Introduction
Colonial Space, Anglo-Indian Perspectives

Space is fundamental in any exercise of power.
— Michel Foucault

British-Indian Geographies, Anglo-Indian Attitudes

In the 1880s, during his wanderings in the north of British India, the young Rudyard Kipling visited the sixteenth-century fort of Amber, in what was then called Rajputana (now Rajasthan), just outside Jaipur. Reporting for the Pioneer newspaper based in Allahabad, Kipling drew intriguing conclusions based on his observations there:

If . . . a building reflects the character of its inhabitants, it must be impossible for one reared in an Eastern palace to think straightforwardly or speak freely or—but here the annals of Rajputana contradict the theory—to act openly. The cramped and darkened rooms, the narrow, smooth-walled passages with recesses where a man might wait for his enemy unseen, the maze of ascending and descending stairs leading nowhere, the ever-present screens of marble tracery that may hide or reveal so much,—all these things breathe of plot and counterplot, league and intrigue.1

At first glance, this seems an embarrassingly bald Orientalist impression. The bewildering “maze” of unlit hallways is worthy of the subterranean gothic-cism of Poe, one of Kipling’s literary forebears,2 but with a colonialist twist that conjures a host of stereotypes concerning “Eastern” mystery and magic. Nor is this surprising: Kipling was certainly interested in magic, as his many stories of
supernaturalism attest. Lewis D. Wurgaft has helpfully observed that the Anglo-Indian preoccupation with magic was partly a means of distinguishing British order and reason from India’s supposed irrationality. But Kipling’s discussion of the correspondence between Indian architecture—more broadly, to use a shorthand I will be returning to, India’s spatiality—and Indian society is much too complex to be reduced to a two-dimensional outlook such as this. In fact, as I will be arguing in this book, the larger British-Indian attitude toward both the natural and built environments of the subcontinent is, in its literary expression, profoundly conflicted and therefore deeply revealing of colonial fixations and uncertainties. On a broad level, perhaps this is to be expected in a time of rapid industrial and societal changes, which resulted in an unprecedented transformation of physical and social spaces as well as a profound mix of self-doubt and self-certainty. The ambivalence resulting from all of this change is particularly noticeable in the period’s literary expressiveness: Think of Baudelaire’s Paris, Dickens’ London or Hardy’s Salisbury Plain. By the same token, writers were able not only to reflect this turbulence, but also to shape the public perception, and even the broad physical retransformation, of particular environments. One assumption behind this study, then, is that writing is not distinct from its surroundings, but rather a powerful means of re-imagining and reconfiguring those surroundings, ideologically as well as materially.

If this was true for a changing Europe, what can we say about writers’ self-perceptions in the context of colonialism? This was a period, as Stephen Kern has described it, that witnessed the compression of space and acceleration of time, and nowhere more so than in the colonial theater. Railways, cityscapes, and infrastructural projects transformed the appearance of the Indian subcontinent, a transformation that simultaneously facilitated imperial reach and Indian nationalism. Europe, as both idea and place, was never a region separable from its colonies, particularly so in the case of British India. Britain, as numerous critics have shown, is impossible to define in its modern imperial sense without including in this definition its crown jewel, India. Britain inserted its own perturbations and ideals into these “Eastern” representations, infusing them, as we will see, with corresponding degrees of derangement (such as the proverbial “decay” of ancient Indian traditions) and idealized sentiment (devolving usually into notions of the “picturesque”). These mixed ideas of India owed much to Britain’s own anxieties concerning its demographic transformation and its geopolitical position in the world, especially as East India Company interests evolved into those of the Crown. As the historian Francis Hutchins puts it, the “certainty of a permanent Empire” in the later 1800s “seemed to increase in proportion to its fragility, and to serve for many people as a defense and retreat from
reason long after the course of events had proved its impossibility.” The situation was, as Hutchins titles his book, an “illusion of permanence.” Prominent writers and intellectuals tended to fall into the habit of endorsing this illusion, none more so than Kipling, at least in his public persona. This attitude was a notable change from the 1700s and early 1800s, when British administrators like Warren Hastings and William Bentick, for all their blind spots, encouraged cultural and conjugal interaction between Indians and Europeans.

In the context of the anglicized world I will be examining, which deeply informs our understandings of English literature and culture, Britishness was, to adapt Linda Colley’s perception and Benedict Anderson’s catchphrase, an imagined community conceived in contradistinction to other regions and cultures. Although Britain held sway over much of this dynamic, the relationship between the “sceptered isle” and its Indian jewel was transactional. That is to say, India was a physical and imaginative presence in the imperial epicenter: on the level of writing, as in the “discovery” of ancient India by the French philosophes and German Romantics, and in Wilkie Collins’ moonstone curse; as objects to be exhibited, as at London’s Crystal Palace in 1851; in the form of spices and textiles; and in the rarer but no less important guise of sketches and paintings of flora and fauna, palaces and ruins. This book argues specifically that Anglo-Indian writers, by which I mean nineteenth- and twentieth-century British writers who viewed India as “home,” were acutely conscious of the relatively new topographies they inhabited and which largely defined their social purchase in imperial society. This Anglo-Indian sensitivity to the representation of geographical as well as man-made spaces—for the two were, as I will explain, interwoven—resulted in narratives that are intriguingly double-edged, simultaneously supporting and subverting colonialist ideologies. Despite their obvious differences from one another, the writers I examine—chiefly Kipling, Flora Annie Steel, and the tiger-hunter Jim Corbett—all reflect this Anglo-Indian outlook, each one offering a window onto a permanently fractured sensibility.

The years leading up to and including those in which these writers wrote, between the 1880s and 1940s, have attracted much scholarly attention, and for good reason. Besides coinciding with the rise of modern industry, this period followed the so-called Mutiny of 1857–1858, which led to more conservative colonial policies. The Mutiny, or “Great Rebellion,” was so named to underscore the British perception of betrayal by Indian soldiers (sepoys) enlisted by the East India Company, who rose up against their European masters. The immediate causes of the rebellion were clearly the ill treatment of the sepoys, the annexation of key principalities, and, more importantly, the alienation of Indians as a result.
of misguided policies. The anglicized urban Indian elite inevitably reacted to these policies, so that even as British imperialism became more robust, Indian nationalism rapidly gained ground. The naming of Queen Victoria as Empress of India in 1876 consolidated the juridical as well as symbolic shifts in colonial administrative tactics. Most notably, past practices, such as Britain’s interference in local religious customs and the toleration of British and Indian intermarriage, which had held for over a century, were now deemed imprudent. After the rebellion (which Indians call the First War of Independence), the British, so one story goes, having tasted the fruits of their greed for property and control, sought to defuse further disaffection by officially refraining from criticism of Native beliefs and customs. At the same time, as Veena Talwar Oldenberg observes in her history of colonial Lucknow, a culturally rich city at the epicenter of the rebellious storm, the British administration—now referred to by the suitably Indian word for rule, Raj—instituted itself into Indian society far more effectively by means of social policies and bureaucratic regimes. Indeed, the cultural legacies of Delhi and Lucknow point to what is arguably a more important result of the Mutiny, namely, the number of colonialist tropes it generated for the consumption of English readers. The imagined rape of Englishwomen by Native men, for example, became a recurring image that structured the increasingly racist attitudes of British administrators.\(^{11}\) Even on the cusp of the twentieth century, when Steel wrote, or in the 1930s and 1940s, during which Corbett published his tiger tales, the fear among British-Indians of more mutinies infused the manly images of hunting, espionage, and chivalric rescue in the popular press.

These transformations of British-Indian society were especially marked by the physical segregation of Europeans and Indians, a policy shift that required a re-ordering of colonial topographies. British military stations, called cantonments, were established on prime real estate far from the bazaars of the Indian city, commonly referred to as the “Native town.” As more and more Englishwomen arrived in the subcontinent to wed British officials, who now could no longer cohabit with Indian women, officers began building homes for their families in India’s hills to escape the heat of the plains.\(^{12}\) These hill stations, partly patterned on English towns, generated their own mystique in this period of high imperialism.\(^{13}\) At the same time, the railway station, the plains bungalow and garden, the Civil Station, and the English Club all became the defining attributes of British-Indian society in these years. To speak of the Hill Station or a Club was, therefore, to speak of a distinct colonial sensibility that could not be divorced from its environs. Kipling is especially famous for satirizing his compatriots’ attachment to these spaces, which reinforced British-Indians’ sense of self-importance. Indians likewise viewed the British through a topo-
graphical lens, rightly seeing their enclaves as smug redoubts: Compound walls, checkpoints, imposing monuments, and intimidating boulevards made clear to the Raj’s subjects the intrinsic separation of Indian and European societies, what Frantz Fanon calls, in the context of French Algeria, a “compartmentalized world.”

I have been speaking thus far of “British India” as if this were a self-evident monolith. Although British imperialism in its broad features was, and is, represented as a homogenous whole, recent studies have revealed its subterranean heterogeneity via its liminal and marginal actors and social relations. This study maintains that certain writers of the Anglo-Indian community in particular expressed the disjunctions and contradictions of colonial identity formation in productively intriguing ways. As will become clear in the chapters that follow, “Anglo-Indian” originally meant any European inhabitant of colonial India. The label became especially contested during the period under consideration, with “country-born” Britishers such as Kipling, who was born in Bombay, feuding for cultural turf with visiting Europeans whom they viewed as interlopers. “The country-born,” Kipling states in *Kim*, have their “own manners and customs, which do not resemble those of any other land,” least of all those of the “dirty [Englishman].” For a colonial culture that demanded authentic racial and social allegiances in the climate of Europe’s civilizing missions, to be simultaneously Indian and English demanded delicate social negotiation, producing a persona that was at once skeptical of and loyal to the “mother country.” No wonder, then, that Kipling’s eponymous hero Kim must establish his Irish-Indian-Imperial identity “through an elaborate relay of identifications, desires, and impersonations.” The term “Anglo-Indian,” moreover, operated as both noun and adjective, so that Kipling, for instance, was immediately characterized as an Anglo-Indian writer, at once a spokesman for the community and an idiosyncratic voice. This designation was part of a larger, evolving discourse of colonialist identity, with various players positioning themselves as experts—experts on economic policy, cultural authenticity, Indian architecture, Indian languages, and so on. Although, as Bart Moore-Gilbert observes, Anglo-Indians had for decades been crafting a seemingly distinct voice through publications targeting their growing community and through a dialect that incorporated countless words from Indian vernaculars, Anglo-Indians quarreled among themselves about the degree to which they were culturally closer to or further away from “Home.” Their stake in colonial India’s geographical imaginary was constantly at war with their equal stake in England, a country that was, as Raymond Williams has demonstrated, itself fractured along the lines of metropolitan and rural societies. George Otto Trevelyan, writing of his visit to India in the 1860s, famously
patronized his Anglo-Indian hosts in words that catch his metropolitan English attitude. Anglo-Indians, he concluded, “looked upon India as their birthright, and failed to acquire the larger views and wider interests of a general English education.” Indians, by contrast, were termed “Natives” by the Europeans, who variously called members of the mixed-race population “half-castes” and “Eurasians.” By the early 1900s, as the nationalist movement in India quickened, persons of mixed-race, sensing their increasingly indistinct status—that is, neither properly British nor Indian—began to call themselves Anglo-Indian to safeguard their social perch, much to the displeasure of British inhabitants. The combination of Britain’s and India’s cultural and racial caste systems in these years led inevitably to name-calling and the micro-management of group labels. Thus, Britishers back Home, infected with late nineteenth-century racial fears about Europeans who “go native,” commonly used “domiciled” and “country-born” to refer condescendingly to their India-settled brethren. The latter, in turn, safeguarded their perch by using racial and cultural epithets like “wog” and “native” for Indians.

Indians of course chafed at this discrimination, but so did British-Indian writers like Kipling, Flora Annie Steel, and Jim Corbett, who, despite their differences, played a strategic hand, by alternately insisting on their Anglo and their Indian allegiances. I focus on these and a few other writers precisely because I see in their partial selves (to borrow Salman Rushdie’s term) a particularly acute sensitivity to the predicament of modern consciousness. It is not coincidental in this regard that the writers I examine pay so much attention to location—imagined location, to be sure, but also, and importantly, geographical as well. Too often, space is conceived of as either entirely bounded or entirely porous, leaving no room for the range of (dis)locations between these poles. The in-between status that Kipling, for example, describes so effectively was a lived experience for the inhabitants of colonial India, Eurasians, Anglo-Indians and Indians alike. To be sure, modern communities all shape their identities through a complex mix of spatial and social, concrete and imaginative correspondences. The colonial Indian experience, however, was particularly marked by such complexities. It is no accident, therefore, that a modern writer like Rushdie should find in Kipling a resonance with his own migrant experience. More to my point in this study is that Kipling and other Anglo-Indian writers felt a particular kinship with Eurasians. This accounts for their attention to the plight of hybrid characters, such as the sympathetic Hurree Babu in Kipling’s *Kim*, whose presence reflects what Rushdie has described, in one of his own fictions about mixed-blood characters, as the near “schizophreni[a] . . . of the Indianesses and Englishesses that struggled within [Kipling].” There is thus a revealing slippage in the very
definition and application of the term “Anglo-Indian,” a slippage that befits this study’s investigation of a sensibility whose liminality derives as much from its conflicted environment as from its psychological underpinnings. It should not be so surprising, therefore, that a writer like Steel, in her short stories and her most famous work, *On the Face of the Waters*, should feel compelled to uphold imperial interests even as her characters, whether they are domiciled Englishmen and -women or Indian women, exemplify contrary interests. Steel’s adoptive Anglo-Indian identity—although not country-born like Kipling or Corbett, she had come to view herself as part of this company—is especially split along such lines. More significantly, as we will see, her characters are impossible to comprehend fully without an appreciation of the different social and physical spaces they inhabit—cityscapes, bungalow verandas, upper rooms. This point thus presupposes that we cannot understand the literary play of “Anglo-Indian” without an equal attention to the term’s geographical contexts. Indeed, the very term “domiciled European” is itself a spatial term, as Peter Scriver points out. It is precisely this interplay among self-perception, cultural entitlement, and imperial dictates that characterizes this study’s attention to the geography of displacement in late colonial India.

Kipling’s ambivalent description of Amber Fort illustrates these disjunctions well. If we limit our reading to this passage, which seems to feed the stereotype of gothic space and its ominous effect upon its inhabitants, we miss the tone of irony, even outright sarcasm, which leads to entirely opposite conclusions than the one famously espoused by Thomas Babington Macaulay in 1835, that non-European minds are benighted by their environment and birthright. Kipling’s intent in this travel passage (and the entire piece) becomes clear once we register the final, deflationary line: “In a dead palace [i.e., like this one]—a cemetery of loves and hatreds done with hundreds of years ago, and of plotting that had for their end . . . the coming of the British tourist with guidebook and sun-hat—oppression gives place to simply impertinent curiosity.” The passage caricatures not the Rajput past, but instead the quintessential English globe-trotter who darts from one tourist sight to another, ticking them off one by one. There is perhaps no more telling indication of Kipling’s disdain for the shallow tourist than the distance he—that is, the journalist narrator—places between himself and this representative interloper by his use of the third-person pronoun. There is, indeed, an odd slippage between the Englishman who bullies his way onto each new scene and the Anglo-Indian whose commerce lies with a side of Rajputana society that is “outside, and unconnected with, that of the [British-controlled] Station.” If it is the persona of the diurnal Englishman who surveys Jeypore from “the top of the palace,” it is the Anglo-Indian who bal-
ances this perspective by viewing it from below, emphasizing thereby not only a seldom seen Jeypore, but also the tenuousness of perspective itself. This back-and-forth between first- and third-person voices that are sometimes one and the same, sometimes distinct, betrays the Anglo-Indian narrator’s recognition of his divided self. This split voice also speaks directly to my interest in this book, which is to explore the Anglo-Indian’s preoccupation with his or her physical as well as imaginative place in the subcontinent. The Anglo-Indian place of dwelling, to borrow from Gaston Bachelard’s study *The Poetics of Space*, possesses an element of unreality whose resonance, at once physical and imagined, is necessarily vulnerable to a variety of meanings and interpretations.

The ways in which the British conceived of their place in colonial India had much to do with how they conceived of the region’s natural and built environments—hills and plains, jungles and bridges—as well as its more socially determined constructs, such as bungalows, gardens, and bazaars.

By “colonial spatiality,” therefore, I mean the collectivity of conceptual and material outlooks at particular historical junctures. This spatial orientation is therefore contingent and frequently performative, infused as it is with ideological, individual and contextual idiosyncrasies. But can one speak of “space” without immediately inviting such a multiplicity of definitions as to render the term ineffectual? Even if one accepts the term, don’t its inherent contradictions make speaking to a particular spatial outlook impossible? My answer to these questions is in turn “yes” and “no,” even as I note the importance of keeping these points in mind. Equally important for the present project is the effect of narrative. Michel de Certeau’s distinction between space (*espace*) and place (*lieu*) is useful in this regard. “A place is... an instantaneous configuration of positions,” each of which is unique. Space is the web of relations amongst these positions and is constituted through “the actions of historical subjects.” “Stories,” de Certeau observes, “... constantly transform places into spaces and spaces into places. They organize the play of changing relationships between places and spaces.”

It is narratives, in other words, that mediate this ceaseless, uneven dialectic, whose particular operation I aim to investigate in the chapters that follow. In the vein of Paul Carter’s archaeology of landscape and history, I am interested in describing the ambivalent intersection between language, historical place, and ideology so as to account for the overlap of representation and materiality. Thus, the instant one speaks of “colonial space”—of an orientation that is political and a prime constituent of modernity, as in the instantaneous telegraph communicating imperial triumphs across India—one is obliged to speak also of local and contingent place.

Critical to my investigation of the literary depiction of these spaces, there-
fore, is the style and structure Anglo-Indian writers use to express their relationship to the subcontinent. Inevitably, these representations differ from writer to writer, and from era to era. What connects them to one another is a shared, deeply ambivalent sense of geographical and imagined homeliness whose negotiation has much to tell us not only about British Indian literature, but also about the ever-present contestation over authentic selfhood in all narratives that wish to be taken seriously. For all their differences, Kipling’s comic treatment of his compatriots, Steel’s self-serious romance set against the Mutiny, and Corbett’s tiger-hunting memoir are equally reflective of a deeply felt ambivalence regarding geographical and societal location. One has only to compare their works to a non-resident English writer, such as Trevelyan, to see the distinction between English and Anglo-Indian. For all Trevelyan’s wit in deflating European pomposity in the tropics, he clings to long-standing assumptions about the distinction between English and Indian cultures. India’s “strange luxuriant vegetation” presents merely “the wild romantic charm” of the tiger hunt, which contrasts with the reassuring familiarity of “home-made bread” and “the Haymarket Theatre.”

(“Strange” is a word that comes up again and again, especially in the travelogues of visiting Europeans.) Kipling and Steel, as well as Corbett, share no such assurance. In their imaginings, England and India are not distinct entities, but instead culturally entwined, casting a doubtful shadow across Europe’s official self-certainties. As inhabitants of an indentured culture, always second to Mother England (if above the even lower rung assigned to Indians), Anglo-Indian writers exemplify a fitful and often contradictory relationship to their cultural location that is remarkably similar to that of postcolonial writers.

More to the point, as the term “location” indicates, Anglo-Indian and postcolonial writers, for all their differences, share a like mix of wonder and distaste regarding their inheritance of European spatial paradigms. For instance, there is no mistaking Kipling’s ironical yet admiring treatment of the “bridge-builders” of the Raj, Corbett’s preference for “forest roads” over European clubbishness, or Steel’s enchantment with, but condescension toward, the “upper rooms” of Delhi’s Hindu and Muslim inhabitants during the Mutiny. This mixed attitude emerged, I argue, when Europe’s long-standing presumptions about geographical exploration and conquest, including Romantic notions of arcadia and empirical quantifications of space, became entwined with an Anglo-Indian poetics of habitation. This study therefore describes how geographical presumptions, which began with Europeans’ self-confident and decidedly non-ironic estimations of South Asian geography, informed Anglo-Indians’ keen self-awareness of their bicultural location. For all their variance, the resulting narratives are Anglo-Indian inasmuch as their ambivalent relationship to India makes them
as likely to impugn their European precursors as to praise them. Thus, while Kipling adopts the well-tried British idiom of distanced irony, he characteristically personalizes it in his contradictory urge to simultaneously satirize and applaud the anchoring realities of his colonial world. This mixed outlook—perhaps best exemplified in Kipling’s tales of hill stations and cantonments and in the cacophonous Grand Trunk Road in *Kim*, as well as in Corbett’s jungle stories—inflects the works of Indian writers like Nirad Chaudhuri, Raja Rao, and Arundhati Roy; this is an important development that the scope of my study does not allow me to delineate in the way it deserves.32

By paying closer attention to the intersection of spatiality and identity in the context of Anglo-Indian writers’ common desire to advertise their English as well as Indian roots, this study addresses a number of interrelated questions that have as much to say about the relationship between words and spaces as about the authors in question. For instance, given the Raj’s obsessive construction of bungalows and bridges, cantonments and clubs, gardens and hill stations, and the large body of literature that is consequently filled with this iconography, what can we say about the effects of this physical reconfiguration upon the subjects who inhabit this landscape and this literature? What are some of the antecedent tropes that infuse the nineteenth-century spatial imperium? Specifically, how does this ethos of colonial iconography and its ostensibly moral implications resonate with those subjects whose outlook refuses, to various degrees, to be spatially bound, and who instead look into the alleyways behind the colonial Club? How are Anglo-Indian women and Indian women figured in this spatial arrangement? In pursuing such questions, I will attempt fresh considerations of Kipling, Steel, and Corbett. These writers are, as I have said, quite different from one another: Kipling, in his autobiographical and fictional output alike, is the wry observer of his compatriots’ earnest desire to be at once supremely English and indignantly expatriate—that is, Anglo-Indian. Steel, viewed for a brief time as Kipling’s literary equal, places women at the heart of her imagined India, and the tales of famed tiger hunter and conservationist Corbett provide rare evocations of a largely solitary appreciation of northern India’s jungles. Given Europeans’ romanticized treatment of non-European territories in the centuries leading up to the Raj, it is no accident that these writers devote a significant portion of their texts to Britain’s enchantment with the subcontinent’s geographical and urban features. But this romanticized view depends, as we will see, on an equal supply of disenchantment with—even outright condemnation of—those same territories. It is this contradictory view that Anglo-Indian writers simultaneously share and subvert.
Letters of Marque and the Globe-trotter

Kipling’s case is particularly illustrative of Anglo-Indian identity for a number of reasons, and therefore it is an apt starting point for my study. From his first works, published while he was still in his teens in the 1880s, Kipling was seen as the voice of colonial Britons. In later years, he was also viewed, with some justification, as the champion of British imperialism and its ideology of the “civilizing mission.” He was placed in a global pantheon by his literary mentor, Mark Twain, who said in his autobiography that Kipling’s “voice is heard around the world the moment it drops a remark.” Several critics, with whom I clearly share points of agreement, have found Kipling’s prose and poetry to be expressive of the writer’s “partitioned” self, citing his ambivalence with regard to his twin ties to Anglo-India and Britain. He has also been regarded as both a proponent and a satirist of Victorian middle-class aspirations, specifically as these were embodied in the inimitable professionalism of the duty-bound colonial officer. These various treatments have made it difficult to disentangle Kipling the modern prose stylist from Kipling the imperialist (as evoked by the still-common adjective “Kiplingesque”). The prevalence of such evaluations begs the question of why Kipling is viewed as an emblematic figure in the first place. I contend that the spatial cast of Kipling’s oeuvre is part of the numerous, often contradictory registers that draw readers to Kipling’s work. We thus see in Kipling’s description of Amber Fort a narrator who mostly espouses the globe-trekking that Kipling scorns, but who makes a direct connection between the maze of “crampt” spaces and the character of its inhabitants. The text makes clear that Kipling the reporter sees himself reflected in both the globe-trekker and the erstwhile Rajput residents, whose identification with their palace parallels Kipling’s own identification with India’s geographical and built environments. More pointedly, Kipling’s well-known interest in characters able to transgress social boundaries to better understand, to “know,” previously secret truths indicates an authorial fascination not simply with the ability to inhabit different personae, but also with the ability to transgress physical and social space. This is why Kimball O’Hara’s skill with impersonation cannot be dissociated from his ability to traverse both narrow and open spaces, such as the dark gullies and the Grand Trunk Road that figure prominently in Kim.

Kim’s youth—we literally witness his growth from boyhood to adolescence—is especially consequential since it is emblematic of Anglo-India’s obsession with youthful, malleable personalities. By the same token, youth is always susceptible to the circumscription of adult boundaries, aging, and the constant threat of death, mostly in the form of disease. These poles of vitality
and mortality structured most European perceptions of the tropics, producing in India what David Arnold has called “deathscapes,” or the documentation of a “morbid geography”—graveyards, monuments, disease-ridden jungles—that characterized Europeans’ susceptibility to the dangers of their adoptive land.\textsuperscript{38} No wonder a crucial factor in accounts of the British-Indian character’s ability to transgress colonial space is his or her relatively unconditioned and still vital youth. As Arnold observes, a European’s death in India “was never far from the ‘picturesque,’” with writers evoking the romanticized image of a selfless and adventurous spirit struck down amidst (and by) lushly dangerous geographies.\textsuperscript{39} The preference for the picturesque has had the paradoxical effect of transforming the image of a wandering spirit into a colonial still-life. Broadly speaking, colonial India expressed its desires ambivalently, juxtaposing the militarily and politically violent stress on social and spatial boundaries with an equal stress on mobility. Long before Kim’s peregrinations, Sir Richard Burton won fame for his descriptions of impersonating “Orientals” to gain access to areas normally off-limits to a European.\textsuperscript{40} Burton’s narratives resonated with his European audience, for in them he acts on not only a latent, mostly male, desire for nomadism, but also a desire for adolescent adventurism.\textsuperscript{41}

These representations of boyish adventure are part of a familiar pattern of child-centered tropes in colonial discourse that are important to consider in light of Anglo-Indian literature. A key feature of an Anglo-Indian upbringing was the role of the Indian nursemaid, or \textit{ayah}, who often became a surrogate mother for the European child. Anglo-Indian children were sent to Britain at the age of about eight for their education, which meant a sudden separation from their two “mothers” and the country of their birth—a rite of passage that was usually painful and occasionally traumatic.\textsuperscript{42} The adult Kipling, for example, seeks out his Eurasian \textit{ayah}’s blessing just before his marriage in 1892 and in his autobiography remembers her fondly. His \textit{ayah} was, as for most Anglo-Indian children, clearly a childhood confidante and, perhaps most importantly, a font of gossipy, sometimes macabre, and always entertaining stories.\textsuperscript{43} There is thus an unmistakable interplay in the literary tropes of Anglo-Indian childhood between idealized innocence and the corrupting influence of worldly experience. John McBratney discusses how Kipling reacts to this, in part by constructing “liminal enclaves,” representative of childhood playfulness (such as Mowgli’s jungle realm or Kim’s bazaar), as a means of enacting his dreams for “white creole” agency that is uncorrupted by the larger imperial and metropolitan cultures.\textsuperscript{44} Whereas the convention of English boy heroes coming to India to prepare for active participation in the work of Empire was well established,\textsuperscript{45} McBratney rightly highlights Kipling’s unique attention to the domiciled (country-born)
individual, who introduces a fresh take on cultural transactions. McBratney thus argues for a more generous reading of Kipling’s works than, for example, Sara Suleri is willing to grant. Like McBratney, Suleri speaks of the inevitability of the youthful, relatively innocent Kim’s displacement by an adult and imperially tainted Kim. Suleri’s conclusion, however, is more pessimistic, for Kim’s ultimate colonial education disallows an indictment of Empire. Such education has, in short, “silenced his voice, and demonstrated that in its adolescence is its end.”¹⁶ I want to follow Suleri’s conclusions a bit further, to contextualize Kipling by examining how the views expressed through his work compare to some of the prevailing ideologies of his day.

To begin with, tropes of unfettered youthfulness, as Suleri observes, posit the Europeans’ youthful energy against an aged, decrepit India. Thus, Edmund Burke indicts Governor Hastings’ administration for giving free rein to young East India Company men, allowing them to engage in “boyish gambols” and “desperate boldness.” The contrast is all the more piquant since India is the very image of vulnerable decrepitude. Suleri points out that Burke’s disgust will give way, in the nineteenth century (and in Kipling), to an imperial ethos that encourages and extols the bold energy of youth. Burke’s wariness of the tendency to treat the vast subcontinent as a European playground (echoed later in the term for Russian-British tensions in northwestern India, the “Great Game”), as opposed to a realm of imperial duty and consequent order, is of a piece with his ideas about the sublime. India’s dense tropicality, great age, and seemingly unfathomable religions and cultures are emblematic of terrifying obscurity and depthless immensity—physical as well as temporal—that inform Burke’s characterization of the sublime. It is therefore critical to Burke that a rule of law be exercised that acknowledges a graduated scale of power culminating in the responsible discretion of traditional (i.e., English) authority. Without this, despots like Hastings, with his self-interested immaturity, will fill the vacuum, and, more terrifying still, return this unfettered power to its sender, Britain. Ironically, Hastings, for all his acquisitiveness, respected the civilization he had been tendered. In this regard, he was not unlike leading Orientalists such as the linguist William Jones, who detected continuity between India and Europe not only in their languages, but historically as well. This did not sit well with the Burkeans, who mixed their romanticism with a hearty dash of English traditionalism. Not surprisingly, therefore, Burke’s influential concepts of beauty and the sublime depended, as scholars have shown, on the distinction between ontological whiteness and its negation, the “vacant spaces” of “black bodies.”¹⁷ This premise became a point of comparison for many travelers in India, such as Bishop Heber, whose well-known 1826 Narrative of a Journey
through the Upper Provinces of India presents the author’s first impressions of Bengalis, whose “darkest shade of antique bronze” he compares with that of the Negro, who possesses “something . . . which requires long habit to reconcile the eye to him.” Heber, like other Europeans—including the novelist and poet Robert Southey, whose work influenced Heber’s picturesque treatments of India—finds the “great difference in colour between different natives” unsettling, for some even resemble Europeans. This consternating mix scrambles the European’s standards of aesthetic and moral sensibility. In a telling aside, Southey, while writing his popular “Oriental romance,” The Curse of Kehama (1810), noted: “There is no mapping out the country (i.e., India), no reducing to shape the chaotic mass.” In Burkean terms, despotism, whether the Hastings or the French Jacobin brand, is a corruption of judgment, whose sensory apparatus collapses under the weight of unremitting darkness and fraudulence, chaos and superstition.

These are the material and aesthetic reference points with which Anglo-Indian writers like Kipling had to contend. Although Kipling, for one, did not consciously imbibe this Burkean perspective, and although his writings clearly reveal an author who exults in his close proximity to byways and bazaars, there is nonetheless an equally powerful urge to paint a picture of subcontinental darkness and mystery, which critics have taken to calling colonial (or imperial) gothic. Metaphors of vertiginous depths and dizzying heights, as for instance in his nocturnal Dantesque descent into Calcutta’s seedy depths in City of Dreadful Night, bestir, as we will see, an almost suffocating prolixity of spatial and corporeal images, so that what promises to be straightforward reportage in many of Kipling’s works quickly devolves into occult language worthy of Ann Radcliffe. Bishop Heber anticipates Kipling when he visits the same Jaipur palace Kipling will describe later in the century. “The passages,” writes Heber, “are all narrow and mean, and the object in the whole building seems more to surprise by the number, the intricacy, and detail of the rooms and courts, than by any apartments of large size and magnificent proportions.” Heber similarly precedes Kipling’s Dantesque imagery in remarking that the Ganga (Ganges) River puts him in mind of the “monstrous dark-coloured water” described in the Inferno (adjectives that also animate John Ruskin’s criticism of Indian art in the wake of 1857).

In contrast to these precedents, Kipling’s prose is characteristically ironic, this irony being a key feature of his spatially inflected ambivalence as a domiciled “native.” In both his fiction and his journalism, Kipling’s iconoclastic eye undercuts the standard colonial declamations concerning India. He does so by first giving free rein to familiar colonial tropes. For example, his descriptions of
the subcontinent frequently begin by indulging in his fascination with gothicism. He infuses the Amber Fort description, like all his journalistic pieces collected in *Letters of Marque*, with words like “dead” and “desolate,” “terrible” and “appalling.” At one point, he speaks of “a strange, uncanny wind, sprung from nowhere,” and of the “confusing intricacy” of bas-relief work, describing how a narrow passage led him “deeper and deeper in the tangle of a mighty maze,” all of which “worked toward the instilment of fear and aversion.”

Kipling fills his impressionistic visits to Princely cities of old with parallel images of lightness and darkness, with maze-like hallways and avenues offering a “view . . . as unobstructed as that of the Champs Elysees.” On the evidence of Kipling’s description of Amber Fort quoted above, one might conclude that his reportage is of a piece with the period’s Orientalist outlook. But he goes even further. Having passed beyond the “civil lines” of cities and cantonments—traveling, in effect, “out of bounds”—Kipling soon enters gothic tomb-like spaces. Like Thomas de Quincey’s renditions of London’s “enigmatical entries,” “sphynx’s riddles of streets,” and shadowy districts that function as a correlative to the early nineteenth-century author’s opiate vision, Kipling’s crumbling Rajput palaces figuratively entomb relics and memories of once-grand fiefdoms—memories that seem almost as hallucinatory and haunting as de Quincey’s inscrutable London.

But for all their implications of death and derogation, and in consequence their implicit threat to British-Indian order, Kipling’s palaces, “built of [nothing but stone],” abruptly lose their frightening potency upon the intrusion of a comically inquisitive and bumbling British tourist. The author’s skepticism about the gothic effects of the site is confirmed when we learn that the palace described lacks any of the ghostliness normally associated with it, and is therefore unable to exert the kind of haunting that critics have cited as evidence of its resistance to British rule. It is at such points that Kipling begins to unveil his narrative strategy, for by first indulging in what were at the time familiar tropes of darkness and intrigue, the author pretends to lay out colonial credentials, pinning images of Eastern grief to the page. He then ushers in the Anglo-Indian version of the trickster, who is unimpressed by the piling up of dependent clauses stuffed with metonyms for cultural degeneration: unlit rooms, maze-like passageways, marble screens. The Chaplinesque tourist, book in hand and speeding past the sights, is as unanticipated in this paragraph as the solitary sentence that describes his appearance and abruptly deflates the previous lines’ pretensions to factual reportage.

The tension between Kipling’s urge to factually report and to engage in sensationalized storytelling, between his respect for histories of place and his
pennant for irony, betrays a characteristically Anglo-Indian ambivalence with regard to India’s iconography. The history Kipling alludes to in this case is that compiled by Colonel James Tod, who earlier in the century, in his capacity as political representative, had conventionalized the romantic image of the Rajputs. In Tod’s hands, the Rajputs’ chivalry, courage, and their immense fortifications epitomize Eastern grandeur. Kipling filters many of his seemingly straightforward impressions of Rajputana through what “Tod had written.” In Rajputana, Tod viewed Rajput palaces and tales as a potent antidote to the ostensibly marauding tendencies of the more southern Marathas, who had successfully resisted both British and Mughal rule; they were also a counterpoint to the Mughals, in whom the British saw an uncomfortable, because potentially adversarial, reflection of their own religious and governmental attitudes. Kipling accordingly sprinkles his text with references to a legendary Rajput princess, “fair Pudmini,” and transforms her into a veritable Helen, who kills herself along with her handmaids. Similarly, the demise of a Rajput redoubt is favorably likened to the sacking of Troy. Tod, like his official successors, exhibits a common colonial contradiction in wishing to preserve and extol the virtues of once-great Indian kingdoms even as he unfavorably compares their ruins to the machinery of modern Europe. This comparison reflected, at root, the kind of utilitarianism that had become the guiding ethos of colonial governance. Its implications were at once cautionary and confirming: Ruins of epic scale showed that every empire, Britain’s included, would fall. At the same time, the knowledge that Britain held sway over these vast lands and their histories ennobled, in colonial eyes, its mission. Above all, Tod was, like his successors, enthralled by the feudal attributes of these Native Princely States, whose culture and architecture had attracted the “aristocratic sympathies” of earlier British colonial officers. This infatuation with Rajput aristocracy would become increasingly unpalatable to those officials, including many in key positions, who advocated a utilitarian approach to Indian governance.

Kipling’s Anglo-Indian eye, like Tod’s, also focuses on the historical evidence that gave rise to this divided utilitarian-aristocratic outlook. But Kipling’s real object is his negotiation of a distinctly middle-class, country-born regard for places that are at once dauntingly monumental (as in Tod’s text) and trivially touristic (as in the eyes of the globe-trotter). Somewhere between these poles, Kipling’s narrator implies, lies an ostensibly “real” India that resists cooptation. It is important to locate this implication within an Anglo-Indian idiom of geographical displacement. Rather than view Kipling’s description of Rajputana as simply an extension of Tod’s colonialist rhetoric, we must be alert to Kipling’s narratorial sleight of hand, which militates against such conclusions.
It is not the subject of Kipling’s account that demands our attention so much as the account of his subject, the multiplex images and tonal shifts that make it impossible to pin him (or his narrator) to an ideology. Kipling’s third-person account is presented in the guise of an “Englishman” whose outlook is distinct from that of the “Anglo-Indian point of view.” The implied author, in turn, adjudicates these points of view and tones, so that the single text alternately presents three voices, the resident Englishman, the globe-trotting tourist, and the Anglo-Indian. Whereas the insolent globe-trotter can return to his “cheery British household” and the resident Englishman can make a “home for the time” in “a dâk-bungalowathsome hotel,” the implied Anglo-Indian author must be ever on the move among landscapes that are as discursive as they are material.61 “Jey Singh [founder of Jeypore],” declares the exasperated narrator, “would have hanged these Globe-trotters in their trunk-strap.

In sum, Kipling’s travelogue is polysemous in characteristically Anglo-Indian ways. At times, the narrator distances himself from official British descriptions of the region, such as those by one of Tod’s successors, the archaeologist H. B. W. Garrick, whose impulsively citational account calls as much attention to itself as to the medieval crenellations he describes.63 Garrick’s prose aims at modesty with the contrary result of tacit self-regard. He thus enacts the familiar colonialist dramatization of one’s own engagement with the colonial landscape, of playing a singular role on a large stage.64 Kipling’s very words echo Garrick: “desolation,” a word Kipling endlessly repeats, is how Garrick describes India’s ruins; and both draw on Tod’s biblically imbued personification of archaic Rajputana as “having become a widow” who laments her abandonment. Yet at the same time, Kipling’s text turns this dramatic presentation on its head by comically undercutting the expected official tone. The reader is kept off-balance by the range of tonal shifts: self-deprecating, self-aggrandizing, inquisitive, historically officious, and straightforwardly observational.

The clear call of “the Road,” the traveling narrator’s domain and the space that enables his physical as well as narrative wandering, is another important element in Anglo-Indian literary expression, Kipling’s in particular. It will figure especially powerfully in Kipling’s later novel Kim, where the character Mahbub Ali believes that only the “Road” can be his friend Kim’s true teacher, echoing the narrator of Letters of Marque, who “would send [each boy, that is, apprentice officer] out for a twelvemonth on the Road.”65 The road, indeed, becomes a leit-motif in the collection, for it forces the visitor to “‘pass the time o’ day’ to fellow-wanderers. Failure to comply with this law implies that the offender is ‘too good for his company; and this, on the Road, is an unpardonable sin.’”66 Besides looking forward to the vital presence of the Grand Trunk Road in Kim, Kipling’s
impulse here to empty governmental offices and pack the clerks off on a road trip signifies the kind of power he wishes he had. For the road suggests the admixture of commerce, class, and custom that colonial administrators rarely encountered or comprehended—and their incomprehension, in the author’s Anglo-Indian view, accounted for the kind of bureaucratic morass he vilifies in other writings. “It is good to be free, a wanderer upon the highways,” Kipling declares in *Letters of Marque*, “knowing not what to-morrow will bring forth . . . Verily, there is no life like life on the Road—when the skies are cool and all men are kind.” It is no wonder, then, that all the authors I consider in this study express some longing for itinerancy, whether it takes the form of Kipling’s road, Steel’s bazaar lanes, or Corbett’s jungle trails.

**Anglo-Indian Mimicry**

It is at this point, however, that Kipling’s Anglo-Indian dream confronts reality, for even an Anglo-Indian’s knowing commerce with the subcontinent is limited by his or her race, especially in the aftermath of 1857. While linguistic fluency and the ability to adopt different costumes might equip the Anglo-Indian with a fair degree of social mobility, there was always a limit imposed by one’s skin. The British, of course, distinguished Indians by religion, caste, and tribal groupings, creating notions of racial identity that persist to this day. What better way to circumvent these limitations than by creating, as Kipling does, a “white” (Irish) protagonist, Kim, who “was burned black as any native” and can ventriloquize a range of voices. But how does Kim’s whiteness manifest? On one level, as other scholars have pointed out, Kim’s whiteness is unattainable for any Indian. In this world, only whites can trade in identities; “natives” are relegated to fixed roles. Kim’s racial identity thus seems to operate as an immutable central command, the essential referent for all of his signifying activities, including his mimicry of Indians and his game of “prowl[ing] through the dark ghullies and lanes” of Lahore in his “costume of a low-caste street boy.” Kipling thus follows his contemporaries’ common practice of making race a powerful catch-all for the many layers of physical, cultural, and intellectual identification that abound in *Kim’s* Indian pageantry. On another level, the novel refuses to assign Kim any easily identifiable race: His very whiteness, as Parama Roy reminds us, “is never something that can be taken as given; it must also be learned, demonstrated, and defended.” Kim’s Irishness, after all, aligns him more, in Victorian thinking, with Indians than with Englishmen. What is most noteworthy about Kim’s transactional identity, in my view, is his spatial sensibility, his interaction with the various topographies he encounters.

As Homi Bhabha and others have observed, colonial whiteness was itself a
introduction

bluff. By adapting Jacques Lacan’s insights about the mechanisms that produce an individual’s sense of colonial identity, and by drawing on Frantz Fanon’s psychoanalytic excavations of racial self-consciousness, Bhabha has been able to expose the instabilities and anxieties at the heart of colonial discourse. Rather than a world of discrete, separable subjectivities and objects and their forthright representations, Bhabha perceives that the colonialist fetish for categorization in fact reveals a terrifying, though suppressed, recognition of its fictionality. What is more, colonialism is inherently unstable, for in seeking to establish a racially superior wholeness distinct from the colonized subject (who is purely Other), colonial ideology is forced to acknowledge an Other subjectivity that has no less claim to wholeness. This contradiction stems from what Lacan calls the “mirror stage” of psychological development, the point at which a child imagines that he or she possesses a unitary self, just as his or her reflection appears in a mirror. This impulse arises principally because the ego is inherently fragmented and alienated. The projection of an “imaginary anatomy,” as Lacan terms it, thus functions in some ways like a map that gives cohesion to a vast and uneven terrain—here, the individual’s lived experiences—that would otherwise be impossible to navigate. The fantasy of wholeness thus depends upon the particular cultural and environmental conditions that nurture the child. This imagined, idealized self becomes for the child a reference point for self-identity—an identity that is, however, rent by the “distress” that inevitably results from a failure of that self to meet the similarly narcissistic demands of “others,” including its own mirrored image. For this reason, the self, in Lacanian terms, is alienated from its idealized, if continuously recalibrated, projection at the very instant this projection first becomes a means of psychological—that is, perceived—wholeness.\(^7\)

How, then, do individuals fare in the racially charged colonial environment? More to the point, if one’s “imaginary anatomy” is, as Lacan posits, constituted through its social transactions, what happens to individuals in the particularly alienating context of colonial space? How, finally, do these contexts and individuals account for the Anglo-Indian sensibility I am concerned with here? Staying with Kipling’s writings as particularly clear illustrations of my theme, I want to suggest some possible answers in light of both his aforementioned travel sketches and *The Jungle Book*, which depict, as McBratney has argued, seemingly distinct but actually reciprocal spatial realms. If we accept Lacan’s premises about the imagined integrity of the persona in contrast to a fragmented world, it follows that Kipling’s representations of Indian spaces, constituted as they are “by complex and interconnecting modes of production” (as Kavita Philip puts it in her discussion of colonial science), help form important components
of the Anglo-Indian imaginary. We have seen the tonal shifts registered in Kipling’s Rajputana travelogue. In the same way, in other narratives he turns to different topographies, including the jungle, the cantonment, and the hill station, to register his multifarious and often contradictory outlook. It is not too much to say, for this reason, that the symbolic dialectic of hills and plains in the post-1857 landscape, one that generated acute literary expressions of home and homelessness, reflected the Anglo-Indian’s own similarly dialectical persona. “Home” became a resonant issue that dominated country-born conversations until Indian independence. This situation was not, of course, limited to Anglo-Indians. Peoples across the subcontinent bore the brunt of the British Crown’s post-1857 “reterritorialization,” the appropriation of property and widespread displacement that went hand in hand with industrial expansion. The predicament facing Eurasians and other minority groups was especially traumatic. Yet the juridical and essentially racist discourse the British used to identify specific groups with specific regions, and thereby to justify the colonial “rule of property,” could not similarly account for emotional ties that cut across groups and spaces. In this sense, an examination of Anglo-Indian sensibility sheds light on what Manu Goswani observes to be true of all social groups, namely, that “social spaces—colonial and national, political and economic, material and imagined—do not emerge from self-evident geographies, nor do they exist in mutual isolation.”

Fanon’s perception that colonial space is entwined with colonial race is instructive in this regard. Drawing on his own experiences as an Afro-Caribbean individual framed by colonial stratifications, Fanon sets up the black man’s iconic moment of confrontation with the white child’s gaze: “Mama,” exclaims the child, “see the Negro! I’m frightened.” It is significant that a child identifies the black man, for not only does it amplify the dominant white culture’s infantalized fear of the Other, it also indicates the effect of the black body on the white child’s psyche. For the latter, the black man is at once a man of parts (with recognizably human attributes) and a purely objectified corporeality that is, as Fanon puts it, “unassimilable.” The white child is thus able to re-assert the boundary between him (or her) and the negation of whiteness by simultaneously acknowledging and disavowing the black man. The latter, on the other hand, is forced by this encounter to regard himself as representative of all that is non-white. He thus functions as the white child’s projection of an image whose very negation helps to constitute and to safeguard its imaginary anatomy, its individual integrity. Noting that this transaction is always dynamic, never static, and that, as Lacan asserts, the presumed integrity of the projecting ego is eternally transformed through this dialectic, Bhabha adds to this equation by pointing out
the profound paradox at the heart of this process, a paradox that is particularly noticeable under the stresses of colonialism: Even as the British residents of India proclaim their interest in raising “a class” of Europeanized men among the Indians, the British bar this anglicized class from ever becoming culturally and morally “white” enough. Like Fanon’s iconic moment of racial differentiation, the British sought to establish their psychic wholeness by projecting onto the Indian “babu” figure a mirror image of themselves, “English” in all ways but coloring. At the same time, the British distinguish themselves from the Indian, whose essentialized non-English body corroborates the fantasy of white superiority and egoistic unity. Bhabha thus reminds us of the fracturing of the ego—the white colonizing ego—at its point of origin, though that fracturing is not surprisingly unacknowledged or “disavowed.” The effect is an ambivalent hybridized identity, eternally unstable and therefore always anxious. This anxiety is inescapable, for despite wanting to completely know India (as I discuss in the context of City of Dreadful Night), the British insistence on India’s obdurate mystery results in a conundrum, which in psychological terms means an intrinsically fragmented psyche. For their part, the Indians who must endure the colonizing gaze frequently learn to practice a “sly civility” that pretends to ape their masters’ idiom but in fact mocks it. It is this almost parodic version of the official idiom of rule that Bhabha mines to arrive at his insights into the elusive, inherently unstable dialectic of power and resistance.

Yet precisely because Bhabha continues to frame this transaction as a dialectic, he preserves the dualism at the heart of colonial discourse, namely, the dichotomy between white and brown, ruler and ruled. Similarly, McBratney’s postulation of a “felicitous space”—an imagined realm like Mowgli’s jungle “that resides uneasily on the cusp between the two paradigms of cultural selfhood: a Victorian racial typology . . . and a modernist” view of “identity as slippery and self-fashioned”—largely maintains a binary schema that reflects the dialectic that grounds imperial myth-making. More notably, Bhabha’s theorization, like Lacan’s, suggests an ahistorical reading of psychosocial transaction, one that downplays cultural and material variations. Perhaps this is unavoidable when characterizing in broad terms a dynamic that clearly expresses itself in multitudinous ways. My interest here, however, lies in pondering the implications of this concept of mimicry for Kipling’s already ambivalent Anglo-Indian sensibility as he comes to terms with the subcontinent’s complex and contrasting spatial characteristics.

To fruitfully address mimicry in the context of Anglo-India, it is crucial, first of all, to note that there are no discrete, irreducible modules of self-understanding. What might constitute a psychic mirror for an English country-born child
like Kipling, whose principal relationship in his first five or six years is with his ayah (Indian nursemaid)? What is the context for the Irish orphan Kimball O’Hara’s psychological self-reflection? And if Mowgli’s life in the jungle represents an idealized version of the domiciled English child’s engagement with his natural environment prior to his adolescent entrance into a human-centered sphere, what are the indices or, to use Lacan’s phrase, “symbolic matrix,” for Mowgli’s self-understanding? Conversely, how do Anglo-India’s inassimilable fragments, such as the ruins of Jaipur or the nocturnal underworld of Calcutta, shape the ego of the Lacanian “fragmented body”? I would argue that all of these spheres—the fictitious space of the Jungle Book, the much-documented (if variously represented) ruins of India’s past, the infelicitous grunge of urbanism—together must contribute to the constant re-fracturing and re-alignment of the Anglo-Indian ego. As opposed to the European romanticization of India that empties the land of historical specificity and denies its contemporary viability, the Anglo-Indian sensibility perceives and represents India, including its ruins, as simultaneously alive and dead. Light and darkness, as well as the chiaroscuro of shifting in-between shades animate Kipling’s, Steel’s, and Corbett’s tales, whose leitmotifs are verandas and jungle glades, highways and magical events, espionage and gossip. These Anglo-Indian writers see in these images a refraction of their own oscillating allegiances and conflicted desires.

The choice of genre was one means of negotiating these conflicts. In Kipling’s case, the narrative form in Letters of Marque, the feuilleton, helps work through and constitute his conscious effort to incorporate the ruins of Rajputana into the fabric of an India that, in Anglo-Indian eyes, eternally resisted any such incorporation. Chief among the attributes of this form, one common to nineteenth-century newspaper reporting, is its allowance for spontaneous and digressive commentary, which suits the wandering feet of its author in his “Pleasures of Loaferdom.” This is much the same approach we find in Kipling’s flanerie in the alleyways of Calcutta, in Corbett’s forest treks, and, to a lesser extent, in Steel’s domestic spaces.

In the peregrinations of a self-styled “savage” outsider, whose birthright as a domiciled European compels his movement to and from the omphalos of empire, we find that the fringes of empire are crucial constituents of the center—in British India’s case, Calcutta is one such key constituent. Kipling locates himself somewhere amidst these spaces, and somewhere in between his simultaneous reflection and mockery of the empirical language of exploration. Kipling’s ironic depictions of colonial India’s proverbially perplexing topography are the spatial correlatives of a mimicking stance that slides from the subaltern agency of an Indian interlocutor to the counterinsurgent authority of the Euro-
pean colonial and points between. Given this in-between condition of the bicultural Anglo-Indian, we should not be surprised to find an iconography expressive of this liminal outlook and indeed such an iconography emerges.

To return to the ego’s mirror stage in the context of Anglo-Indian identity, I would argue for as much emphasis on Lacan’s brief discussion of the symbolic, especially material, correlatives of the “fragmented body,” as on his discussion of language and temporality, which Bhabha has elucidated. If mimicry, as Lacan generally conceives it (following sociologist Roger Callois), is principally the way in which a person perceives his or her objective surroundings, so that the mirror-image is effectively a combination of psychic and material space—“the threshold of the visible world”—what are we to make of mimicry in the context of colonial space? If colonial mimicry indeed cuts two ways, it follows that spatial perceptions, whether on the part of the colonizer or the colonized (a binary I hope to complicate), likewise represent the observer’s internal processes of acknowledgment and disavowal. Gothic literature is thus read as a particularly spatial expression of the ways Europeans have worked to constitute their own shifting identities by recourse to images, frequently erotic, of primitivism, ghostliness, interiority, and surreal enlargement. In colonial works, such representations help to differentiate the western “Europe” from anything remotely “Eastern” and ancient, even as the same images, examined psychoanalytically, reveal a latent recognition of identity with these same “outside” images. In colonial gothicism, one can thus be confident of finding an even more acute differentiation between “us” and “them.” Anglo-Indian prose, however, pulls the rug out from under these finely balanced analyses, for the Anglo-Indian is the “colonizer” under erasure or, conversely, the trace “Indian.” (The quotation marks indicate my own inevitable erasure, for I must use “colonizer” and “Indian” even as I acknowledge these terms’ fluidity.) If indeed the figure of the Anglo-Indian is filtered through layers of representation that include attributes of “Englishman” as well as middle-class Indian, and if this Indian is typified, as historians and literary critics alike have shown, as the effeminate Bengali babu, then it is equally important to recognize the ways in which Anglo-Indian sahibs were compelled to assert their “English” masculinity in the face of detested pious condescension of the arrivants from “back Home.” If India’s Kiplings and Corbetts were viewed as country bumpkins, this is the very persona author Kipling mockingly adopts in his guise as a “savage” interpreter of the Indian scene. Anglo-Indians like Kipling and Corbett structured their self-perceptions according to an ensemble of prescribed roles while working to subvert those prescriptions. If anything, Anglo-Indians were sometimes viewed by India’s Home-based administrators as dangerously (because femininely) close to Eur-
asians. To rely, then, on a Fanonian triangulation of psychological nodes—the white child, the “Negro” mirror, the colonial superego—to explain Anglo-Indian attitudes toward race and place is to ignore an equally potent constellation of perceived attributes that included effeminacy, class, education, maternity, and moral inheritance. A thorough analysis of the Anglo-Indian mirror stage would, for example, have to pay attention to the functions of the ayah and the babu as well as to their implied correctives, the martial English father and his handmaid, the imperial memsahib.

I hope to show that the liminal outlook I have been describing does not result in predictable outcomes. Corbett’s comparatively matter-of-fact, nonurban representations of Indian geography, for instance, differ considerably from Kipling’s ironic, cosmopolitan predilections. Nor do the spatial correlates of this in-between perspective emerge full-formed in every case. It is better to characterize Kipling’s, Corbett’s, and Steel’s liminality as necessarily performative (again, the theatrical dimension is hard to ignore) and inherently unstable. It is not coincidental that Kipling relishes journalistic meandering and Corbett his peripatetic hunts. With each trek into the jungle or around the Princely State, the Terai (low-lying lands, including Kumaon, in the Himalayan foothills) or the city, these writers imaginatively re-shape their relations to the environment and so re-work the psychological mirrors that constitute their respective Anglo-Indian identities and personae. I do not mean to suggest, in consequence, that the ruins Kipling encounters in Rajputana, for instance, metonymically represent, in a one-to-one correspondence, the author’s haunted psyche, or that Corbett’s man-eating tigers signify the hunter’s own repressed instincts to roam and lay siege to an otherwise ordered colonial world. The relationship between the writer and his spatial configurations is always in flux and always prone to the destabilizing network of sensorial associations. Where in Fanon the black man suffers under the gaze of the white boy in a relatively predictable dialectic, in the Anglo-Indian work the dialectic itself disintegrates under multiple ideological gazes—visiting English tourist, colonial functionary, Oxbridge administrator, Indian babu, Indian villager, and so on. Clearly, Kipling and Corbett were not compelled to endure the kind of prejudice that Fanon analyzes; indeed, their own domiciled gaze frequently meshes with colonial hierarchies. My point is that in failing to discern these writers’ partiality for exchangeable voices, disguises, and Indian vernaculars, all of which equip the author to transgress preordained boundaries, we overlook the way their works unbalance the very psychological concepts that critics conventionally rely upon to describe modern coloniality, that is, the mind-set of everyone in this milieu, whether British, Indian, or Anglo-Indian. A passage from The Jungle Book tale “The King’s Ankus,” describ-
ing Kaa, the big rock python, also describes these authorial impersonations: Kaa 
“had changed his skin for perhaps the two-hundredth time since his birth. . . . 
Skin-changing always makes a snake moody and depressed till the new skin 
begins to shine and look beautiful.”

**Scope of the Book**

As the preceding discussion indicates, this study is not concerned with how 
Indian authors have responded to British and Anglo-Indian evocations of the 
subcontinent, a discussion that demands more space than I have here. My 
selection of materials has been guided by my interest in how colonial spatiality 
has been inhabited and expressed by hyphenated characters, especially those 
characters that have conventionally been treated in fixed ways. This focus has 
led me to writers whose works are in many ways emblematic of the contra-
dictions at the heart of the colonial mind-set. My choices are thus intended to 
be representative of various notable strands of such expression, rather than a 
catalog of every possible articulation of the in-between existence that I believe 
has a lot to tell us about not only colonial, but, by implication, also postcolonial 
spatiality. I have mentioned the principal authors whose works I will be examin-
ing. Such an examination cannot, however, leave out the archival and historical 
texts that informed the imaginative contours of colonial representation. This 
study is neither an attempt at a social history of Anglo-India, nor a psychoana-
lytic investigation of colonial repression or of gender or of race, nor yet is it a 
reading of the boundaries of statecraft. There are many noteworthy studies of 
these dynamics and if I draw on them at various points, it is to substantiate my 
aim of probing the ways in which colonial expressions of space and place, those 
particular ideological relationships to physical spaces, both condition and are 
conditioned by the self-perceptions of the various subjects who inhabit the pages 
of colonial-era texts. To that end, I have turned to narratives that resonate with 
the intimacies and consternations associated with spatial inhabittance.

Edward Said effectively demonstrated the links between power and space 
that Foucault had long noted. His *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) begins with 
a chapter titled “Overlapping Territories, Intertwined Histories,” in which Said 
stakes his claim for a reading of literature contrapuntally in terms of cultural 
formations and the world. His book’s title underscores the mutual constitution 
of European ideas of culture and the history of Western imperialism. As he 
states in his introduction: “The great cultural archive . . . is where the intel-
lectual and aesthetic investments in overseas dominion are made.” Thus, the 
manorial parlor world of Jane Austen can no longer, he argues, be read indepen-
dently of the Jamaican plantations and slavery that financed those manors. To be
sure, Said has been critiqued for overstating his case, particularly in his earlier *Orientalism* (1978), as when he distributes the triumphant Western discourse of Orientalism (which produces a certain “Orient” in order to better manage it) equally among the ancient Greeks and nineteenth-century European colonizers. But the force of his argument is clear. Pertinent to my discussion is Said’s focus on the politics of location, both his own as a Palestinian-American and the subjects of his analysis. Hence such phrases as “the voyage in” to characterize the “conscious effort to enter the discourse of Europe . . . , to mix with it, transform it,” and “the sense of what it means to be at home” come into play in reference to Jane Austen’s *Mansfield Park*. Said’s point is to highlight “the importance of empire to the situation at home.” Clearly, Said’s own sense of home and homelessness invigorates his readings with an ambivalence that marks most diasporic writing. In the context of colonial literature, it is important to explore how a similar (un)homely sense, of both belonging and not, profoundly structures imperious European interactions with colonial spaces. This ambivalence is all the more pronounced in writings by Anglo-Indians—those “country-born” Europeans whose sensitivity to the notion of home finds some resonance in even the most outwardly “colonialist” of texts. A deep sense of fracture in Anglo-Indian descriptions of familiar sites of social exchange—bazaars and hill stations and military settlements—manifests itself variously as irony, injury, and loss.

To excavate these undercurrents of Anglo-Indian sensibility, I have necessarily drawn upon scholarship from a range of disciplines. For example, in addition to Bachelard’s philosophical poesis, sociologist Pierre Bourdieu points us to the ways in which “[e]very established order,” particularly the spatial, produces an ethos that the individual and the group imbibes, and is thus defined by its sense of limits and sense of reality—a spatial, temporal, and affective context that he calls “habitus.” Derek Gregory and Ross King have written about space from the perspectives of, respectively, geography and architecture, as has Anthony Vidler on the uncanny, Narayani Gupta on colonial urbanism, and Gillian Rose on the gendering of space. Tony Bennett probes similar questions in his examination of the nineteenth century’s “exhibitionary complex,” and the pioneering subaltern studies theorist Ranajit Guha highlights the role of “territoriality” in India’s history of insurgencies. Stephen Kern draws on a range of disciplines to consider how the modern “culture of time and space” distorts all previous conceptions of proximity. Kathleen Kirby analyzes “spatial concepts of human subjectivity,” Timothy Mitchell has mapped the politics of colonial rule in Egypt, and Partha Chatterjee succinctly reminds us of the interdisciplinary nature of colonial power dynamics.
The point of departure for many current theorizations of space, however, is Henri Lefebvre’s 1974 Marxist analysis, *The Production of Space*, which continues to generate healthy responses, such as in Edward Soja’s *Postmodern Geographies*. Lefebvre’s analysis is provocative in that it links capitalist modes of production to the late-modern production of self-constituting space, that is, to the individual psyche. Echoing Walter Benjamin, Lefebvre argues that capitalist production saturates the world in the form of commodities, which are “exposed to the gaze of the passers-by, in a setting more or less alluring, more or less exhibitionistic.” “Self-exhibition is [the commodity’s] forte,” residing as it does in the social arena of the marketplace. This “chain of commodities,” moreover, is interlinked with all the other “circuits and networks of exchange,” including—perhaps especially—the recognition of others. Hence the vital need, claims Lefebvre, for a materialist account of spatial production, one he believes has been ignored by the overly epistemological interpretations of such scholars as Foucault and Derrida. “We may be sure,” he states, “that representations of space have a practical impact, that they intervene in and modify spatial textures which are informed by effective knowledge and ideology.” Consequently, these representations of space must have a direct “influence in the production of space.”

By “spatial textures,” I take Lefebvre to mean the cultural and individual sensibilities shaped by the production of space, a dynamic process that is never settled but derives its energies from the contests between different power interests, from the state and its military to educational institutions and the market. Lost in most analyses of these abstract, ideologically charged transactions are the particular historical processes that Lefebvre takes pains to point out. He is, he maintains, more interested in the “affective kernal[s]” of the everyday—“ego” and “house,” “church” and “graveyard”—that inhabit “the interstices between” spatial abstractions.

This is my interest as well—that is, to tease out the affective kernels of in-between lives, or, to adapt Soja’s words, to reveal how colonial “relations of power and discipline are inscribed into the apparently innocent spatiality of social life.” Examining the ways the writers I have selected respond to this dynamic of spatiality and power seems to me to be especially revelatory of the geographical dimension of human histories. A critical reading of these writers, in other words, can re-direct our attention to how the specificities of everyday life are conditioned by geographical sensibilities. Read any novel set in colonial India and you will notice an apparent paradox: the cohabitation of words describing an exhilarating but vertiginous immensity of geographical space with those describing the ceaseless crowding of human spaces—city bazaars, social clubs, verandas, alleyways. I say “apparent paradox” because in the pages that follow I
show how Anglo-Indians’ depictions of the colonial subcontinent conjoin infinitude and confinement, each a necessary counterpart of the other. The result is usually messy, often uncomfortable, and always fascinating. More importantly, we cannot adequately understand either colonial British or postcolonial Indian fictions—or, for that matter, modern British fiction about colonialism—without looking closely at why and how writers depicted the subcontinent in the way that they did.

Why, then, the focus on space and not also on time? Kern rightly links these concepts together in his study of the profound cultural changes that arose alongside nineteenth-century developments in mobility, cartography, and timekeeping. Europe’s geographical and architectural conquest, as well as its temporal classifications and controls, fed the notion that non-European peoples who lacked similar modes of measurement were inferior both racially and culturally. Revealingly, Kipling frames the stories of past life in a narrative of the present, a mechanism that, as McBratney observes, enables the author to allegorize the Then as a lesson for the Now. In a sense, the temporality of the text—the time of reading—parallels the sequential rediscovery of lost time, as when artifacts are unearthed in a meadow. Mikhail Bakhtin’s concept of “chronotope” calls attention precisely to the “intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature.” He notes how time in literature seems to become “visible,” just as the literary expression of space is susceptible “to the movements of time, plot and history.” Like Walter Benjamin’s Marxist contention that “homogenous, empty time” must give way to “materialist historiography,” Bakhtin alerts us to the need to “assimilat[e] historical reality into the poetic image” in order to account for the pressures of a modern historicized world no longer enchanted with “empty time.” Bakhtin’s intervention is an important one in the struggle to simultaneously hold in our minds two seemingly opposed dimensions, time and space. This is especially useful given the interrelatedness of individual spatial-temporal perception and one’s environment (as opposed to Kant’s \textit{a priori} definition of these purely cognitive dimensions).

Part of the difficulty of conceiving of literary space, as Michel Foucault and W. J. T. Mitchell remind us, has to do with the history of spatial and temporal concepts and the privileging of the visual over the literary arts. Foucault calls attention to the industrial revolution’s transformation of our understandings of time and space, with space becoming “fundamental in any exercise of [modern] power.” Foucault understands this to be a naturalized and therefore almost invisible distribution of power. Partly for this reason, literary space has become, as Mitchell argues, “a synonym for the denial of history and the escape into
irrational reverence for mythic images”—what Benjamin calls the “aura” of pre-industrial, pre-literate iconography. While Mitchell identifies “a dialectical struggle” that distinguishes the supposed split between time and space in the arts, my focus on the spatial dimensions of colonial experience will target more particularly the Anglo-Indian preoccupation with dwelling. It is nonetheless important to keep Mitchell’s and Bakhtin’s observations on the interconnection of time and space in mind as we probe the ways in which Anglo-Indians conceived of the powerfully spatial features of their particular milieu. Colonialism is predicated most obviously on the notion of physical boundaries that are at the same time social boundaries. C. L. R. James underscores this reality in the title of his pioneering work on colonialism and cricket, Beyond a Boundary. Like Bakhtin and other theorists, James recognizes the reciprocal relationship between space and its inhabitants: each shapes the other, so that it is very hard at times to separate, for example, individual motivation from the pressures of the social-spatial milieu that colonialism so strenuously seeks to control. This does not mean that individual agency is moot, but we must apply a multiplicity of theoretical perspectives to our readings of colonial spatiality to expose the subtleties that may distinguish individual motivation. The “contact zone” between cultural forces identified by scholars of colonial India signals a critical awareness of the liminal world so often enacted—and, I would add, embodied—in the heteroglossic and heterotopic dynamics of colonial rule. As all the theorists and critics make clear, such boundaries inevitably lead individuals as well as groups to transgress the borders of their world. This is so precisely because boundaries are usually invented in an effort to preserve some particular balance of power. Boundaries and the possibilities of boundary-crossing kindle the fears and desires of this dynamic. Thus, to the degree that race, class, gender, and sexuality were obsessively categorized in the nineteenth century, their supposed antitheses—the European “gone native,” “half-caste” offspring, eunuchs—alarmed colonial officials, who at once perceived and disavowed the instability of their rubric.

The interest in spatiality was especially powerful under colonialism because the tools behind Europe’s global conquest beginning in the eighteenth century were precisely those geared to geographical acquisition and control—surveying, map-making, military ventures, division-and-rule policies and, perhaps most effectively, the invention of the “civilizing mission.” Backed by an ideology that justified violent occupation as the necessary means to secure the ultimately beneficial inculcation of so-called civilized practices in “native” cultures, this mission and the evangelical fervor associated with it point to the transference of a religious idiom to an imperial one. This emerged, not accidentally, at a
time when Britain in particular was struggling to come to terms with a loss of faith in the certainties of Christian teleology, in the wake of idol-smashing scientific discoveries. In much the way that many evangelicals turned to printed tracts to promulgate their message, imperialists depended on the potency of language to disseminate their beliefs. Writers of fiction and autobiography, of poems and news reports, all produced mountains of prose that took for granted imperialism’s stated aim of reconfiguring geographical and built colonial spaces to promote the “moral good.” For example, the term “time-line,” while attesting to the linkage of temporal and spatial interests, took visible form in telegraph and railway networks introduced to India in the course of its colonial development; these relied upon a coordinated matrix of timetables and rail junctions that, as Kern points out, conditioned, among other things, the conception of the future as well as the structure of narrative.108 Similarly, that most influential venue for imperial and national self-advertisement, the museum, effectively universalized Europe’s perception of society, even non-European society, as a temporal and spatial arrangement of reality that is best articulated through catalogues and exhibits. Much of the so-called romance of empire depended upon a belief in timeless European values that are asserted over the ruin of indigenous non-European societies. To imagine oneself as holding the reins of the future required a contrasting passivity on the part of one’s subjects, and that passivity was never more clearly on display (according to the colonial script) than in the exhausted history of ancient India.

Romance, however, is only one element of the colonialist equation. Of equal interest are the historical contexts of romance and the shift from a comparative certainty about Europe’s place in the known world to the increasingly ambivalent Anglo-Indian idioms that so largely defined late colonial modernity—a period in which, paradoxically, Europe was assumed to have reached its colonial zenith. Timothy Mitchell points to this paradox in his study of French colonial Egypt when he argues that Europe’s colonially ordered world was naturalized as one in which the European and usually male “observing subject” is conditioned by a “metaphysics of capitalist modernity” in which lived space lacks meaning until it is framed by this observer as if it were an exhibition. For Europeans, writes Mitchell, “reality meant that which presents itself in terms of a distinction between representation and original.”109 The observing subject is, moreover, one who internalizes this Cartesian division between the world-as-stage and the ostensibly separate gaze. The European eye, according to Mitchell, represents the colonial world “as though it were a picture of something,” waiting to be arranged in such a way as to be interpretable.110 As a result, “the boundary of the outside” world of the “colonial order” is seen to be all that there is.111 Gillian
Rose’s discussion of European perspectives of non-European spaces correlates with Mitchell’s points, although she refocuses our attention to the masculine properties of this gaze.\textsuperscript{112}

Mitchell’s study of colonial Egypt has been useful for identifying what is indisputably a key feature of colonialist representations of the East, that is, the European tendency to frame India and elsewhere as if the landscape and peoples were a picturesque object for aesthetic or scientific scrutiny. This perspective certainly informs the paintings, photographs, and writings about British India. Mitchell’s emphasis on this representational split does not, however, leave much room for the kind of in-between outlook I am probing here. To make his point about a “modern [European] subjectivity” that carefully constructs “the effect of having a position,” Mitchell must subscribe in some degree to the very categorization he wants to complicate.\textsuperscript{113} He appears, for example, to envisage subjectivity as at once individuated and unitary, as when he refers to “European” and “Egyptian” standpoints without addressing the complexities of these positions and names. The breadth of Mitchell’s study no doubt necessitates a measure of generality. But the exclusive focus on the difference between an overdetermined Europe and its other, in this case Egypt, overlooks the split within the individuals who variously subscribe to one worldview or another—or, indeed, to both worldviews at once, as Anglo-Indians often did. If Mitchell rightly calls out Europe’s naturalized conception of the “neutrality of [non-European] space” as a crucial presupposition for colonial discipline, he neglects to explore how this conception is so often split at the moment of enunciation, as Bhabha observes.\textsuperscript{114} The “deliberate disguise” of colonialist operators that Mitchell highlights assumes an essential European-ness distinct from the disguise and from the indigenous population, as opposed to an identity that, as Bhabha has demonstrated, is always already conflicted. My own conclusion is that this inherent ambivalence is itself variable, so that one is hard put to speak, for example, of a singular Anglo-Indian (or Egyptian) mentality. The writers I examine here indeed exemplify quite different attitudes and motivations. What links them together is a general spatial sensibility conditioned by their Anglo-Indian experiences. It is important to keep this in mind as we proceed.

Despite the broad brush of some of Mitchell’s arguments, his concentration on colonial spatiality returns us to the particularities of the lived environment in such a world, as opposed to studies that alternately over-emphasize the psychological, class-based, and political effects of coloniality. The different analyses of colonial power dynamics on which I have drawn offer partial approaches to a study of Anglo-Indian spatial sensibilities. But taken together they, have provided me with many of the necessary analytic tools.\textsuperscript{115} If no one of these
approaches is sufficient unto itself, each is a catalyst that may bring forth various nuances of bicultural existence in a world—British India—overcharged with the politics of space.\footnote{116}

A group of historians of India identified as the Subaltern Studies Collective has significantly added to our understanding of these colonial interstices. Chief among them is Ranajit Guha, whose work significantly informs this study. Guha’s seminal essay “The Prose of Counter-Insurgency,” for example, shows that colonial texts are as revealing for what they do not say as for what they superficially tell us.\footnote{117} He shows how colonial forms of knowledge, to which we are still beholden, have largely determined the way in which we view history, so that those lives and events that do not fit presupposed categories have been ignored. As with most of the works I have drawn upon, Guha’s is acutely aware of its own entanglement in paradigms that occlude “subaltern” agency. Such self-critique is not really new, of course. Indeed, my aim is to show how the bifurcated sensibilities in the writers I examine lead them to challenge the status quo. This is, I suggest, the way to read Kipling’s ambivalent record of his visit to Amber Fort, as a constellation of tones and strategies that reflect partial selves.

* * *

The subsequent chapters of this book take up, in turn, hill stations, cantonments, city streets and bazaars, engineered structures, and the jungle hunt.

Chapter One draws on archival materials and historical studies to contextualize the ways Europeans looked upon Indian landscapes, and how these landscapes befuddled European presuppositions about the subcontinent, including the aesthetic concepts of the sublime and the picturesque. Drawing on nineteenth-century British representations of India by John Ruskin, G. A. Henty, and Harriet Tytler, this chapter discusses the ways in which imperial iconographies of British India—the concept of the picturesque and the treatment of land as “virgin soil” ready for development—compare with Anglo-Indian depictions of the same. Kipling’s short story “Rikki-tikki-tavi” is especially noteworthy for its articulation of a sensibility that is at once at home in India and estranged from it, refracting this ambivalence through the motif of the bungalow garden. The chapter as a whole illustrates how the British tended to represent India’s natural environment in terms of order and disorder: managed Garden and untamable Jungle, bordered stations and disordered bazaars. Anglo-Indians’ bicultural outlook, by contrast, presents a world in which the garden and the jungle are never separable but instead always overlapping.

Chapter Two turns to a discussion of the hill station and the plains, including the latter’s “cantonment culture.” Focusing especially on Kipling’s short
story “Lispeth,” I illustrate how the hill station and cantonment helped to define one another in both conventional and Anglo-Indian ways. The chapter also illustrates how impersonation, at which Kipling’s country-born character Strickland is notably adept, reveals a typically Anglo-Indian skepticism about the separation of English and Indian spaces. Kipling’s iconic Plain Tales from the Hills, whose title puns on this, effectively satirizes British-Indian culture precisely because Kipling’s hyphenated voice is able to discern both the inner and outer workings of these paradigmatic social spaces. Kipling’s self-perceived insider/outsider status enables him to parody the hill station’s culture of colonial politesse.

Chapter Three explores the literal and symbolic roles of the colonial Club and the cantonment, both of which stressed exclusionary practices. An English resident was prohibited, either juridically (in the case of soldiers, especially) or socially from crossing cantonment borders—from being “out of bounds”—in defiance of the sanctified rituals of club life. This is why Kipling focuses on characters whose borderline existence threatens this sense of order. Like the physically divided Club he depicts in “The Bisara of Pooree,” characters who thrive on border-crossing express latent Anglo-Indian desires. Similarly, the Grand Trunk Road, which in fact anchored Indian traffic for centuries, figures prominently in Kim precisely because it is a space whose kaleidoscopic variety mirrors the persona of Kimball O’Hara.

Chapter Four focuses on Kipling’s travelogue of Calcutta, City of Dreadful Night, to demonstrate how Europe’s experience of late nineteenth-century urbanism, particularly in regard to spectacle and to the figure of the flaneur, the strolling spectator, is echoed but also subverted in the colonial city. At once a copy and a betrayal of the quintessence of European urbanism, Kipling’s uncanny versions of Calcutta expose fault lines that colonialism does not want to acknowledge. Drawing on the insights of Walter Benjamin, Kipling’s version of Calcutta proves to be a copy of the imperial epicenter, London, but one that calls its very centrality into question. The chapter rounds out this discussion with a reading of Kipling’s story “The Madness of Private Ortheris” to show how the author’s fictional and non-fictional interests cohere around concerns with liminality.

Chapter Five turns to Flora Annie Steel’s revealingly flawed Mutiny novel, On the Face of the Waters, to show how the Indian bazaar and bungalow, and especially the veranda, were crucial tropes in British-India’s domestic geography. How Steel employs these tropes counters the conventionally masculinist images of the Mutiny. In Steel’s otherwise conventional imperial novel, the watershed event of the 1857 rebellion, intensely charged as it is with preconceived notions of Indian spatiality, simultaneously endorses imperial narrative and calls atten-
tion to the occlusion of women in this narrative. The British-Indian invention of the field of “medical topography,” I argue, is a particularly revealing motif that informs Steel’s novel in fascinating ways.

Chapter Six reads Kipling’s story “The Bridge-Builders” to show how the author’s Anglo-Indian perspective inclines him to empathize with the natural environments—represented by talking animals—even as he celebrates the quintessential duty-bound imperial worker. This perspective alternately endorses pastoralism and industrialism, and not surprisingly the story concludes on a note that accentuates this split outlook. A key articulation of this split is the character Peroo, an experienced Indian sailor whose polyglot abilities, not unlike those of Kim and Mowgli, save the bridge.

The final chapter, Chapter Seven, locates the place of hunting in the colonial imaginary and explores how Jim Corbett’s popular tiger-hunting tales, especially the best-selling collection Man-Eaters of Kumaon, complicate conventional colonialist representations of predation and confineable spaces. The tropical hunt, described in innumerable memoirs, became emblematic of exotic colonial life, so much so that ordinary Britons thronged to an exhibition of stuffed tigers at the 1851 Crystal Palace. I show how Corbett’s narratives, by contrast, imbue this seemingly familiar iconography with an ambivalent sensibility that resists the self-avowed authority of conventional British representations of India. Typically “fiendish” tigers prove, in Corbett’s hands, to be discursive versions of his own ambivalent identity. For all his differences from Kipling, Corbett’s tales record a similarly empathetic connection to India’s environment, which they discursively shaped into a homely, if conflicted, space.

This study focuses on the Anglo-Indian sensibility, but its thematic concerns intersect with similarly conflicted idioms that have informed postcolonial works like Salman Rushdie’s Midnight’s Children, whose switched-at-birth narrator, Saleem, proves to be Eurasian, a blend of European departure and Indian arrival at the nation’s midnight birth. Rushdie’s novel shows that the question of belonging always turns on societal claims of provenance and ownership, a theme that not surprisingly recurs in postcolonial narratives. As I have tried to show, such claims, whether they are based on colonial, national, class, religious, or gender categories, are suspect not simply because they are rooted in a politics of exclusion, but more importantly because the supposedly stable spatial idioms they employ are, in fact, built on contradictions. This is why we need, as Gaston Bachelard has said, a poetics, rather than a politics, of space. Thus, the question I have tried in different ways to address is simply: What happens when the exclusionary symbolism that attaches to the colonial hill station or the cantonment or (negatively) the bazaar proves to be shot through with spaces
and actors that transgress? The answer, as I trust the following chapters will show, is not a more complete consideration of coloniality, but rather a more accurate representation of what Gyanendra Pandey has called the “fragmentary” perspective, what Kipling termed the “savage” point of view. As such, this study does not follow a strict chronology of events or publications, but instead thematizes British-Indian iconographies in such as way as to illuminate their inherent ambiguities.

Notes


2. Kipling’s contemporaries immediately discerned the resemblance between Kipling’s tales of the supernatural and Poe’s. Bonamy Dobrée, for instance, observed in 1927 that Kipling’s “stories of horror” were “unequalled outside Poe.” Dixon Scott similarly invoked Poe in his 1912 discussion of Kipling, as had Andrew Lang before him, in 1891. See Kipling: The Critical Heritage, ed. Roger Lancelyn Green (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), 75, 312, 361, respectively.


8. As Wilhelm Halbfass observes, the Enlightenment mood in eighteenth-century Europe took root in India in the form of William Jones and the Asiatic Society, which had Hastings’ blessing. Certainly this was a practical part of Britain’s ambition to more effectively control the subcontinent in the interest of trade. Nonetheless, it is a fact that the level of interaction between Europeans and Indians, in marriage as well as scholarship, increased in the decades after 1757, when Britain consolidated its grasp of India. See Halbfass, India and Europe, 62–64.


10. The term “Anglo-Indian,” originally used by “native-born” Britshers to distinguish themselves from those Europeans who had come to India as adults, began to be adopted by the mixed-race, or Eurasian, community early in the twentieth century. For most of the book I retain the original sense of the term in order to maintain historical and semantic consistency.

11. On this trope, see for example Jenny Sharpe, Allegories of Empire: The Figure of Woman in the Colonial Text (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), passim; and Purnima Bose, Organizing Empire: Individualism, Collective Agency & India (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 36–39, 207.


15. Homi Bhabha’s essay “Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse” is the locus classicus of current postcolonial theorizations of hybridity. See his The Location of Culture (London: Routledge, 1993). For productively applied discussions of this theory, see for example Roy, Indian Traffic.


17. Roy, Indian Traffic, 9. Roy shows how the late-colonial Anglo-Indian commu-
nity attempted to co-opt Indian nationalism as “its own,” thereby threatening to scuttle Indians’ own nationalist moves. My study endeavors to identify and understand how the contradictions and ambivalences within this community are expressed in similarly ambivalent works of literature, whose stated aims are usually at odds with their narrative forms and effects.


20. As a result of successful lobbying by the Eurasian community, they were legally termed “ Anglo-Indian” by the new state of India at the time of its independence in 1947.


24. Margaret Macmillan describes Steel’s comparatively unorthodox resolve to roam about India, forsaking her prescribed role as the dutiful wife of a colonial Civil Servant. See her *Women of the Raj*, 238, 246.


40. Parama Roy discusses Burton’s, and his contemporary audience’s, penchant for spectacle, observing that whereas the “civilizing mission demands the careful maintenance of nonpermeable boundaries,” Burton’s permutations simultaneously question and uphold colonialist attitudes. Burton’s preference for playing mixed characters (e.g., “half-Arab, half-Persian”) corresponds in several ways to the dynamic favored by the Anglo-Indian writers I focus on here. See Roy, Indian Traffic, 34, and 17–40 passim.

41. For more on Kim’s “nomadic” proclivity, see Ian Baucom, Out of Place, 95; for more on Kim’s adolescent signification, see Suleri, The Rhetoric of English India, 128–131; and see below.

42. Mary A. Procida, Married to the Empire: Gender, Politics and Imperialism in India, 1883–1947 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 58, 84–85, 99.


44. John McBratney, Imperial Subjects, Imperial Space: Rudyard Kipling’s Fiction of the Native-Born (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2003), xxvi and passim.


50. As Nigel Leask notes, “Romantic Hellenism,” beginning with the eighteenth-century German art historian J. J. Winckelmann, was long the standard according to which other cultures were measured (and usually found wanting). Moreover, Europeans read the demise of Greek civilization as a cautionary tale of the intermixing of politics and aesthetics. See Leask, *Curiosity*, 48–50.


52. Heber, *Narrative of a Journey*, vol. II, 403, 7. The extent to which Heber’s visit to Rajputana clashed with his Romantic vision of the tropics is reflected in Heber’s contrasting description of the Calcutta Botanic Garden, with its myriad of plants offering “a picturesque and most beautiful scene” that “more perfectly answers Milton’s idea of Paradise except it is on a dead flat instead of a hill, than anything which I ever saw.” *Narrative of a Journey*, vol. I, 52.


56. Thomas Metcalf, in his illuminating study *An Imperial Vision: Indian Architecture and Britain’s Raj*, remarks on Kipling’s “skepticism,” but then cites the same lines, in which Kipling speaks of a the sensation of being “followed by scores of unseen eyes,” as evidence of the author’s anxiety. But Kipling, as I have noted, makes clear that these palaces are not living, hence do not elicit any such haunted feeling. Otherwise insightful readings by Gail Ching-Liang Low and Lewis Wurgaft similarly underplay the thread of self-deprecation so noticeable in *Letters of Marque*. See Metcalf, 109; Low, *White Skins, Black Masks*, 143–155; and Wurgaft, *Magic and Myth in Kipling’s India*, 133–134.
57. James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan, or the Central and Western Rajpoot States of India* (Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 2001), 36, 94.


59. Ibid.


61. Kipling, *Letters of Marque*, 14. This is not to say that Kipling did not relish the dramatic tales that fed the very tropes he mocks. These tales in one sense replay the childhood excitement of listening to an *ayah*’s tales. No wonder that an older Kipling’s recollection of “evening walks . . . by the sea” with his *ayah* in Bombay still elicited in the author a surprisingly gothic sentiment, at once “menacing and attractive.” He had “always loved the voices of night winds through palm . . . trees” as much as he has feared the same trees bathed in “tropical [darkness]” (*Something of Myself*, 2).


64. For more on the imperial I/Eye, or “the-monarch-of-all-I-survey,” see Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992), especially chapter 9, 201–228.


67. Ibid., 105.


74. It is worth noting, in this regard, Manu Goswami’s observation in her broader discussion of Indian history that this period saw the rise of “a global space-time” that
“was a dialectical, contradictory, and doubled process.” *Producing India: From Colonial Economy to National Space* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 39.


76. See Goswami, *Producing India*, 57.

77. Ibid., 5.


80. This is the term, and the argument, Thomas Babington Macaulay used in his influential 1835 “Minute” on Indian education.


93. See Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments*. Chatterjee observes how “technologies of disciplinary power . . . put in place by the colonial state . . . create[d] the institutional procedures for systematically objectifying and normalizing the colonized terrain, that is, the land and the people of India. Not only was the law codified and the bureaucracy rationalized, but a whole apparatus of specialized technical services was instituted in order to scientifically survey, classify, and enumerate the geographical, geological, [and] botanical . . . properties of the natural environment and the archaeological, historian, [and] anthropological . . . characteristics of the people” (19–20).


95. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 342.

96. Ibid., 3–5, 41–42, 44.

97. Ibid., 42–43.


James Fitzjames Stephen at the London offices of Britain’s colonial Home Department for India wrote that eunuchs were “wretches” in charge of “an organized system of sodomitical prostitution,” seconding John Strachey’s earlier memo calling for the enforced end to a common practice that “is highly discreditable to our Government.” See National Archives of India [NAI] Home Department, Judicial, file no. 55, 30 July 1870. For more on the colonial policing of sexuality, see Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault’s History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), and Philippa Levine, “Venereal Disease, Prostitution, and the Politics of Empire: The Case of British India,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 4.4 (1994): 579–602. Such rhetoric exemplifies Britain’s masculinist regard toward a supposedly emasculated culture. For more on this, see Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy*, passim.


See Bhabha’s “In a Spirit of Calm Violence,” in *After Colonialism: Imperial

115. For example, Said’s pathbreaking if totalizing historical view of Orientalist tendencies, the despatialized, dehistoricized insights of Bhabha’s psychoanalytic approach, Ashis Nandy’s perspicacious but overindulgent meditation on Gandhi’s anti-modern mythos, Rose’s greater attention to gender differences than to their overlap, Suleri’s spotlight on colonial rhetoric at the expense of politics, and Ching-Liang Low’s discussion of colonial psychic liminality rather than spatial liminality.

116. Suleri highlights Europe’s tendency to read India, Britain’s “jewel in the crown,” as a powerful Western metaphor that “suggests spatial intransigence” in order to disavow the “fluidity of culture” (Suleri, The Rhetoric of English India, 6, 5). As Bhabha observes, a fuller understanding of how the combustible mix of colonialist and nationalist tendencies shaped, and is shaped by, narration requires us to do our best to avoid precisely the either/or thinking that guides conventional ideas about borders and subjectivity (Bhabha, “Of Mimicry and Man,” 125–133). Gauri Viswanathan echoes this point in her demonstration of how Indian women converts to Christianity under colonialism were stripped of real choice in the visible effects of their decision, governed as they were by the Manichean ethos of a colonial order that demanded legal fixity (Gauri Viswanathan, “Coping with (Civil) Death: The Christian Convert’s Rights of Passage in Colonial India,” in After Colonialism, 183–210). Also see Peter Hulme’s similarly effective discussion, in the context of the Caribbean, of how, despite the binarist thinking that pervades colonialism, its effects are various and contradictory (Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492–1797 [London: Methuen, 1986], 21 and passim). Nandy’s study of Kipling and Gandhi seeks, with partial success, to avoid precisely such binarist thinking by underscoring the “androgynous” basis for Gandhian politics. But this otherwise insightful study cannot resist conceiving of Gandhian tactics as inherently different from other forms of resistance, implying once again the very otherness that such tactics are presumed to subvert (Nandy, The Intimate Enemy). Rose, like Mary Louise Pratt, has reminded us of how the representation of colonial landscape as feminized and in need of cultivation owes much to male-ordered European perspectives, but that we must read such representations against the grain, alert to both their explicit and oblique commentaries (Rose, Feminism and Geography; Pratt, Imperial Eyes). Low’s discussion of Rider Haggard and Kipling in White Skins, Black Masks succeeds on many levels in pointing us to the interstices of colonial discourse so as to detect the contradictions and permutations that course through all relationships of power and resistance.

117. Ranajit Guha, “The Prose of Counter-Insurgency,” in Selected Subaltern Stud-

118. I refer to Gaston Bachelard’s aforementioned 1958 book The Poetics of Space.
