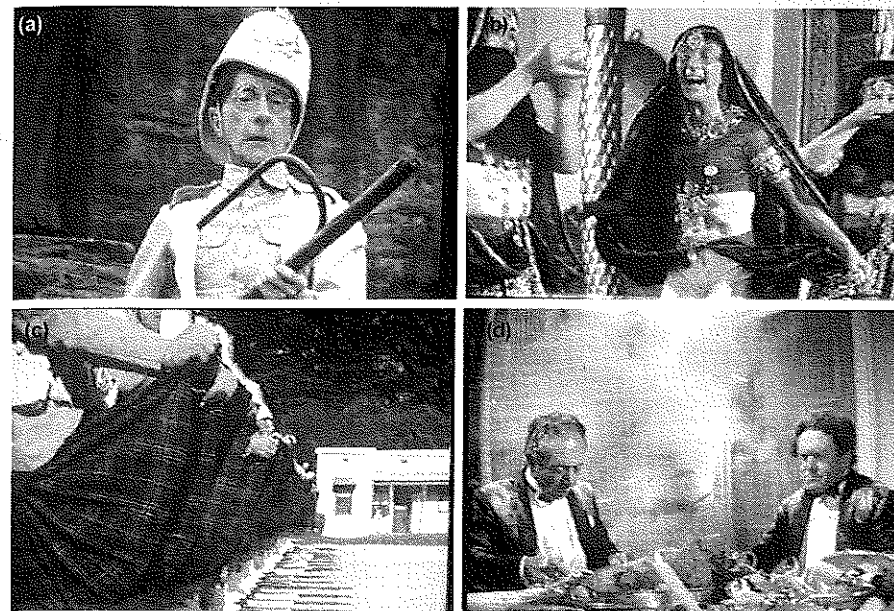


**Figure 2.5** Stills from *Carry on up the Khyber*

## Nation

As we have already noted, Said has been accused of Occidentalism in his view of European knowledge. Clearly there are power relations within the governance of Europe, with minor national groups insisting that they are discriminated against formally. Some interpretations of Scotland's and Ireland's past – and sometimes their present – have used the term 'internal colonialism' to discuss their relations with England (and the term is also used by the Basques in Spain).

The nineteenth century was a period of intense nation-building where various states were attempting to incorporate often diverse and historically contrary groups into one modern nation-state. Just as there was a projection of normative culture in terms of class then, this also existed in terms of national identity. The World's Fairs were clearly important for this project as they prominently displayed the successes and achievements of each nation-state alongside others. Their organisers actively encouraged all sorts of groups of people to attend the fairs in order to view these achievements and thus the benefits of being from a particular country.

The Celtic fringe of Britain, for instance, was, to some extent, dealt with in similar ways to the Orient that lay beyond the boundaries of Europe. Just as English anthropologists studied the skeletons and bodily dimensions of the peoples of the colonies, in the same way they catalogued the 'typical' Scottish, Welsh and Irish, in order to demonstrate the supremacy of the English race.

This was also evident in the World's Fairs. The Celtic fringe was represented in ways that were not dissimilar to the ways in which the peoples of the British Empire were shown. Ireland was presented as ancient and rural, with thatched cottages, traditional dancing and use of the Gaelic language, a romantic image of happy self-sufficiency not so different from the African villages assembled nearby. Similarly, despite the booming industry of Glasgow, 'second city of the empire', Scotland was represented as a highland idyll. In the context of nation-building, this played an important role, as potential political differences between the nations making up Britain were rendered no more than aesthetic and folksy.

### Further reading

*On colonial knowledge*

Adas, M. (1989) *Machines as the Measures of Man*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
Arnold, D. (1993) *Colonizing the Body*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

*On travel writers*

Blunt, A. (1994) *Travel, Gender and Imperialism: Mary Kingsley and West Africa*. New York: The Guilford Press.
Driver, F. (2001) *Geography Militant: Cultures of Exploration and Empire*. Oxford: Blackwell.
Pratt, M.L. (1992) *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. London: Routledge.
Riffenburgh, B. (1993) *The Myth of the Explorer*. London: Wiley.

*On the role of women travellers in geography*

Domosh, M. (1991) 'Towards a feminist historiography of geography', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 16: 95–104.
Stoddart, D. (1991) 'Do we need a feminist historiography of geography – and if we do, what should it be like?', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 16: 484–87.

*On the popularisation of empire*

Greenhalgh, P. (1988) *Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851–1939*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
McClintock, A. (1995) *Imperial Leather*. London: Routledge.
MacKenzie, J. (ed.) (1986) *Imperialism and Popular Culture*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

# 3    *LANDSCAPES OF POWER*

The Indian or native city is situated often at a considerable distance from the European civil lines and military cantonments, in one or the other of which the Europeans live. [It] is usually walled. The houses are closely packed together, the streets being very narrow … Even the main street, in which the chief business is transacted, will hardly allow of one cart passing another. The houses are high and most picturesque, though very dirty. The bazaar is a feast of colour. The booth-like open shops filled with many-hued wares, gay silks and cottons, and piles of luscious fruits, with the brilliantly coloured garments of the passers-by and of the loungers (for in the East there is no hurry), make the native city a joy for the lover of colour. The effect would be garish, but with the background of closely set fantastic buildings, the sunny lights and deep velvety shadows, the picture gives joy and satisfaction to the onlooker. True, a captious critic does not approve of what he sees on close inspection, and the state of sanitation is such that diseases when introduced spread with incredible rapidity. It is not without reason that the European residential quarter is built at a considerable distance from the fascinating but dangerous native city. (Platt, 1923, quoted in King, 1976: 127)

The form of the colonial built environment can tell us a good deal about how the colonisers viewed the native people and their landscape, but we can also see what happened when the ideas of the colonisers were put into practice – the outcomes were not always what they expected! As we can gather from the opening quote, native towns were often viewed with a mixture of wonder and fear. The colours and designs were seen as exotic and exciting, but at the same time, their apparent lack of order and design was worrying to the colonisers. As we know from the previous chapter, colonial systems were powerful as a result of the knowledge created about native peoples. The apparent illegibility of the native quarters was therefore a threat to Europeans. Sometimes native areas were ordered and rebuilt; most often, though, European quarters were established in distinct areas, sometimes at quite a distance from the natives.

## POWER IN THE LANDSCAPE

When it came to the landscape, colonialism was about transformation. Just as colonial knowledge sought to order the world in a taxonomy of the known, the engineers of the colonial landscape sought to order the colonies into a knowable pattern. Colonial landscapes were ordered, sanitised, made amenable to regulation, and structured to enhance the flow of economic activities. Thus, these landscapes did not simply reflect colonial aspirations but were also both consciously and unconsciously used as social technologies, as strategies of power to incorporate, categorise, discipline, control and reform the inhabitants of the city, town or plantation. It was therefore intended that the use of buildings and the urban form itself would start affecting the nature of native populations.

Components of such a framework of colonial power in the landscape varied between the cities of the different colonial powers in place, but included:

- The church (especially in Latin America).
- Trading companies such as the British East India Company.
- The military (which wanted an ordered, visible landscape that was easy to control).
- The colonial state itself.

Through the actions of these institutions, colonial policy was made concrete through colonial space and practice.

In many cases, the first stage in the colonial process was the seizure of land belonging to the previous ruler and using this to weaken the power of native institutions. This simultaneously undermined the economic base and attacked symbolic power. There are many examples throughout the world of conquerors taking over symbolically important sites, whether these were religious or political. For instance, the Spanish *conquistadors* established their capital, Mexico City, on the ruins of the Aztec capital Tenoctitlan. They destroyed the indigenous city and established a new one in its place as a marker of power – their power over the old order. At other times, colonists have propped up the elements of traditional power once they have been conquered in order to help establish firm colonial rule. In Morocco, French colonists rebuilt the palace of the Sultan in Rabat but the governor's residency was placed next to it, drawing on the symbolic power of this association.

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### THE POWER OF THE LANDSCAPE

The landscape then is one further form through which discourses about European mastery could be expressed. James Duncan argues that the landscape is particularly important because it works to help make certain values seem natural (self-evidently true rather than someone's opinion) because it seems non-political. The landscape is just there. However, encoded within the landscape are particular values. Consider the following quotes from Duncan:

> The landscape is a text in the language of built form which is explicitly read or subconsciously apprehended by those who live and work within its presence. The power of landscape features lies in the fact that they are easy to grasp both emotionally and intellectually, for they can be visited, touched, venerated, and often most importantly, taken for granted as right and natural. (1992: 81)

> The landscape, I would argue, is one of the central elements in a cultural system, for as an ordered assemblage of objects, a text, it acts as a signifying system through which the social system is communicated, reproduced, experienced, and explored. (1990: 17)

> ... the landscape of the city was a political tract written in space and carved in stone. The landscape was part of the practice of power. (1992: 86)

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### How did power work through the colonial urban landscape?

First we need to turn to the work of Michel Foucault, and in particular his conceptualisation of the **panopticon**. This was based upon an intriguing prison design by Jeremy Bentham (Figure 3.1, p. 58). The prison was designed around a central tower. The prisoners were housed in individual cells around the outside walls of the prison. While these were visible from the centre of the prison, there were walls between individual prisoners that made contact between inmates difficult. The guards' tower was in the middle. This had tiny slit-like windows which allowed them to view the prisoners, but made it impossible for the prisoners to see when they were being watched by the guard. This meant that they had to behave at all times *in case the guard was watching*. But what intrigued Foucault most was the fact that as there was no way of the prisoners knowing when they were being watched, there was not in fact any need for a guard to be there at all. It was the structure of the building that facilitated the disciplining of the prisoners, and the gaze of power which emanated from that central tower that ensured self-discipline. Foucault took this as a metaphor for the way that modern societies worked. Rather than having to resort to violent means of control as earlier societies had (hangings and other gruesome public punishments for those who disobeyed the ruler), it gave the possibility of constant surveillance throughout people's lives, from school through to work, and the establishment of institutions of knowledge collection run by the state.

Thus, in terms of the colonial landscape we have the operations of power working subtly through the landscape. For instance, the layout of colonial plantations was such that the workers' accommodation and the rows of crops would sometimes radiate outwards from the owner or manager's residence,
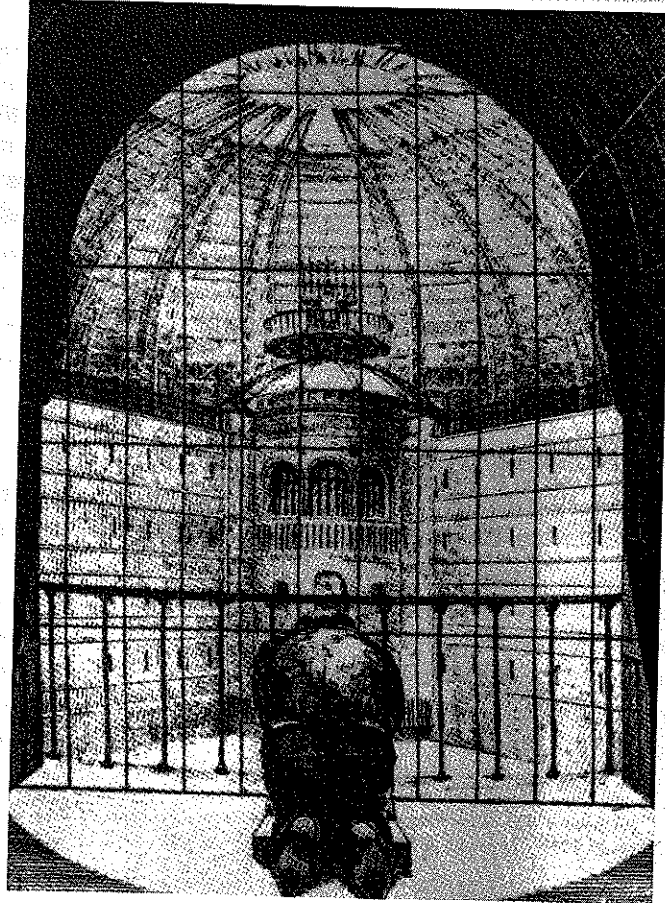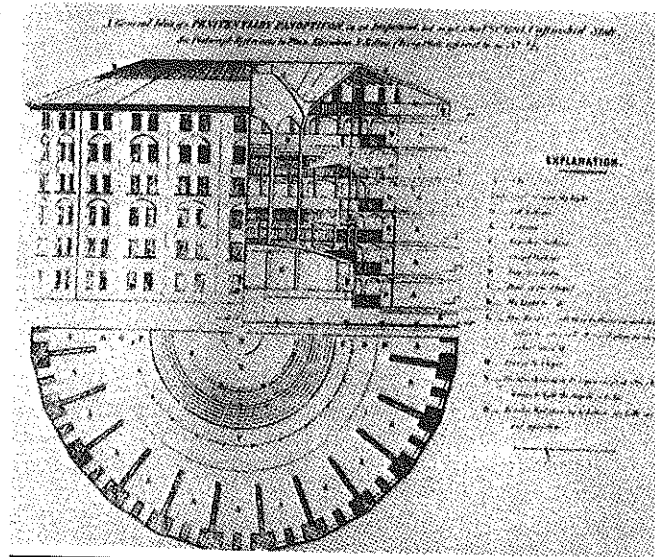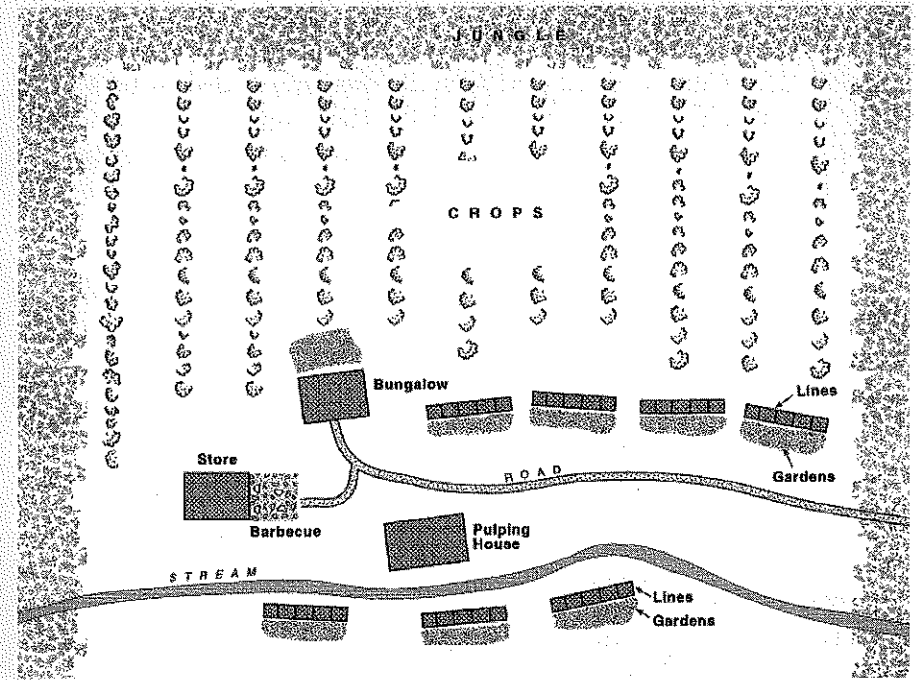
Figure 3.1 Bentham's panopticon



Figure 3.2 Schematic diagram of a coffee plantation, mid-nineteenth century. The 'lines' are workers' dwellings

or would be ordered along easily monitored straight lines (see Figure 3.2). This allowed surveillance of the workers from a central point, a bit like the guard in the panopticon tower, and once again it would not always have been apparent to the workers whether they were being watched or not.

Foucault's metaphor for modern society has been highly influential but post-colonial scholars have suggested that it is a Eurocentric model and has to be seen in a more partial way. For while it is convincing to argue that panopticism has become dominant in western societies, under colonialism the ruling powers still continued to use spectacular forms of power (such as publicly violent punishments) alongside the subtleties of a disciplinary landscape to maintain control.

Therefore, we also need to consider other understandings of how power worked through the colonial landscape. Georges Bataille, another French philosopher of the built form, turns Foucault on his head. Rather than power running silently through all relations, for Bataille power can be visualised in the landscape. Applied through colonial architecture, locals are meant to see power openly reflected in the monumental architecture of the colonisers. Architecture acts as a metaphor of the power of the colonisers and it is intended to overawe its new subjects. The gaze here is the reverse to Foucault's model, as it is the subjects who gaze at the signs of power in the architecture, rather than the built form facilitating a disciplinary gaze on the subjects.

Most often civic buildings in colonies were built to impress the colonised, and to imprint firmly the power of the new rulers into the landscape. However, it should be noted that such architecture tended to be located within the capitals and major cities and that architecture elsewhere tended to be much more modest and mundane. Colonial architectural investments also differed by location. The British invested more time and money to changing the Indian landscape, for instance, than they did in most of their African colonies, reflecting the relative values they held of each place.

In India the British created landscapes of power in a new capital. New Delhi was planned to incorporate spectacular and grand architecture to enforce British dominance. This plan included a conscious attempt to civilise the Indian population. The architect of this plan and the major buildings, Edward Lutyens, had nothing but contempt for Indian architectural heritage. He considered that India had no architecture before the arrival of Europeans, just tents in stone (Irvine, 1981). He, and many other European architects of the time, interpreted Islamic art as feminine, insufficiently structured, and exotic and imaginary rather than practical. He assumed that architectural styles had remained constant for all time rather than progressing and developing as had been the case for European architecture. British architecture was supposed to 'improve' the natives, especially via public buildings and museums. The order and structure of the streets, the good examples made by those celebrated in public statuary, and the informative and enlightening culture of museums, were all seen as having a positive effect on colonial people – the cultured nature of such built forms was expected to 'rub off' on the morality and values of colonial viewers. As we have already seen, the Victorian bourgeoisie had the same plans back at home for the working classes, whom they considered were in need of the same moral guidance and enlightenment.

Clearly it was an extravagant move to build a new city from scratch but the British colonisers were facing nationalist stirrings. The Indian Congress Party had been formed in 1885 and had developed an increasingly vocal opposition to colonisation that had lasted into the twentieth century. In response, the British began New Delhi in earnest in 1913. The city was structured around two triumphal avenues, Kingsway and Queensway. The plan offered a clear sense of order, with the main street running between the governor's residence (occupying an elevated position overlooking the general population) and various government buildings. Statues of lions at the entrance to the Viceroy's house were further symbols of Britishness and strength. War memorials were included in this landscape but none of these marked battles between the Indians and the British. Instead, memorials were built to Indian deaths in wars that Britain and her empire had fought with others. This was clearly an attempt to enforce a common identity in the empire; not quite a brotherhood, but a family with Britain as both mother and father, and the colonised people as children under Britain's guidance.

More generally, a colonial town model emerged which involved two separate settlements comprising each city – the Oriental and the western quarters.
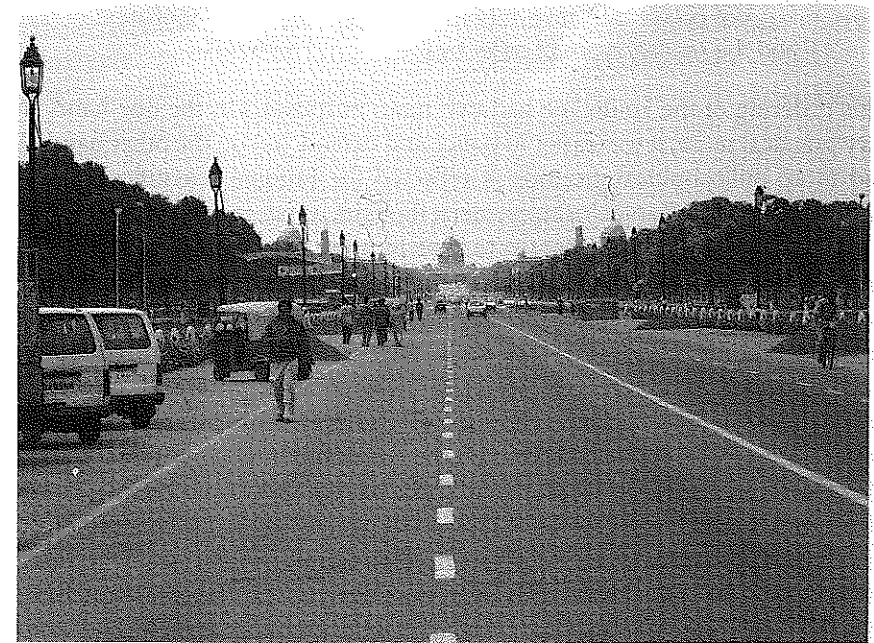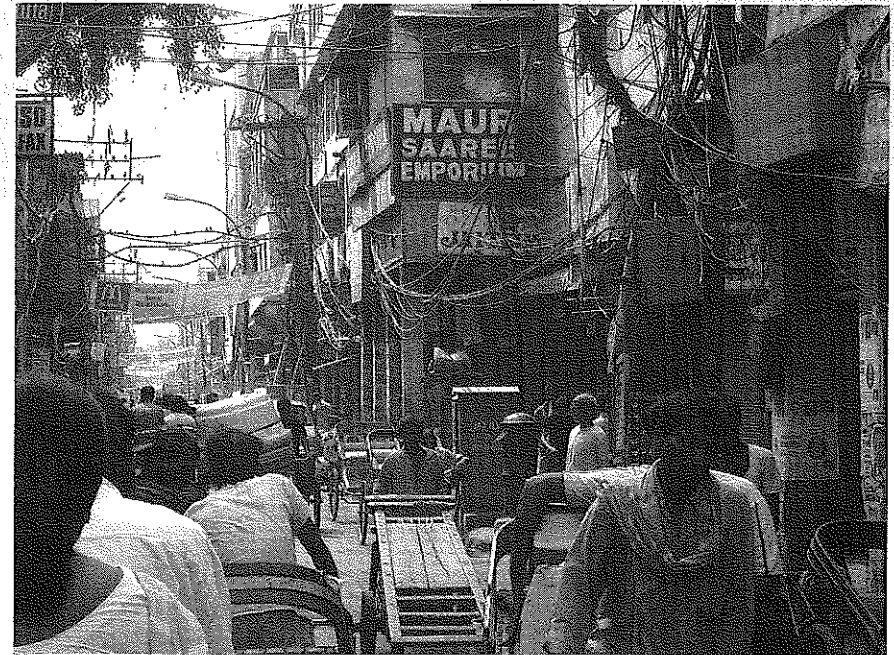


**Figure 3.3**  Contrasting Delhi streetscapes. Top – dense streets of the older part of Delhi. Bottom – the 'ordered' landscape of New Delhi.

These were kept separate by colonial administrators, nominally for health and safety reasons, and protected Europeans from what were believed to be disease-ridden traditional quarters, and also the perceived threat of violence. However,

these two parts had to be close enough to allow workers to travel to service the Europeans and also to allow for military control. The Oriental quarters were perceived to be maze-like by the European colonisers who felt that their own urban design reflected order and rationality. There were often very direct interventions in the native quarters, which demonstrated the importance of order as a practical as well as a moral concept. Kumar (2002: 95) explains what happened in the instance of nineteenth century colonial Madras:

> The Inspector of Nuisance (an Indian) was appointed to determine levels of hygiene on a daily basis, as well as to educate the natives in cleaning, personal hygiene and in the prevention of nuisance. It was believed that: 'lessons they would teach of the advantages of obedience to a few simple sanitary laws would in course of time lead the people to adapt of themselves measures calculated to place their village communities under improved sanitary condition' (Ranking, 1869: 2). The Collector noted that: 'The Inspectors I would appoint to certain groups or circles of villages ... This class of men need not be highly educated. They would merely be required to know what are 'nuisances' to spy them out and report them' (ibid.:4).
>
> [...]
>
> Nuisance Inspectors were under the paternalistic purview of the Superintendent of Lands (a European) who was explicitly referred to as a 'Moral Agent' to check evil misuse of power by native subordinates, illustrating the conflation of the moral and the sanitary types of order by the colonial authorities.

This ordering of the landscape had two main purposes. On the one hand, in a very practical sense, it was easier to police and defend, but on the other hand, this had more philosophical grounds: it reflected the rational scientific order that Europeans saw as characterising western thought, as we saw in the last chapter.

As geographers, it is important to bear in mind the landscapes upon which the colonisers were working. Although these were based around colonial plans of how the landscape should operate, such plans did not always work out perfectly in real life. While imperial architectural styles were manifestations of interconnected structures of power/knowledge that informed colonialism everywhere, there were always certain constraints and limitations placed by the materials and wealth available and by the environmental conditions. Much of the postcolonial critique of colonial practice has emerged from literary and cultural studies which have tended to focus on plans and documents rather than the everyday practices of colonialism (something which we will discuss towards the end of the book). However, outside of the capital cities, much colonial life was mundane and unspectacular with architecture that had had to adapt to local conditions and available resources. Just because the colonisers were trying to impose an image of order, this was not always completely successful. In her work on colonial Singapore, Yeoh (1996: 10, 13, 15) explains:

> The colonial urban landscape is hence not simply a palimpsest reflecting the also a terrain of discipline and resistance, a resource drawn upon by different groups and the contended object of everyday discourse in conflicts and negotiations involving *both* colonists and colonized groups. It embodies the negotiation of power between the dominant and the subordinated in society, each with their own versions of reality and practice.
>
> [...]
>
> To attribute an absolute *omnipotence* to the 'apparatus' of disciplinary power would, as Colin Gordon has argued, confuse the domain of *discourse* with those of *practices* and *effects* for what is intended and articulated by the 'powerful' within the domain of discourse (such as those of sanitary sciences or urban planning) may fail to materialize in its entirety when transposed to the domain of actual practices and techniques or produce unintended consequences and effects. It would also amount to denying that those which disciplinary power seeks to control are capable of counter-strategies which can challenge disciplinary power and modify its effects.
>
> [...]
>
> These counter-strategies included 'active' forms such as rioting, holding demonstrations, or going on strikes as means of expressing grievances. However, more common than 'active' and 'heroic' forms of protest, and in the long run less costly in terms of effort and sacrifice, were the 'passive', rather unspectacular means of countering and inflecting colonial control. The community could adopt an outward attitude of apparent acquiescence (or at least non-protest), but in reality disregard or even thwart the measures imposed by the colonial power. They could drag their feet over or dig their heels into requests for co-operation. [...] Compliance was withdrawn unobtrusively, without calling attention to the act itself or upsetting the larger symbolic order of dominance and dependence prescribed for the colonial world. Even when such forms of resistance became widespread enough to awaken the colonialists to the inefficacy of their policies at grassroots level, they were often too dispersed, too anonymous, and far too commonplace to allow immediate effective action against the actual culprits.

The colonial urban landscape was hence not simply a surface reflecting the effects of the unequal power relations characterising colonial societies, but also a resource drawn upon in conflicts involving *both* colonists and colonised groups. It embodied the negotiation of the power of domination and resistance between the dominant and subordinated in society, each with their own versions of reality and practice. While the colonised may have behaved themselves in public and acquiesced to rules and regulations, this does not mean that they internalised the meaning encoded in the landscape. In the safety of private spaces, in their homes or with friends, they might have discussed rather different interpretations, challenging or poking fun at the images imposed by the colonisers.

It is important to note here that the notion of power running through the

only to the distant colonial past. The use of the landscape to emphasise the power of one group over another was perhaps at its most blatant in South Africa during apartheid. From 1948 until its repeal in the 1990s, apartheid operated following three spatial scales – the personal, urban residential and national – and was designed to keep the races (white, black, coloured and Asian) apart, in terms of differential access to public facilities or residences. Apartheid thus also promoted differential access to resources and life-opportunities.

# ABSTRACT SPACES: THE COLONIAL LANDSCAPE, WORK AND THE BODY

The creation of maps and plans of colonial territory, and the establishment of ownership over this land, had the effect of creating what Henri Lefebvre (1991) has called '**abstract space**'. Lefebvre observed that to control the production of space is to control the processes of social production and reproduction. Central to this is the commodification and bureaucratisation of everyday life, namely making space mathematical and ordered (challenging the indigenous ordering of space) in such a way as to render the colony most efficiently known and governable. As we have already seen, geographers were among those who did just this; producing maps of colonised territories, measuring distances, noting landownership, and so on. This was a process that fed into the colony as a site of production: the selling and taxing of land (where perhaps the notion of land ownership had previously not existed) as well as assisting the colonisers' rule through the knowledge this produced about the area.

The links between capitalism and modernity have been explicated by many authors. But as capitalism spread to colonies, so modernity became part of the imperialist project and cultural transformation became based on imperialist knowledge. Duncan (2002) has argued that abstract space requires the construction of 'abstract bodies' to conform to it. Abstract bodies are bodies that are docile, useful, disciplined, rationalised, normalised, and controlled sexually. In short, they are economic investments to be protected and utilised to their greatest capacity.

In his work on colonial plantations, Duncan (2002) develops the ideas of the production of colonial urban space into non-urban elements of the colonies. He argued that the production of abstract bodies in a place like Ceylon or other colonies required the cultural transformation of a people, by attempting to create a new de-cultured worker who could labour productively in the colonial plantations.

Plantation owners' ideas were based on a nineteenth century belief in scientific solutions to what were seen as highly interrelated problems of race, moral depravity, disease, material squalour and political disorder. They tried to transform what was seen as the flawed native body into the abstract body of the labourer, a body that corresponded to abstract routines of labour in time and space. Here is what the Chief Medical Officer in Ceylon in the 1870s had to say about local workers or 'coolies': 'The coolie is naturally lazy, indolent and docile ... He has strongly developed animal passions' (quoted in Duncan, 2002: 324). In a despatch to the Colonial Office, Governor Robinson claimed that

The Tamil coolie is perhaps the simplest, as he is certainly the most capricious, of all the Orientals with whom we have had to deal in Ceylon. He is like a child requiring the strong arm of power. He must know that he is subject to paternal authority. (quoted in Duncan, 2002: 324)

Through the ideas of control and rationality covered in the previous chapter, plantation owners believed that work routines could be established to create effective labourers. The need to turn the 'indolent, pleasure-addicted, sensuous peoples' of the Orient into efficient labourers 'inspired innumerable discourses on the techniques of supervision and control' (Adas, 1989: 258). Work routines were centred around the notion of a flawed native body, compared to the abstract, ideal, European body. This view emerged from the belief that native peoples were closer to nature than Europeans that we have come across already. So, for example, wages were determined by bodily characteristics: in the 1870s, men were paid 9d, women 7d, and children by their height. Plantation owners argued that it was necessary to limit wages for the good of the labourers. Because of their closeness to nature, their animal passions and needs only required subsistence wages. They merely needed to support their own bodily requirements, it was believed, so to give them more money would be reckless. Workers were to be physically disciplined if they did not work. Punishments were corporal because of the embodied nature of the workers. Thus, the native workers were perceived to be improved through their work on the abstract space of the plantation:

Plantations can be conceived of as modern technologies for the reconfiguration of space, tools, scientific instruments and other material resources, bringing together culturally heterogeneous populations, stripping them of their former social attachments and reconstituting them as workers through the use of space-time strategies of monitoring and control. (Duncan, 2002: 317)

The native body was regarded as an instance of nature which was worked upon through labour and the abstract space of the plantation to create the abstract body of the worker. Thus, labour westernises the native body. If we return to the views of the Chief Medical Officer of Ceylon, we can see this view very clearly:

It is "genius of labour," he said, which transforms the coolie. His countenance "mirrors the newly awakened soul, and the consciousness of powers and capabilities, hitherto dormant and unused, stamps the physiognomy with an expression of manliness and intelligence which is never seen in the raw, uncivilised, newly landed coolie". (quoted in Duncan, 2002: 326)

Imperialist knowledge was command over time and space – it was rationality, order and self-control – all things which natives lacked and colonials possessed. By enforcing a work discipline onto the natives (providing an ordering of time and space in the abstract space of the plantation), the plantation would transform the native from a culturally-marked body into a labourer, and capitalism could be spread throughout the colonies. Of course, this was very convenient because it suggested that hard work was beneficial to the colonised people (rather than being seen as a burden to them, as is a more usual interpretation). Therefore, this discourse presented the needs of the colonials and the good of the natives to be the same.

## LANDSCAPES OF HOME

Part of power is to be able domesticate the unfamiliar, in other words, to create home in distant and foreign places. When building cities and residences, colonists drew upon the styles with which they were familiar, which they understood and which they valued. When in the colonies, Europeans reproduced home life but with a difference. Race stood in for class. Colonists could act out a higher class status in colonies so they could reproduce the landscapes of home – but with added luxury. Europeans did not want to go to the colonies to live as they did back home, but wanted to improve their lot. This meant that European-style architecture was established in the colonies, even when at odds with the local style and environment (see Figure 3.4).

Clearly, in many parts of the empire, climate was a great drawback to recreating home. Buildings and lifestyles had to make compromises to deal with searing heat and humidity. In South Asia, this was negotiated through the creation of hill stations, built from 1819 onwards as high elevation retreats from heat, dust and the natives. By the 1850s the colonial government had established alternative seats of government for the hot summer months. In addition to being a more pleasant environment for Europeans, it was thought to save administrators from the degenerative effects of the climate.

There were also more directly related health issues. The colonisers considered all natives to be unhealthy and this in turn warranted segregation, as we saw in terms of the colonial cities. Disease was thought of in moralistic terms as well as in a literal bodily sense. Hill stations were ideal because of the healthier climate and being away from Indian population densities. They were 'comforting little pieces of England' as one contemporary visitor said (quoted in Kenny, 1995: 711).

This was perceived to be especially important for women who, because of their closer proximity to nature, were thought to be more affected by the extremes of the Indian climate. To ensure that women (and their morals) did
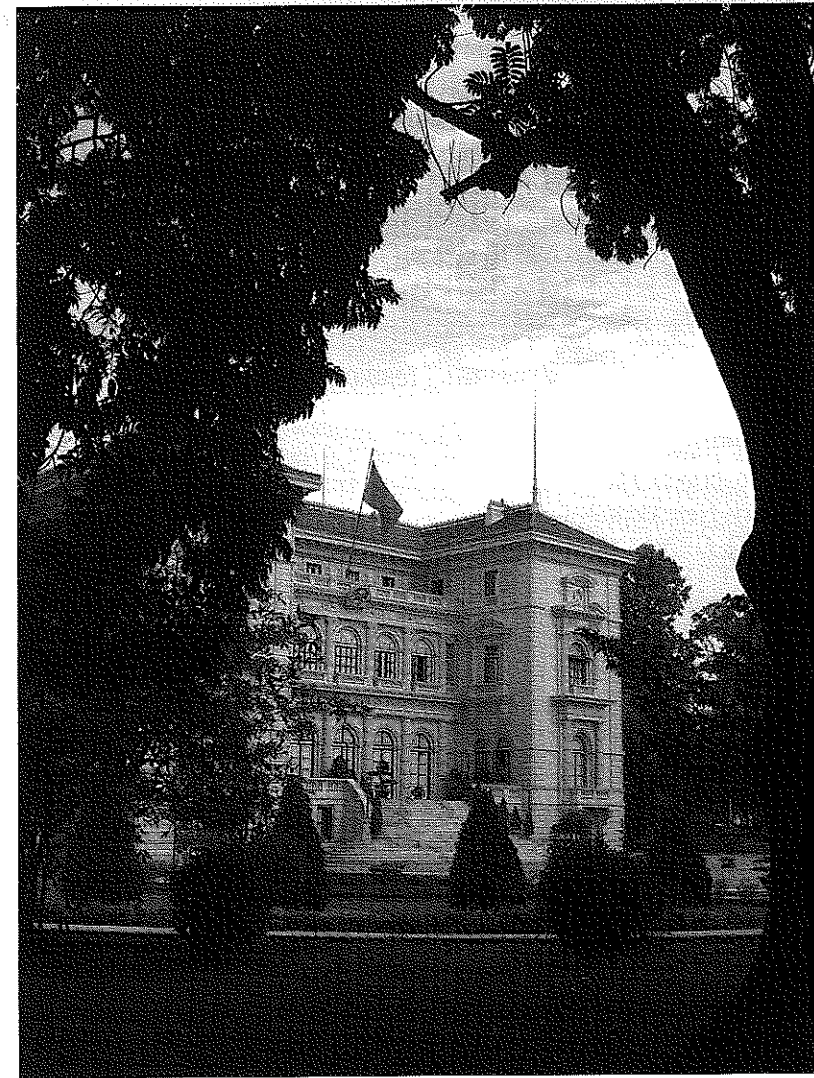


Figure 3.4    French style architecture in Hanoi, Vietnam

not fall victim to the heat, they periodically needed to escape to the hill stations. But this environment also made it possible to introduce European plants, European housing, clubs, pastimes, and to produce a more convincing and recognisable landscape of home. Plantations were given English names such as Eton, Pine Hill, Gloucester, and Wiltshire. Plantation owners adopted a model of the country gentleman. In 1877 one commentator said of Ootacamund in the South of India: 'I affirm it to be a paradise ... The afternoon was rainy and the road muddy, but such *English* rain, such deliciously

*English* mud' (quoted in Kenny, 1995: 702). The landscape of the hill stations was so familiar to the English that they were almost accepted to *be* part of England.

Again we can see the power of colonialism to write meaning onto the native landscape. Here the colonialists were able to domesticate the different landscape to render it in a form that was familiar and known to them. It allowed them to feel at home in such foreign lands (and perhaps also made the natives feel out of place in their own lands).

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### Further reading

*On the construction of the colonial landscape*

Carter, P. (1987) *The Road to Botany Bay: An Exploration of Landscape and History*. New York: Knopf.

King, A.D. (1976) *Colonial Urban Development*. London: Routledge.

Mitchell, T. (1988) *Colonising Egypt*. Berkeley, CA: University of California.

Myers, G. (2003) *Verandas of Power: Colonialism and Space in Urban Africa*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

Yeoh, B. (1996) *Contesting Space: Power Relations and the Urban Built Environment in Colonial Singapore*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

*On the creation of abstract space and abstract bodies*

Duncan, J. (2007) *In the Shadows of the Tropics: Climate, Race and Biopower in Nineteenth Century Ceylon*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Duncan, J. (2002) 'Embodying colonialism?: Domination and resistance in 19th century Ceylonese coffee plantations', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 28 (3): 317–38.

Lefebvre, H. (1991) *The Production of Space*. Oxford: Blackwell.

*On the domestication of colonial landscapes*

Blunt, A. (2005) *Domicile and Diaspora: Anglo-Indian Women and the Spatial Politics of Home*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Kenny, J. (1995) 'Climate, race, and imperial authority: the symbolic landscape of the British hill station in India', *Annals, Association of American Geographers*, 85: 694–714.

A film that conveys a sense of the mundane and unspectacular, everyday nature of much of the colonial experience, but also the highly symbolic nature of the landscape, is Jean-Jacque Annaud's *Noirs et Blancs en Couleur* (1976), released in English on DVD as *Black and White in Color* (2003).

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# PART II

## POST-COLONIALISMS

As already indicated, in conventional accounts, decolonisation marked the end of colonialism. However, postcolonial approaches see continuity from the colonial to the post-colonial periods. While the idea of neo-colonialism (literally a 'new' colonialism) has long been argued for in economic terms – in that there are still relationships of dependency between ex-colonies and the powers that had once ruled them – here we will examine the continuing legacies of colonial ways of knowing. In Chapter 5 we will consider the shape of the post-colonial world order to see if it has indeed moved away from the binary of west-rest that Said and others witnessed during the colonial period. We will also think about American ideas on development as a replacement for colonial relations, and the rise of the Third World. In Chapter 6 we will see how the exotic and the other – concepts at the heart of colonial travel writing and exploration – have been reformulated in the post-colonial era where all parts of the world are known and explored, and will examine the ways in which they have become incorporated as products in the world economy. While this chapter will consider arguments about globalisation and cultural homogenisation, it will also argue for the ways in which different parts of the world are resisting this process and offering alternative expressions of cultural belonging and identity.