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***REPRESENTING THE IRISH
LANDSCAPE; COLONIALISM,
POWER AND IDENTITY***

by

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Introduction

Given the length of the tradition and its abundant manifestations, representing the landscape may seem like a relatively uncontentious thing to do. The origins and reason why initial images were made, however, hint at the underlying significance of this practice. The use of the visual language developed from this initial period in contemporary popular photographic landscape imagery aimed at the tourist market is also significant. This thesis aims to provide a contextual setting and examination of 18th century Irish landscape images and contemporary tourism landscape imagery. The contextual analysis will hopefully shed some light on not only the producers of the images but perhaps more importantly, the audience to whom they were addressed. The inherent functions of these imagery cannot be uncovered without such an examination and what they might thereby reflect about specific aspects of Irish society during both periods prompts some interesting questions.

18th century topographical landscape drawings and prints that accompanied or grew from cartographical sources, far from providing aesthetic enjoyment served primarily a utilitarian function. In this respect their information value took precedence but the tendencies towards a certain mode of representation is also notable. In the landscape elements of Richard Bartlett's map drawings for example, or the many unnamed artists whose drawings accompanied plantation maps and early surveys, we see not only sparse detail and an adherence to a recognisable landscape

format but we also notice a distinct lack of human presence in the scene. Growing from these initial drawings were further works, independent in the practical sense at least, from their predecessor's functional role. However, a representational norm was set from these initial works and what followed can be seen in the same general vein. Autonomous landscape drawings and the ensuing antiquarian period maintained the formal emptiness or distancing and also continued the process of the meticulous recording of places and sites.

It could be argued that a similar kind of recording takes place in the production of photographic landscape imagery for the tourist market in Ireland today. With a statistically higher proportion of our tourism imagery devoted to landscape, these representations are arguably not a result of unconscious decisions. Vast mountains and valleys, lakes, deserted beaches, laneways and dramatic ruins are all typical subjects. As a peripheral, largely non-industrialised country, Ireland relies heavily on the economic value of tourism. As a natural asset, the landscape is responsible for a great deal of what attracts the necessary consumers and thereby represents a site of common economic and cultural importance. The main producer of these images and the body most closely linked with the government, is Bord Fáilte, the Irish Tourist Board. Landscape imagery produced by Bord Fáilte through various brochures for different markets and postcard images exemplify the issues under examination here.

The formal links between the imagery of the two periods alluded to above, is one aspect that will be analysed. However, it is what these images will tell us about the 18th century and today through their contextual analysis, that will raise most issues. "If we can understand why certain images are created at certain times and their effect on their contemporaries, then we have a powerful analytical tool for the past" (Kennedy and Gillespie, 1994, p. 10). 18th century landscape drawings and paintings produced in Ireland are generally described as colonial or post-conquest, as the initial images delineate a view of the land often intended for an English landlord about to be granted estates in Ireland. This view, among other features, usually shows minimum evidence of previous human habitation and thus 'sells' a particular attractive image to the prospective owner. As such, when surveying the past not just artistically, but historically and culturally, such images have often been omitted. However, by ignoring what Luke Gibbons refers to as "the inscriptions of the Protestant Ascendancy on the landscape and material culture" (Gibbons, 1996, p. 92) we fail in our study to actively negotiate the past. Such negotiations can be extremely fruitful especially when they are used to inform contemporary situations. These arguments will be more fully explored in chapters three and five.

More often than not included within the set of post-colonial countries, Ireland could definitely be described as a peripheral nation undergoing many challenges concerning its identity. Debates on this issue diverge greatly but an awareness of the 'other' whether its source be a colonial past or the constant exposure to tourists for example, is a significant factor to be

taken into the equation. Within these debates, general issues concerning the physical definition of a nation, place and the linking of culture to such a place or a home, are central. In Ireland not only does 'Roots Tourism' account for a large percentage of the industry but the quest of the tourist as McCannell describes, to find a simple unifying, home-coming experience, is well catered for here (Selwyn, 1996, p. 40). The visual images of places that might represent this, aimed at the 'other' - the tourist, raise some interesting questions. The relationship between ourselves and the consumer to whom we are selling the image to, in this instance is equally problematic. It is through this key connection with the 18th century example that we can begin to assess what contemporary tourism landscape imagery signifies.

"The conflict and the space between our current 1st world and our past 3rd world and the negotiations of such polarities is where we are culturally today" (Gibbons, 1996, p. 90). If such an appraisal of existence in contemporary Ireland is true, the case for taking such seemingly disparate examples is strengthened. In doing so, however, it is necessary to draw on debates not only within art history and history, but also within cultural studies, geography and the ethnographical, anthropological and sociological studies that inform tourism research. The ideas and theory that link the two periods are informed by all of these areas and by more generalised discussions on contemporary Ireland both cultural and political. The overall relevance of the issues are addressed by David Brett

when he asks, "Under what description of historical and contemporary reality are we working?" (Brett, 1996, p. 14).

This study will firstly examine contemporary Irish cultural identity with specific reference to post-colonialism and the role of place and the 'other' within that. The idea of landscape and place will be elaborated on by examining the ideology of landscape in its natural and visual manifestations. The cultural significance of this in the historical and Irish context will be explored in depth. Taking the 18th century model, early drawings and maps by Bartlett, Place, Fisher and Beranger, for example, will be looked at both formally and contextually. Their contemporary counterparts will then be assessed through Bord Fáilte brochures and postcard images. A further contextual analysis that draws together the two periods will then follow, discussing possible implications and conclusions.

Literature Review

The disciplines consulted have already been mentioned but it is necessary here to discuss the specifics of these areas and how they are directly relevant. In all disciplines, the most contemporary writings have a tendency to broaden their base and openly cross-reference other areas. Cultural studies is perhaps the epitome of this cross-fertilisation and provides much of the theoretical basis here. What follows is a brief review of the disciplines, the relevant writers and ideas within their work that apply to this thesis.

In cultural studies the work of Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall have primarily contributed here, with their discussions of identity, its formations and contemporary 'ruptures'. The broadening of these theories and their sources to take in the idea of a collective identity has been used widely in subsequent discussions concerning national identity. In particular, the discussion of Lacan's idea of the 'mirror phase' in the formation of identity has been useful in pinpointing the role of the 'other' in such a collective process. Williams' extremely broad subject range cannot possibly be tackled but it is his notional ideas such as the 'structure of feeling' that have been beneficial here. The opening up of a theoretical space between representation (in his example, linguistical) and 'reality' has presented many new possibilities and has broken down some former academic constraints. In a broad way, along with writers such as Frederic Jameson, Edward Said and Spivak, Hall and Williams have cleared the path for interdisciplinary studies that take examples and narratives in the post-structuralist sense, deconstruct them and relate them to a greater diversity of narratives and concerns.

The emphasis on the role of space and place in identity formation was elaborated on and given a new slant by Iain Chambers, James Clifford and Johnathan Rutherford. James Clifford writes primarily about travelling cultures from his anthropological background. He criticizes the 'naturalising bias' (Clifford, 1992, p. 63) of the word culture, a word that favours a single site over the movement, he believes, characterises contemporary existence. Chambers speaks of migrancy and the

impossibility of a 'home-coming'. The politics and the idea of 'home' and 'place' are also examined by Rutherford. The relevance of these issues to contemporary Irish society is apparent from the above, but is also mentioned specifically by many of the theorists named so far. The grand narrative of the centre is removed and the periphery becomes a vital space from which to re-read the modern. Ireland's location both physically and culturally provides many interesting examples in this respect.

Coming also from the first writers mentioned are Rosalind Krauss, Andreas Huyssen and John Fiske. They also deal with the breaking down of the grand narrative, specifically that of high, elite or avant-garde culture. Krauss in her re-reading of the avant-garde opens up a place for the 'copy' to exist legitimately in high culture, as does Andreas Huyssen's discussion of popular or mass culture. The power plays involved in this structure are theorised, perhaps in a over-optimistic manner by John Fiske. Nonetheless however, a less passive picture of the 'consumer' emerges. Again, these writers open up an arena where the more common symbols of society can be analysed and put to use in what was once the confines of elite art. Furthermore, the complexities of power and the usage of the elite's language by popular culture presents possibilities for an interesting re-take of the position of the repressed.

In the realm of philosophers, historians and theorists addressing current cultural, social and political trends in Ireland, Richard Kearney, Jim Smyth, Luke Gibbons, David Brett and Desmond Bell were primarily

consulted. The implications of post-modern Europe of regions for Ireland are evaluated by Kearney whose conclusion leads him to a vision of a post-nationalist Ireland. Less optimistic on this front are the ideas of Jim Smyth. He is skeptical of the over-enthusiastic 'intellectual opportunism' (Smyth, 1988, p. 162) that might inform some of the debate. Warnings are issued against the trap of utopianism by Smyth and to a lesser extent by Luke Gibbons. Gibbons' framing of the Irish post-colonial question is most useful in positioning Ireland within the broader peripheral and post-colonial context. They both see culture and its interpretations as embedded in politics in Ireland and warn against the separation of the two spheres. This is perhaps one of the most important aspects to emerge in relation to this study and it is an aspect, it could be argued, that Kearney underplays. David Brett, on the other hand is more than aware of the dangers involved in the interpretation and aestheticization of the past in contemporary politics. The relevance of these issues is easily seen in the growth of the heritage industry within tourism and their accompanying popular histories.

Coming from the background of communications, Desmond Bell's writing not only addresses the contemporary issues mentioned above, but is also concerned with current tourism imagery. As part of a recent crop of theoretical debates on tourism in Ireland, Bell looks at landscape images and their reliance on the cultural baggage of the country they are intended for. Issues of tourism, nationality and identity, however, are primarily addressed by O'Connor and Cronin in Tourism in Ireland. Fascinating

questions are asked within this field, as it draws not only on the aforementioned disciplines but also on the more 'concrete', empirical research of sociology, geography and ethnography. In ethnography, the work of Ulrich Kockel places Ireland within the context of a former field of anthropological study and brings us up-to-date in terms of European ethnography. Tom Selwyn writes about the post-modern myth of the tourist brochure in his anthology on *The Tourist Image*. He provides two readings of what this myth might signify based on interpretations of contemporary experience by McCannell and Frederic Jameson. In the same anthology, Elizabeth Edwards looks at postcards as tourist icons. She examines the manner in which postcards use and re-appropriate popular imagery. The stereotypes and objectifications of the 'other' that postcard imagery sets up, are her main concern. Both of these writers provide direct examples of analysis of tourism imagery in a cultural studies context. However, the drawing together of art history and social history in the Irish context is rarely, if ever used to inform debates on contemporary tourism imagery. Bell's pinpointing of the connection between the North European painting tradition and landscape images for tourism is, as already mentioned, insightful but he still fails to draw on any native archive.

Geographical concerns with space and place have been fundamental for the basis of many of the specific writers mentioned, particularly for Daniels and Cosgrove's enquiry into the iconography of landscape. Similarly, the historical and cultural geographer, PJ Duffy makes some

interesting contributions to the historical and visual reading of the Irish landscape. This work is appropriately included in Kennedy and Gillespie's anthology, Art into History. This book represents a fresh look at the visual images of Ireland's past through the eyes of the geographers, historians and art historians. A realisation that the visual is not simply an illustration for text comes about by this process and as a result native artistic traditions begin to gain wider recognition. This area is also of serious concern to Adele Dalsimer based in an Irish Studies department in Boston. The contextual reading by her contributors of images of the past, previously dismissed as colonial and therefore irrelevant, is of enormous importance here and is perhaps indicative of the kind of enquiry that can stem from such a broad course.

Finally, the art historians consulted were primarily concerned with the socio-political aspects of art. Kenneth Clarke and John Berger's interest in the symbolism of landscape has been ground-breaking not only in the narrow terms defined here, but in a more general way. Clarke's more philosophical reading was layered upon by Bergers social and economic interpretations of Gainsborough for example. John Barrell and Anne Bermingham continued within that vein and have provided us with a reading of landscape that thoroughly assesses the difference between social reality and what was portrayed. The politics of such a portrayal are examined and again the space in between is not interpreted as a vacuum, but rather as a site that can explain much about society.

Within Irish art history, Anne Crookshank, the Knight of Glin, John Turpin and Strickland were consulted mainly for detailed source material. Crookshank and Glin's primary research is invaluable as it addresses not only the context of each genre and movement as it comes up, but also a whole range of work from oil painting to watercolours, sketches and prints. Again within geography, John H. Andrew's analysis of the earliest maps, their preparatory sketches and the Ordnance Survey has been crucial. However, it is the contributors to Dalsimer's anthology such as Màire de Paor, Kevin O'Neill and Dalsimer herself who make a real stab at contextualising imagery of the past and who attempt to draw connections between national identity and art.

It now becomes somewhat apparent that although each of the disciplines looked at briefly, have begun to broaden their approach, it is difficult to harness any directly relevant material. However, whether it be Rutherford's analysis of the politics of place and home, Tom Selwyn's analysis of tourism brochures or Crookshank's listings of Irish antiquarian artists, the relevance of each topic cannot be underestimated. Rather than this diversity being seen as difficulty in research, it is viewed here as essential to the understanding of such a complex issue. It is the drawing together of the relevant issues in each field that will hopefully make different connections and provide a slightly fresher approach.

Methodology

In order to gain a full understanding of the topic under discussion here, it was necessary to draw on a range of disciplines. Art history and general history provided the actual examples, facts and figures, while more contemporary readings within those disciplines gave a contextual background. Theoretical aspects were chiefly addressed within cultural studies and also overlapped into geographical concerns with place and identity. Elements that have informed both of the above disciplines were found with ethnography, anthropology, sociology and communication studies. These areas, however, have also informed much of the current work within tourism research which relates quite directly to the topic here. Aspects of the above disciplines which addressed the actual images, the possible connection of these images to cultural identity at the time and the nature of that identity, were concentrated on the most.

The notion of 'place' and 'the land' emerged as one of the central issues within theoretical debates on contemporary cultural identity and not only in Ireland. The role of the 'other' in the formation of identity and the representation of place and landscape in a post-colonial country seemed to collide in the realm of tourism landscape imagery in particular. However, it became apparent that none of the readings of contemporary landscape photography used in the tourism industry, drew on any particular native landscape tradition. Keeping in mind that it is what these contemporary images can reflect about a cultural/national identity that is of interest here,

it seemed pertinent to look at their counterpart in colonial Ireland. Remembering also the market that these tourism images are aimed at and their general function, the most direct connection in these terms presented itself in the 18th century when the modern landscape image 'began' in Ireland.

The tourism imagery chosen has come mainly from general Bord Fáilte publications. Certain brochures are destined for particular markets, for example, the urban areas of Germany and North America. The images therefore differ slightly. However, they are mostly summarised in the general 'Discover Ireland' series. Bord Fáilte represent a national government body producing imagery designed to promote Ireland for no one specific commercial interest. The imagery they have produced over the years has influenced many of the publications by private concerns. However, to represent perhaps the more common encounter with such images, the popular postcard will also be analysed. The particular form these images take in Ireland and what they reveal by the messages they convey make them ideal vehicles to explore the above ideas. Juxtaposed against these images will be those of 18th century topographical views, maps and antiquarian works. The 'function' of these works, the nature of the message they convey, the audience to which they were addressed and their popularity and abundance in the form of printed reproductions make them perhaps an 18th century equivalent of today's images. Not only will formal comparisons between the two areas become apparent but

they will also provide strong contextual bases from which to explore the aforementioned issues.

Starting, then from a theoretical base, looking at issues of concern in contemporary Ireland and the role of imagery within that, the above approach provides interesting points from which to debate. The use of such a comparative strategy and the actual images themselves will hopefully exemplify the issues, as well as prompt the most relevant questions.

CHAPTER ONE

Ireland: Identity and Place

Many debates within postmodernity resonate strongly in Ireland. The deconstruction and re-readings of some of the grand narratives such as nationalism, colonialism and issues of centre and periphery find interesting expression here. This chapter sets out to examine the relevant issues and to find some sort of position relative to this study. Specifically, it is the role of place and its representation that is important and what this might reflect about the identities involved. To provide this base will hopefully contextualise the images that follow and set out their importance in such a discourse.

"In Ireland we witness a situation in which European high Modernism is tested against radically different environmental conditions and is superseded", according to Frederic Jameson (Kearney, 1988, p. 22). The testing of European high Modernism and its legacy is a central concern of many contemporary cultural theorists. Such a testing is often written about in terms of location and identity. How, in turn, these two terms are ultimately linked is then of great importance. Ireland, as a location from which to test European Modernity depends primarily on its peripheral status and its subjection to the colonial process. The identity of a large group of people in that situation, i.e., the population, depends also on those conditions. Whether that group is located within the boundaries of this island and whether that literal location defines their identity is,

however, another question. The confusion between location as a literal rooted notion or a temporal position can cause many problems in this case. This is perhaps reflected in the more basic conflict in this country between an association with the outsider, i.e., someone from another place, as a threat and the outsider in all of us. By this it is meant that many Irish people have experienced being 'outsiders' through emigration, exile and travel. In a more subtle form, it could be argued that being an outsider did not necessarily require a literal move. Daily existence in a place where authority is historically outside oneself and contemporary exposure to other cultures via mass media, provide other examples. Taking such a reality into account, literal location becomes less important and the assumptions that begin on that basis, namely those concerning a particular national identity, must be called into question.

An essential component in identity formation, a component that is referred to by Stuart Hall as one of the 'modern ruptures' is based on Lacan's idea of the 'mirror phase' (Hall, 1994, p. 61). It is the process whereby one's identity is formed in relation to how others see you and whereby a set of constraints and comparisons are initiated. The trouble with this is that too often the 'other' became a particular social or ethnic grouping along with the obvious hierarchies. In the case of Ireland, exposure to the other came in a very particular form, namely that of the coloniser. It is arguable that this 'mirror phase' in identity formation was and is particularly potent here and the processes this set in train invariably affect the subsequent encounters with 'others'. The substance of the

encounter is another matter that will be explored later, but it is important to establish at this point the relevance of the other in individual and collective identity formation.

If this encounter with the other that takes place during emmigration, travel, exile, etc. is of such importance, a whole element of those journeys is often overlooked. That element is the return and how the experience of being 'away' is both literally and theoretically brought home. Again encounters that require no literal travel, such as exposure to tourists, TV and chainstores for example are included in this set. What then emerges is an sense of constant exposure to the outsider, that informs identity in a much more active and on-going manner. This notion again undermines the concept of a homogeneous, fixed identity occurring within certain spatial boundaries. James Clifford asks, "how are historical borderlands (sites of regulated and subversive travel, natural and social landscapes) like and unlike diaspora?" (Clifford, 1992, p. 65). Furthermore he concludes, "If we are re-thinking culture in terms of travel, then the organic, naturalising bias of the term culture - seen as a rooted body that grows, lives, dies, etc. is questioned" (Clifford, 1992, p. 66).

The Irish reverberations of these debates in their European "climate of culture, social flux and political realignment" (O'Connor, 1993, p. 30) can be divided into two loose interpretations. The first takes what could be described as a very optimistic reading of the situaiton. It applies contemporary post-modern readings to the Irish situation in a relatively

unproblematic manner. The second interpretation also looks at Ireland's position in a post-modern Europe. It sees this position, however, as far more problematic and argues that the whole-sale taking on of such theories would be inappropriate at this point in time. The main grand narrative that comes under attack in the first interpretation, is Nationalism and while recognising the nationalistic tendencies of both colonisers and the colonised, a post-nationalist society is put forward as the ideal. The political basis for this takes the form of a Europe of communities and the de-centralising of different nations while remaining under the one umbrella of the EU. This is a situation it is believed, that would disseminate ethnic and land-based conflict and empower the currently alienated individual whose role in his or her collective destiny seems increasingly remote. The role of travel and the encounter with other cultures is seen as nothing but positive. "An on-going process of free migration which traverses a plurality of other cultures before returning to its own local culture enlarged and enriched" (Kearney, 1988, p. 30).

It is argued here that while this approach acknowledges such encounters, it does not fully theorise what 'the returned' might seek after such a hybrid and fragmented experience. When this is applied to all of the aforementioned forms of travel, literal or otherwise, the situation becomes somewhat less simple. Another problem with this approach can be seen in its tendency to separate the political and the cultural. "What we are talking about is not the liquidation of nations, but their supercession

into a post-nationalist network of communities where national identities may live on where they belong - in languages, sports, arts, customs, memories and myths" (Kearney, 1988, p. 31). This separation not only suggests a point in time which is clearly beyond the immediately visible but it also represents a worrying lack of appreciation of the political nature of culture. The second interpretation of Ireland's cultural and social position is heavily, although not directly, critical of Kearney's views. Writers such as Jim Smyth, Desmond Bell and Luke Gibbons, give a different assessment of where Irish identity might stand today. Much of their analysis is historically based and concludes that the past and current political situations have left Ireland in a much more unstable position than the first approach suggests. The unresolved question of nationalism is particularly important and is discussed using the example of Northern Ireland and in terms of our post-colonial identity. This interpretation portrays the Irish situation in its full complexity, a situation that is nowhere near ready to take on major changes. In this instance, contemporary theory provides invaluable insights, not prescriptions.

What puts the first interpretation most at odds with the second is not necessarily the theory used, but rather how it is employed. The first almost assumes that because there is a space for Ireland, for probably the first time, in a more international narrative, that it is an end in itself. It is taken as a springboard for progression rather than a context in which we can begin to fully analyse the situation. Surely the difference between a post-modern narrative and a modern one, is that the former provides a

forum for debate and questioning whose outcome does not have to be linear progression. The first interpretation could thus be criticised for repeating the mistakes of the Modernist approaches it initially criticises. The three writers named above begin that process of delving into the depths of a situation postmodernity has contextualised. Jim Smyth examines our "internal set of circumstances" (Smyth, 1988, p. 164) with a view to informing the present. He believes that the air of utopianism that is expressed in the first interpretation has been informed from an outside source and cannot, therefore, be of great value. He examines what he calls the "ideological vacuum", (Smyth, 1988, p. 164) that has developed in Ireland as a result of a colonial, religious and conservative past, suddenly clashing with our current relatively liberal and European identity. A similar identity is seen by Luke Gibbons. He believes that this is a natural and even quite healthy situation as such an obvious vacuum developing in such a short time span prompts public debate and awareness. He warns again that this is not the problem, but rather "it is not a memory of the past that drags us down (conservatism) but rather the whole-sale taking on of international issues" (Gibbons, 1996, p. 96). All three writers identify a particular tendency that contributes to the development of such a utopianism. Desmond Bell expresses this when he criticises "the sustained attempt to de-politicise the cultural" (Bell, 1984, p. 30). Kearney's last comment in the last paragraph clearly illustrates their difference on this issue. This particular point will be fully explored in the next chapter.

The above questions are of course of enormous breadth and depth and could not possibly be negotiated here. But the same fundamental questions do arise when looking at particular instances. The nature of the identity that informs the subject of this study is more closely linked to the second approach and the assessment Gibbons again, gives us of our post-colonial status. "Post in this context signifies a form of historical closure but it is precisely the absence of a sense of ending which has characterised the national narratives of Irish history" (Gibbons, 1996, p. 98). It is perhaps then, the more subtle forms of contemporary encounters with the 'other' that might reveal to us the nature of this continuing narrative. It is suggested here that a useful site from which to examine the issue and power structures involved and a location in which to frame such encounters, is the landscape. The question of the ideology and iconography of landscape will be examined later, but again, its relevance to the location of Irish identity must be established here. Some of the manifestations of the above are recognised by Barbara O'Connor when she observed that, "the objectification of the 'other' is an integral part of the entire tourist process and experience, whether in terms of landscape, artifacts, the past or people" (O'Connor, 1993, p. 32).

The question that must be asked when putting the rest of this study into the above context, is what can contemporary popular landscape images reflect about the current situation? An examination of an 18th century model will also help clarify the structures and relationships involved. The manner in which we deal and live with the legacies of the past, the

18th century in this case, is what is ultimately under scrutiny. Whether this legacy can be interpreted as various levels of the "re-location of meaning" (Gibbons, 1996, p. 99) or whether a more pessimistic reading can be rendered remains to be seen.

CHAPTER TWO

Representations of Place: The Landscape

It is the aim of this chapter to establish the role of landscape in the theoretical context that has been set in Chapter One. This will specifically involve an examination of the landscape as both a physical reality and a visual code. When examining landscape as a common tool in the communication of certain information, cultural or otherwise in the 18th century and today, it is vital that the overall ideology or iconography of landscape is first explored. It is proposed in this thesis that the landscape represents a crucial site where both the cultural and the political intersect. Questions arising from connections between the actual landscape and its visual representation, the power structures involved and the stakes in choosing one view of the situation over another, shall also be explored.

It would be fair to assume that notions of the land and the landscape represent an important role in Irish consciousness. Perhaps it is the result of long-term land-based conflict in the form of land wars or border conflict, or maybe it represents a physical, identifiable manifestation of our identity. "Heritage landscapes are part of the very iconography of a region or a nation" (Williams, 1989, p. 200). The ways in which we experience our surrounding land and landscape, however, are most diverse. The utilitarian value of the land in the agricultural rural economy differs greatly from the kind of value we place on the landscape frequented by tourists. The mediated experience of a national park versus the

restrictions and difficulties faced by those whose land falls within the designated area, also provides an example of the polarities of that experience. It is no less the case now, than in art historical analysis of the 18th century, for example, that the socio-economic reality of the landscape must be measured against the image of it at the time. It therefore follows that the choice to represent certain aspects of that land bears great significance and the difference between the rural reality and its images becomes more problematic. Raymond Williams commented that,

"a working country is hardly ever a landscape. The very ideas of a landscape implies separation and observation. It is possible and useful to trace the internal histories of landscape painting, landscape writing, landscape gardening and landscape architecture, but in any final analysis, we must relate their histories to the common history of a land and its societies" (Cosgrove and Daniels, 1988, p. 212).

Although the double meaning attached to the word 'landscape' is recognised by many, its importance in understanding the phenomena described above is often neglected. This is perhaps because of the emphasis placed on the truth of naturalness and, as Bell describes the landscape being seen as "natural, therefore prior to social" (Bell, 1984, p. 24). However, if we are to truly recognise landscape as both a natural and a cultural reality we must not only investigate the cultural aspect in more depth, but we must also explore reasons why one aspect might be emphasised over another. The reciprocating influence the two meanings

of landscape have on each other provide interesting instances in which to observe both. "People who have given the matter no thought are apt to assume that the appreciation of natural beauty and the painting of landscape is a normal enduring part of our spiritual activity" (Clarke, 1949, p. 3). Another manifestation of a cross-over and what could be seen as a culmination of the above process is evident in the emergence of the landscape garden in the 18th century England. While recognising these instances it is most important for the purposes of this study to constantly keep in mind that "a landscape is a cultural image, a pictorial way of representing, structuring or symbolising surroundings" (Cosgrove and Daniels, 1988, p. 14).

Although specific examples will be delved into later, it is important to ask at this point from a theoretical point of view, why it is necessary to represent a landscape in the first place? In the 18th century it was Ruskin's aim to seek "a stable ground in which a consistent order of divine design could be recognised in underlying form" (Bermingham, 1987, p. 2). This could be broadly related to the desire of the Enlightenment to "control the exterior world of things" (McKee, 1995, p. 22). If such a code were established, then the formal problem of recognising a particular type of image could be left aside. Thus, by drawing the attention away from the context, it could be argued, certainly in the case of the picturesque, that the context was some-how 'naturalised'. The particularly picturesque features of the actual landscape and the affects employed by the painter could then be concentrated on while the rest was taken for granted. The ambivalence

towards landscape at the time of Enclosure in 18th century England, and Ireland to a lesser extent, was somehow rationalised, reduced and made coherent in the form of the 'rustic landscape'.

If this code of representation continues to rationalise, reduce and make coherent an increasingly fragmented and confused exterior, its appropriateness and value can only increase as time goes on. The code must, naturally, have a real, physical place to represent but it is also imperative that it has a reason to represent a particular place in such a way. A related example of this can be seen in Barthe's discussion of the value of the unifying view from the Eiffel Tower as experienced by a vast number of tourists (Selwyn, 1996, p. 39). It is argued in this thesis that the tourist's desire, as described by McCannell, to find such a unifying, rational, 'home-like' experience on holiday that contrasts with their everyday, could be catered for in this realm (Selwyn, 1996, p. 41). The idea of the "home-like" experience will be explored in Chapter Four. It is also argued in this thesis, that due to the importance and abundance of landscape related imagery in Ireland, we might provide an ideal package to meet some of these needs.

To bring some of the above points more clearly into focus, the nature of the role of the landscape image for certain people at certain times, needs to be explored. More specifically, this could be described in terms of PJ Duffy's 'preferred' or 'valued' landscapes (Duffy, 1994, p. 59). In terms of any popular landscape imagery, it tends to be the particular markets that

dictate the type of imagery produced. Of course, the word market can be applied in its broadest form here, to encompass an ideological, cultural as well as economic force. The examples Duffy gives refer to farmers, for example, preferring the representation of rich, productive or improved land or large landowners valuing vast expansive scenes. Other influences such as practical accessibility of certain places, fashions in interior decoration and the blatant contempt of the wealthy for reminders of poverty, also dictate what was produced. If this rationale is applied to the earliest landscape images, i.e., those closely related to mapping, a more ideological framework must be brought into play. Questions concerning the preference of the imminent estate owner for a clean, empty landscape, devoid of human reference, must be raised. It must also be asked if similar preferences can be noted in the contemporary tourist. If a connection becomes apparent then the role of landscape and its representation becomes a vital link.

The landscape then emerges as "a site for the generation of cultural meaning" (Bell, 1984, p. 30) and a space where an active "social framing of nature" (Bell, 1984, p. 30) takes place. When interpreting the landscape as such, it is less likely that the context will be down-played. As discussed in relation to the codes established in the picturesque era and as is often seen in architectural drawings of the period, the function of the subject is all too often silenced in favour of the form. To emphasise the contextual side of landscape becomes increasingly important when we take on board the role it might play in the link between the 18th century and contemporary

issues discussed above. We must not allow the 'naturalising' element of the perception of landscape to cloud the cultural and political context. In terms of the actual images we must not allow the imperial source of the 18th century works to detract from or even eliminate their relevance. The relevance of the contemporary images is again well summarised by Bell when he discusses the fact "that these codes enter the popular visual imagination and come to pre-figure social perception" (Bell, 1984, p. 29). Again, to emphasise such an angle and point out the power structures involved, unavoidably politicises culture and the landscape in particular. In terms of the issues discussed in the first chapter, this is a healthy position and one which cultivates a more realistic site from which to debate the broader matters.

CHAPTER THREE

Colonial Ireland: Landscape Images of the Late 17th Century and the 18th Century

To endeavour at this point to give a full and academic account of the origins of Irish landscape art would not only be overly ambitious but it also would not properly serve the aims of this thesis. Instead, the more specific question of who represented what for whom will be looked at and the locations of power involved. The significance and position of landscape art in the late 17th and 18th century is important in this respect and also when using this period as a model that might inform contemporary theory.

There are many difficulties when trying to position Irish landscape art in relation to its English and European counterparts. Slightly more fruitful connections appear when the subject is broadened out to its theoretical base. Perhaps it is telling that these difficulties arise and that there is such ambiguity when trying to decipher under which narrative it should be analysed. Often the landscape art of this period is quite neglected due to this ambiguous status. "Because of the imperial sources of post-conquest art, Irish cultural studies ignores material essential to an understanding of the intertwined national identities of the two Ireland's in their colonial and post-colonial incarnations" (Dalsimer, 1993, p. 9).

Increasingly, however, this is changing through new primary research by Anne Crookshank and the Knight of Glin and through interdisciplinary approaches to the landscape by art historians, geographers and cultural theorists for example. The opening up of 'low' culture as a useful area of study and an increasing awareness of popular culture and processes of cultural translation have also helped the case. Looking at 18th century landscape art from this angle not only endows a greater status on the art itself, but also provides a more useful lens with which to see the work and its possible relation to today's images.

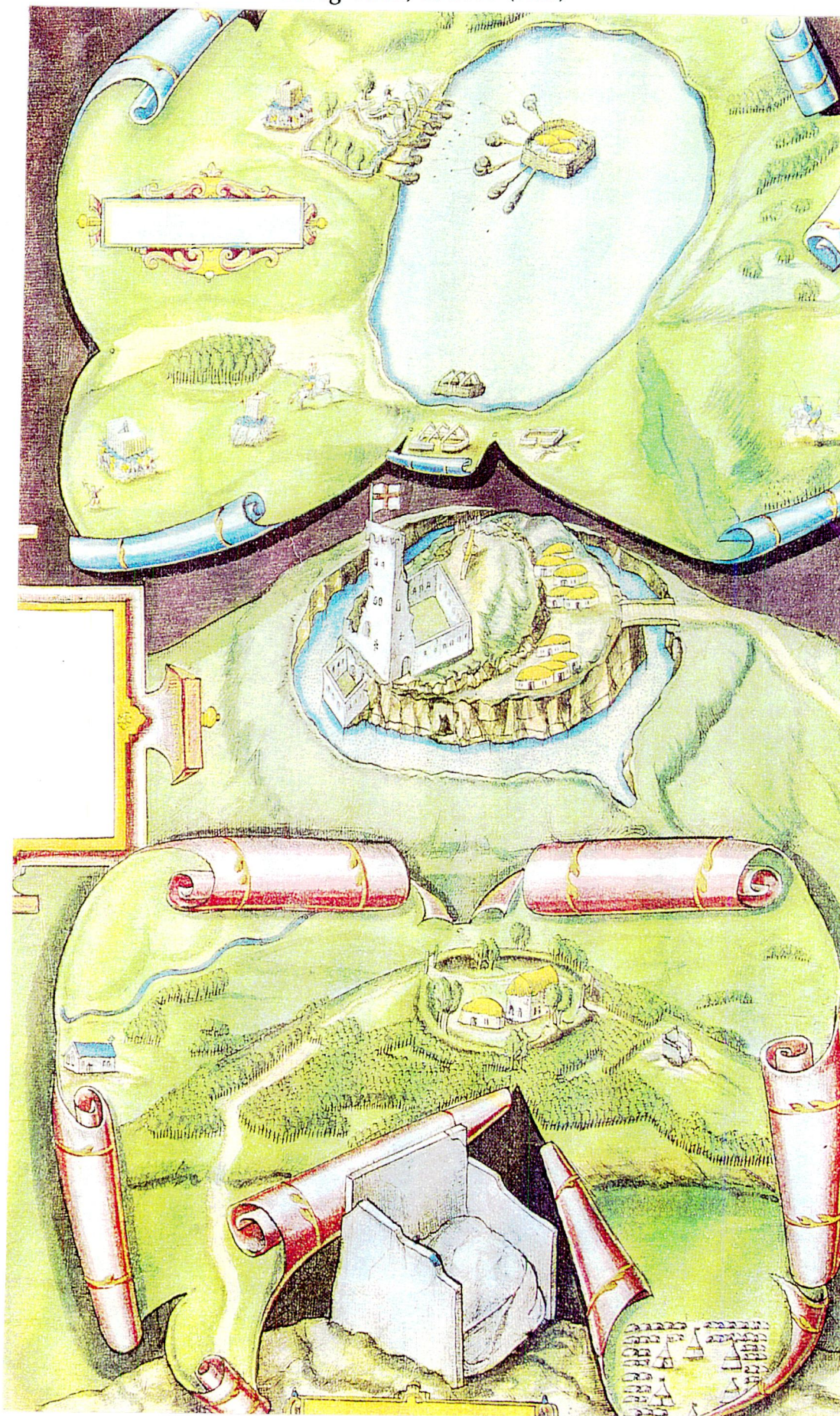
It was mentioned in the previous chapter that the need during the Enlightenment to "control the exterior world of things" (McKee, 1995, p. 20) might bear some relation to the making of the landscape image. Scientific method, critical rationalism, empiricism and reason were chief concepts of the Enlightenment that manifested themselves in the great collections, namely in museums and libraries at the end of the 17th and 18th century. Recent theoretical debates on the issue view collections such as the Victoria and Albert Museums as "reassuring indicators of international power" (McKee, 1995, p. 18). The order in such a system depends on rules and hierarchies and has been broadened by Elsner and Cardinal to include imperialism itself, where one country collects an empire of foreign lands (Elsner and Cardinal, 1994, p. 29). Although the colonial issue in Ireland is of far greater complexity, the above concept is an interesting one because it was at that very time that the first surveys, maps and forerunners of topographical landscapes were produced here.

To see these earliest images in the context of such a process is important as it goes some way towards answering the question of who represented what for whom. It also reveals an origin that is well removed from the unproblematic, romantic, natural associations many have with landscapes in general.

"The beginning of Modern Art that depicts Ireland in the 17th century and early 18th century arises largely from conquest. Our view of Ireland derives from a process of English conquests and comes from descriptions, surveys and most tellingly from maps" (dePaor, 1993, p. 90). The bridge between the Gaelic/Christian tradition in Ireland and the 18th century was largely gapped by Elizabethan surveyors and to a lesser extent, heraldic artists and miniaturists. The most relevant forerunners of what developed into a more formal landscape tradition are seen in the 17th century, with the more pictorial of the map makers. These map makers, Richard Bartlett, Francis Johnson and Thomas Raven for example, were employed chiefly to survey the country for the new settlers. Bartlett's map of Dungannon (Figure 1) not only provides fascinating historical detail but shows the beginnings of a portrayal of landscape. At this stage we also notice the emergence of the 1st estate maps, maps that show sieges and plantation maps. "All these drawings have a directness and vivid pictorial quality which so clearly illuminates the harsh colonial settlement of Ireland" (Crookshank and Glin, 1995, p. 15). It is interesting that all of these survey maps were actually done in England from drawings not

Figure 1

Richard Barlett, Map of Dungannon, Co. Tyrone with O'Neill Chair in the Foreground, c. 1600 (NLI)



necessarily carried out by the eventual accredited artist. John Andrews believes that these maps were largely "a consequence of rule by outsiders all too aware of their unfamiliarity with the places they were trying to govern" (Andrews, 1978, p. 11).

Later on in the 17th century we see a change in style where a very recognisable landscape form is introduced into the surveys. The first of this genre in Ireland was introduced by Thomas Philips, an engineer brought into Ireland by the Duke of Ormonde in c. 1684. His work was destined for the Earl of Dartmouth, the Master-General of the English ordnance. Influenced by the Dutch landscapists, Philips' view of Galway (Figure 2) shows new observation of nature and a format that had not been 'applied' to Irish scenes before. Again, however this is an English artist producing pictures whose ultimate function is to aid colonial expansion. Interestingly though, unlike the very obvious map quality of Bartlett's picture, Philips' view could easily be classified within a more general popular landscape genre, that we are all familiar with, without knowing its function. The same could be said of the views of the celebrated Francis Place. The pen and ink and wash drawing of the Castle of Cranny, Co. Waterford (Figure 3) displays the first of a real concentration on landscape. Place was an English tourist and antiquarian and although there may not seem to be a very obvious connection between the function of his work and of Philips; when looked at from a different angle, the connections are actually quite strong. "The art of the

Figure 2
Thomas Philips, Galway, 1685 (NLI)

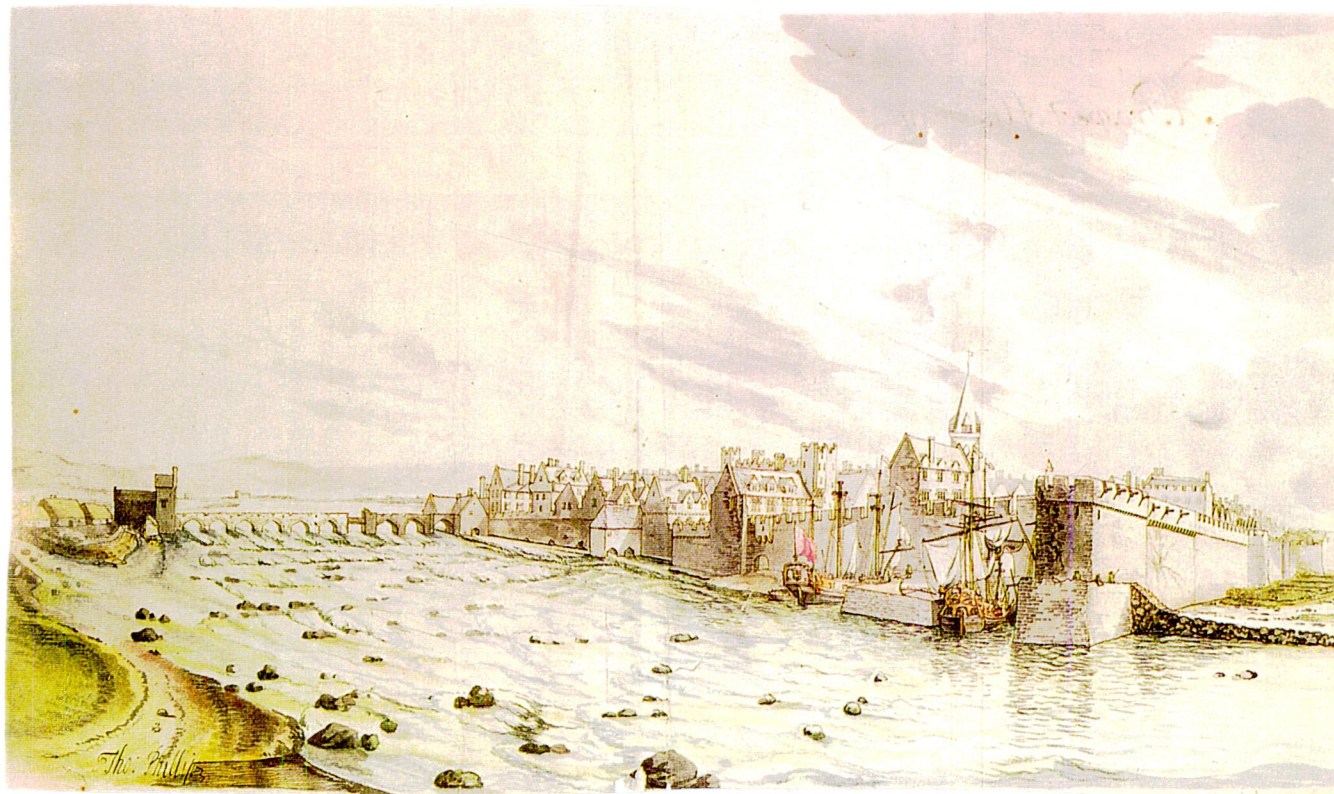
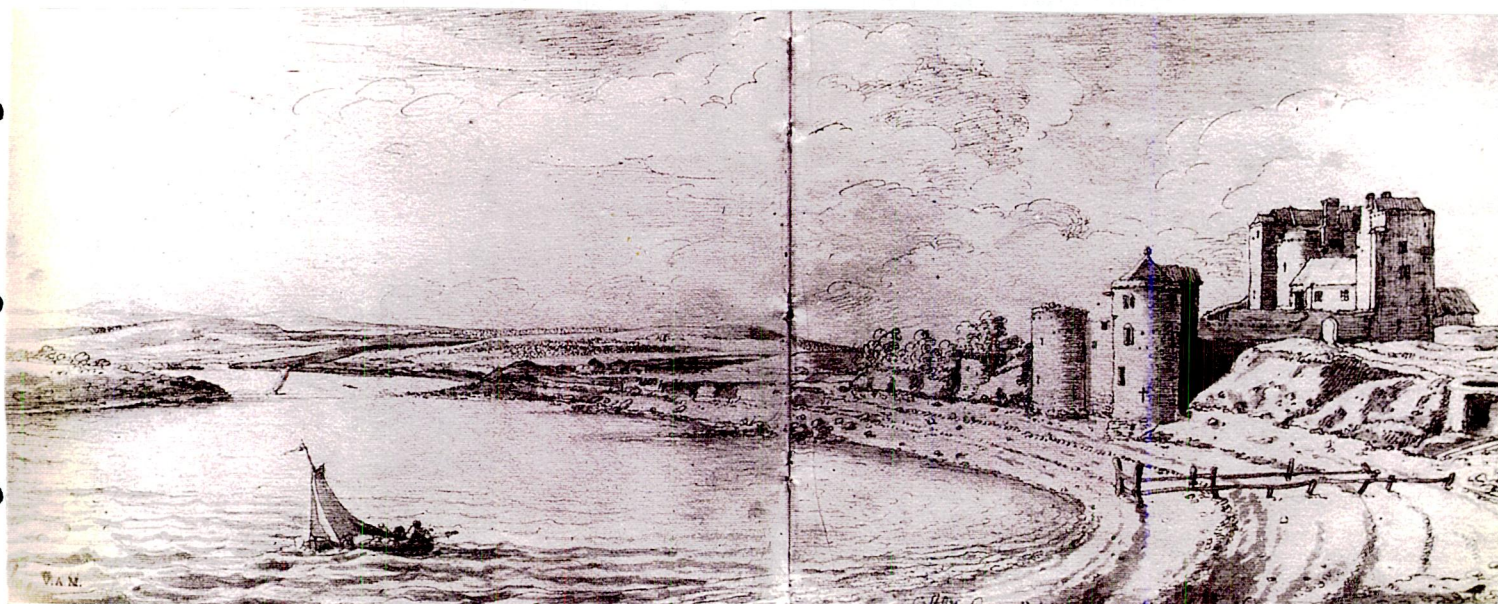


Figure 3
Francis Place, The Castle of Cranny, Co. Waterford, 1699 (V&A)





colonials had two aspects: representation of themselves and their world; and representation or rather discovery of the world they had conquered" (dePaor, 1993, p. 79). The implied connections here between the conqueror and the tourist will be explored in Chapter Three. However, the visual resemblance between Philips' and Places' images are obvious and the fact that their form influenced and is recognisable in virtually all landscape images that followed is enough to contemplate at this point.

One of the first town views ever engraved was by Anthony Chearnley in 1750. He had been commissioned to illustrate prospects for an Irish version of the Britannia that never actually got off the ground. Another English visitor, William Pars, had been brought over by Lord Palmerston to visit all of

Ireland's picturesque spots in 1771. Chearnley's view of Cork (Figure 4) and Pars' view of Lough Lene in Killarney (Figure 5), illustrate the close relationship in the early stages, between maps, topography, budding antiquarianism and the picturesque. An example of 18th century Ascendancy Ireland representing itself and its world can be seen in the work of the famous Mrs. Delaney (Figure 6), and her friend Letitia Bush (Figure 7). Although, more skilled in the area of applied arts and crafts, Mrs. Delaney's watercolours display what an accomplished 18th century lady could achieve and her particular interests in the world around her. Topographical and scenic prints of landscape imagery were beginning to

Figure 4

Anthony Chearnley, Detail of view of Cork, 1750, (Engraving)

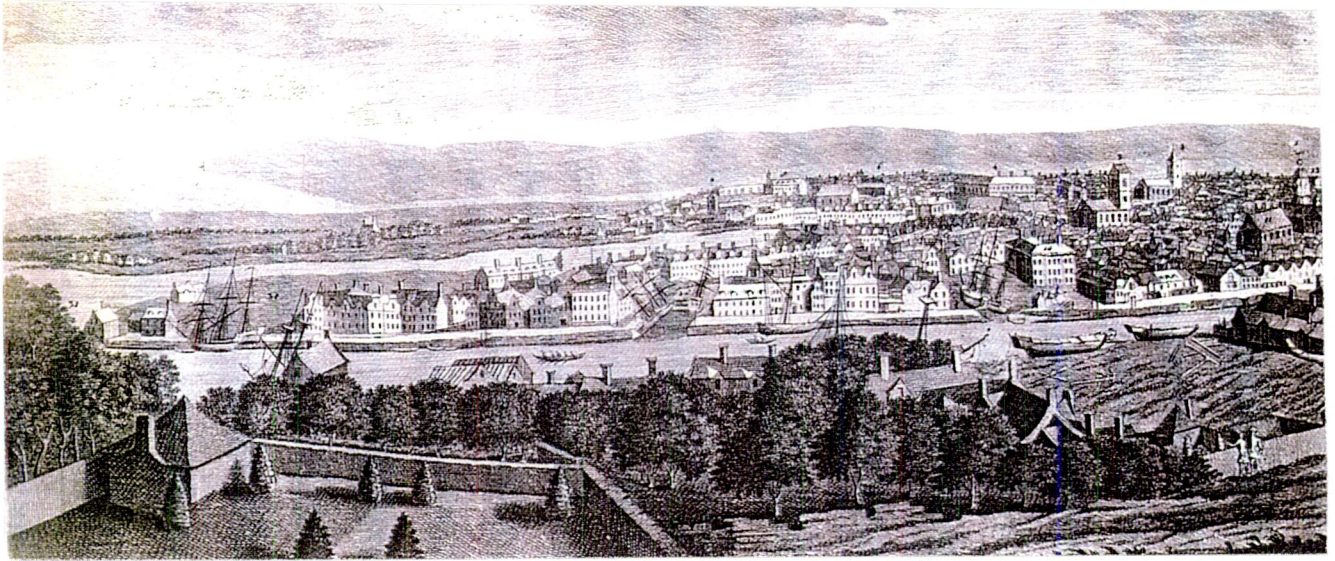


Figure 5

William Pars, Lough Lene and the Killarney Mountains, Co. Kerry, 1771

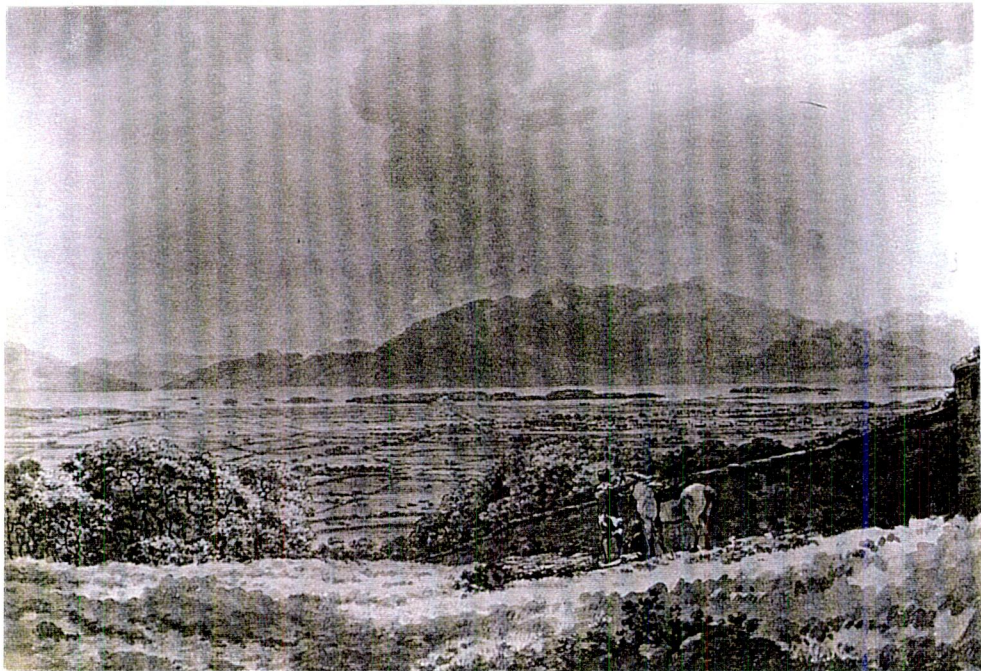




Figure 6

Mary Delaney, Castleward, Co. Down, 1762, (NGI).

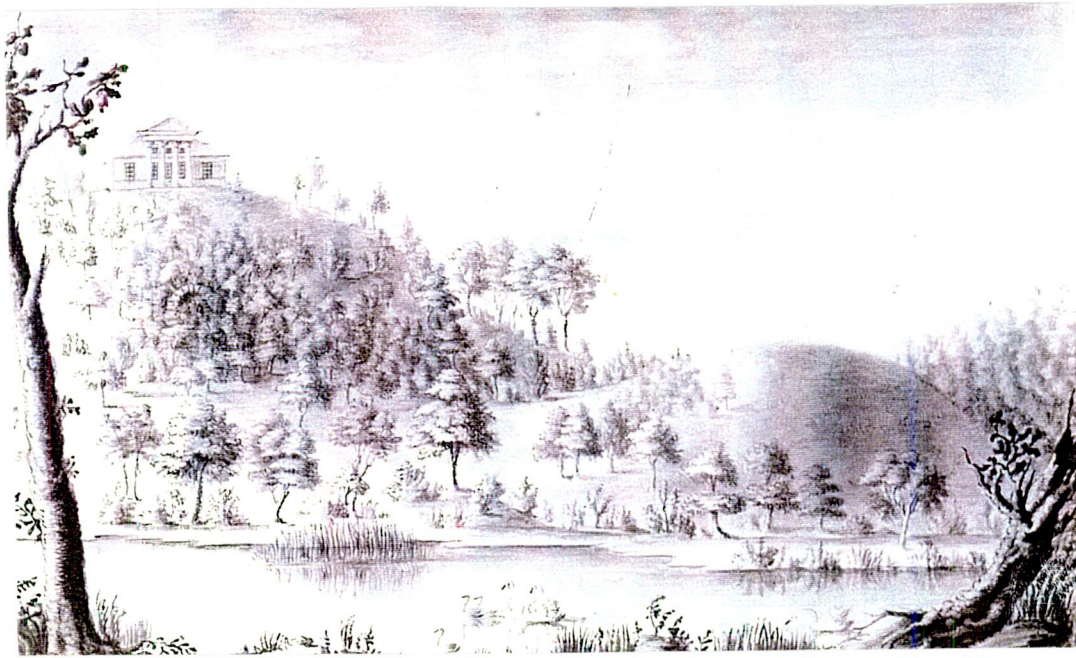
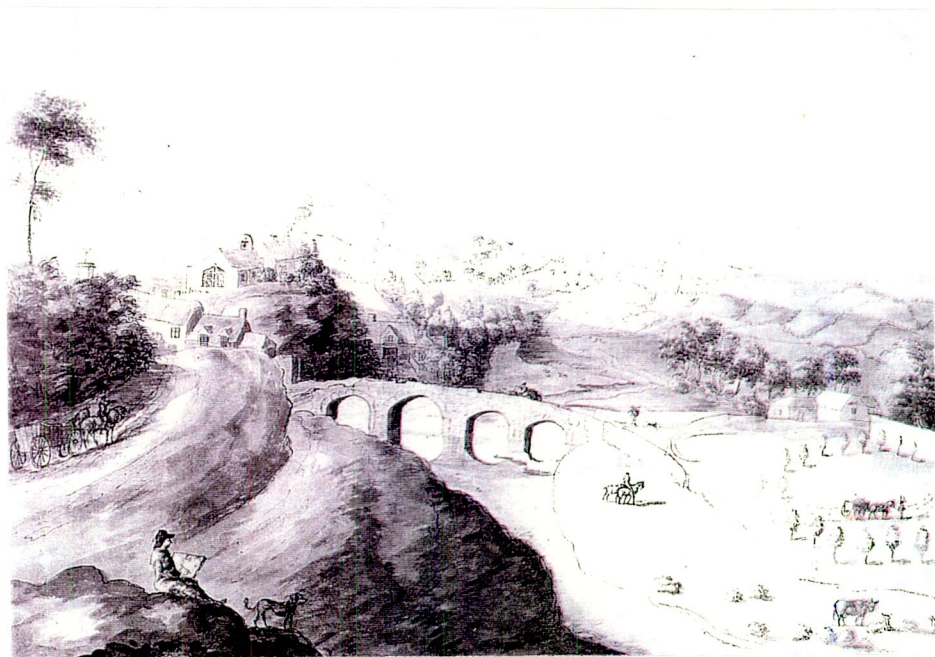


Figure 7

Letitia Bush (fl. 1731-1757), View of the Village of Bray, Co. Wicklow





The continuing connections between topography and surveying in the 18th century, however are perhaps more clearly seen in the work of Johnathan Fisher. A straight-forward topographical artist working in the second half of the 18th century, Fisher's personal connections and background give an interesting cross section of the network much 18th century art was produced from. Although self-taught, Fisher won many prizes in the Dublin society schools, whose school of landscape and ornament, a telling combination, was just established. He was extremely friendly with the Honourable John Dawson, Lord Carlow who in turn had strong connections with Lord Portarlington and Colonel Vallancey. Vallancey's military background, involvement with the Antiquarian Association, cartographical and archaeological interests were somehow a microcosm of a particular set of concerns at the time. Fisher produced work that was in line with these surveys and he also made contributions to Grose's Antiquities of Ireland. This view of Carlingford Harbour (Figure 8) is again quite typical of his work and displays obvious formal connections with both Place and Philips.

An area that flourished with the work of George Petrie in the 19th century but began in the 18th century, was antiquarianism. The almost epic volumes produced by several generations of the Grose family began here and furnished the Ascendancy's "landscapes with the melancholy pleasure of ruins as much as the colourful figures of Arcadian peasantry" (dePaor, 1993, p. 79). There are strong links again here with the obsession of collecting noted earlier in this chapter, which could also be phrased as "the

imperial process of reduction and colonisation" (dePaor, 1993, p. 81). What dePaor also refers to as the Bourgeois substitute for the Grand Tour, took off around the 18th century Irish countryside and the antiquarian drawings are as much evidence of that. The image of Strancally Castle by Daniel Grose (Figure 9), shows a typical landscape, with the ruined castle and three small figures in a boat. In the same vein, Gabriel Berangers main patrons were General Vallancey and Conyngham and his view of Glendalough (Figure 10) typifies the draughtsman-like quality of his antiquarian work. Beranger's Huguenot background is interesting and he provides an example of the many English and Continental artists working in Ireland at the time. This again presents difficulties when attempting to classify such art. "Ireland's white European native population and the ease of access for British and Continental artists and craftsmen made the country appear, if viewed on way, as part of the 'home countries'" (dePaor, 1993, p. 78). The complexities this situation represents will be discussed later, but it is at this point we leave the study of the actual 18th century images.

Antiquarianism did provide a bridge into the romantic, sublime and picturesque and stimulated the beginnings of a more romantic, nationalistic appreciations of the Celtic past. It is also, however, the last of the genres to more openly betray its connections with its source. These connections and power relations become more and more complex as the

Figure 8

Johnathan Fisher, View of Carlingford Harbour from the new road to Hillsborough behind Rosstrevor, (NLI)

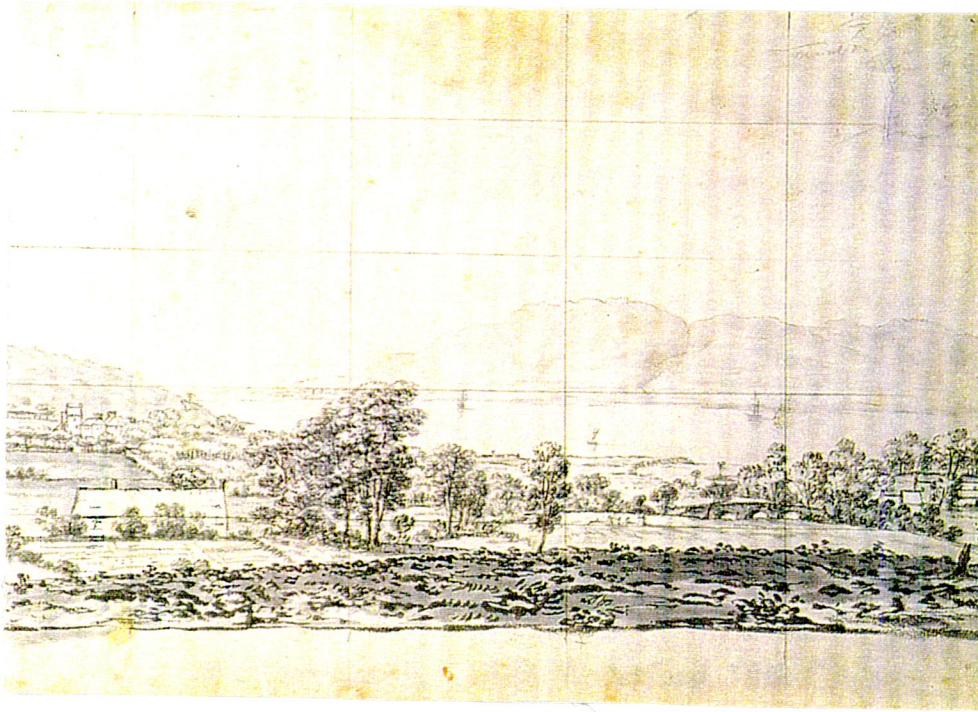


Figure 9

Daniel Grose, Strancally Castle, Waterford, 18th Century

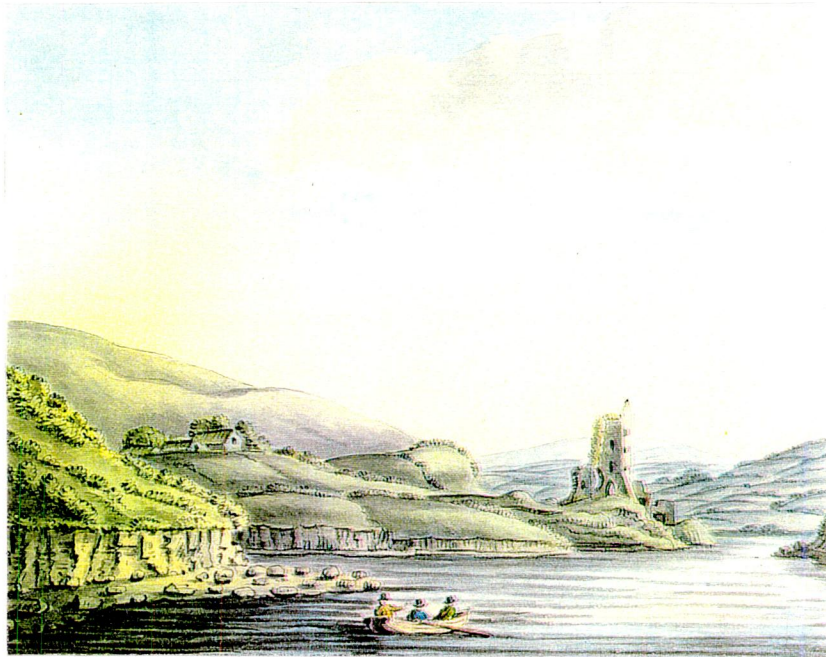
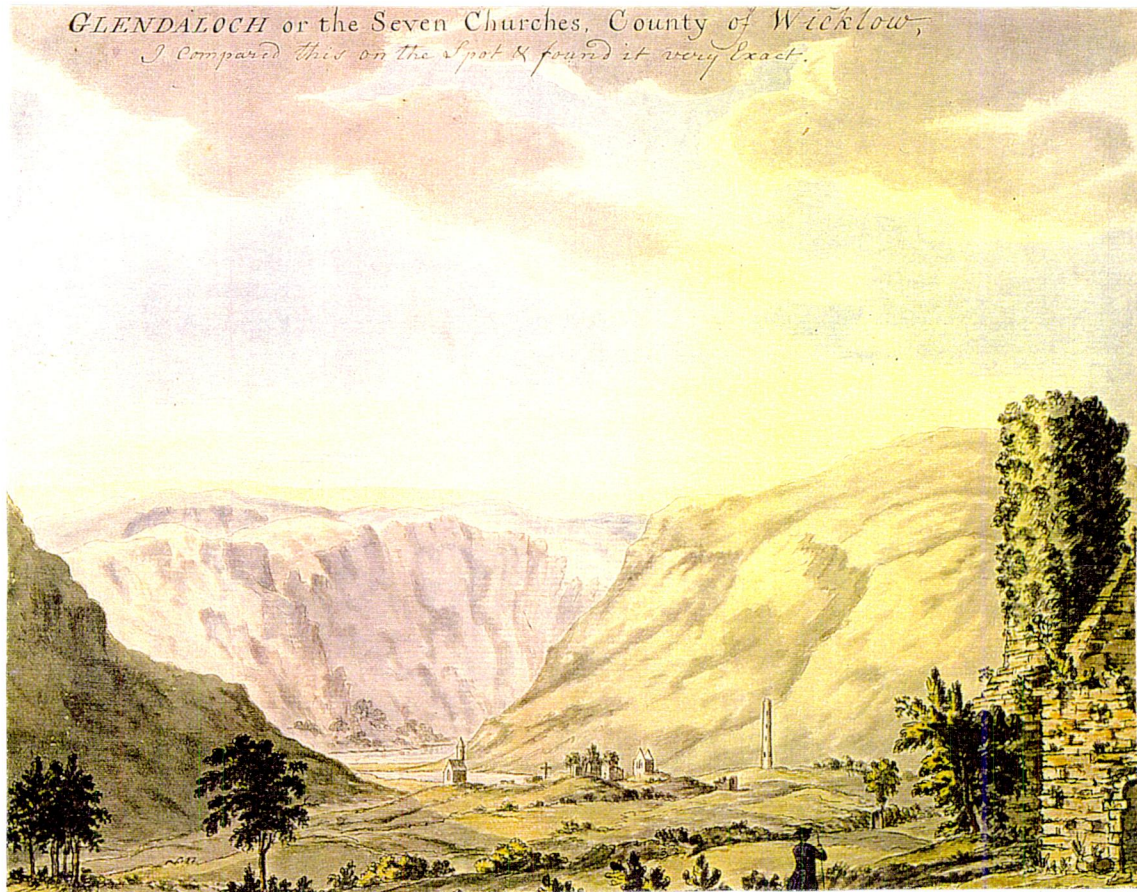




Figure 10
Gabriel Beranger, Glendalough, Co. Wicklow, c. 1799



story unfolds but it is important to remind ourselves again of Bartlett's era. It is more that anecdotal to mention the fact that he was eventually killed by the people whose lands he was surveying. His status as a foreigner employed by a foreign government is reiterated when we discover that the colonial cartographical genre he contributed to is "hardly know elsewhere in Europe" (Andrews, 1978, p. 12). Although landscape work that followed does not solely have links with this source, the connections are strong enough to have considerable implications. There

is surely a pub or hotel somewhere in Galway that has a print on its wall of Philip's view or at least one very similar. The question of whether this and the millions of popular photographic landscape images whose direct or indirect ancestry lie in the late 17th and 18th century, came about by a process of 'cultural translation' or otherwise, is a complex one.

The popular status of the landscape image in the 18th century is also interesting as these pictures obviously had a circulation unprecedented in any visual form. It is difficult to know, to what level in society they might have filtered but the potency of the visual at the time cannot be underestimated. "Popular culture was both illiterate and in the process of dramatic linguistic transformation at that time" (O'Neill, 1993, p. 56). If this was the case and the contemporary view is true that: "the absence of a visual tradition in Ireland, equal in stature to its powerful literary counterpart, has meant that the dominant images of Ireland have, for the most part, emanated from outside the country, or have been produced at home with an eye on the foreign (or tourist) market" (O'Connor, 1993, p. 69), then the visual legacy becomes even more deep rooted. Either way it is crucial that our study of this period does not conclude, as it so often does, with banal references to the wonderful curiosity value of the images. Of course they operate on many levels, but to maximise their discursive potential that particular level must be left to one side.

CHAPTER FOUR

Post-Colonial Ireland, Contemporary Tourism Landscape Images

To bring ourselves abruptly back to our current first world, as referred to by Gibbons earlier, without the benefits of history or hindsight, contemporary landscape tourism images will now be explored. The question of who is representing what for whom becomes much more complex and unclear at this stage. Even if we state that it is the Tourist Board and the tourism industry, representing certain aspects of Ireland for foreign tourists, the depth of the question is not even touched on. However, the basic use of the landscape as a mode of address, or commodity for the foreigner is established and the connections with the 18th century are reiterated. To examine this statement in full the first question that must be asked is what are these certain aspects of Ireland and what is their source? Following from that it will be possible to speculate on why the state and the industry might want to portray such an image and why the foreign tourist seeks such a portrayal.

There is no doubt that popular and mass visual culture borrows heavily from so-called high art and vice versa. Indeed it is "the Global currency of images that are the lifeblood of the tourist industry" (Edwards, 1996, p. 139). Where exactly they borrow from, however, is another question. Desmond Bell refers to tourism imagery destined for the German market, relying heavily on the Germanic romantic landscape tradition. Influences ^{are seen in} (Figure 11) and Glendalough (Figure 12), (Bell, 1984, p. 14). Bord Fáilte and

Figure 11

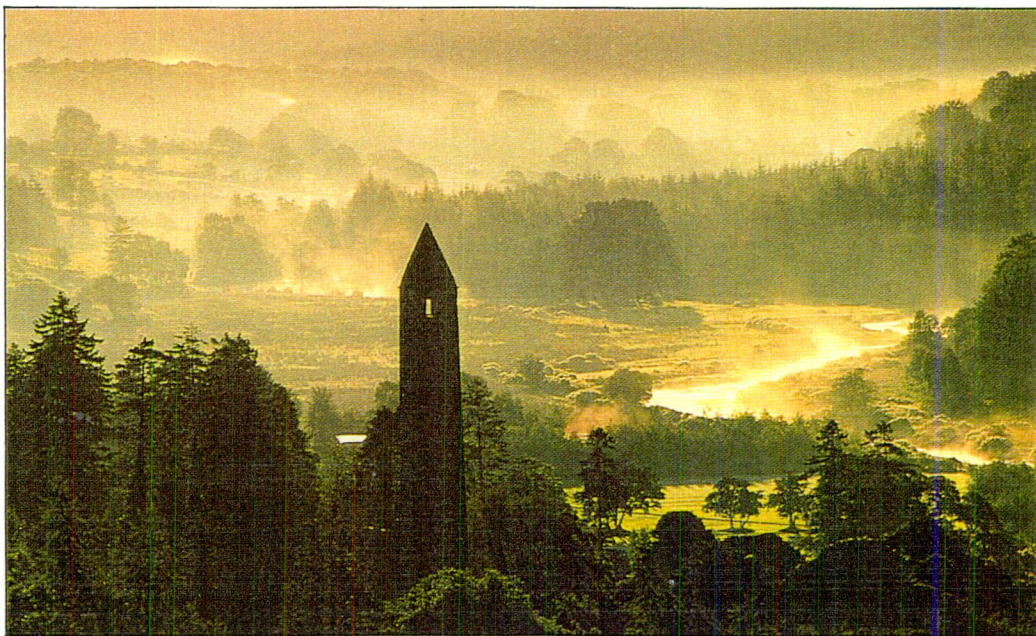
Connemara, Insight Ireland Ltd., Photo - Peter Zöller



CONNEMARA

Figure 12

Glendalough, Insight Ireland Ltd., Photo - Peter Zöller



IRELAND

John Hinde arguably utilise the reference to the deserted ancestral cottage in the photograph of the Rock of Dunamase, Co. Laois (Figure 13) and in the postcard depicting a ruined cottage (Figure 14). These connections provide interesting food for thought and they also prompt the obvious observation that neither the original German painters or the makers of the 'Quiet Man' were particularly Irish. To probe that aspect further the observation that "the construction of tourist imagery is influenced by historical representations" (O'Connor, 1993, p. 32) can be made. To focus on the root of the source of these representations then and to deliberately clash Gibbons' 3rd and 1st world, it is necessary to compare the late 17th and 18th century.

If we look again at the images of Connemara (Figure 11), Glendalough (Figure 12), Dunamase (Figure 13) and the ruined cottage (Figure 14) we can trace their lineage back a little further and a little closer to home. Glendalough, as we can saw in the previous chapter, was a subject drawn by Gabriel Beranger in the 18th century and by virtually every other antiquarian artist worth his salt. It was discussed in that chapter what the source and initial function of antiquarianism was and although numerous other references accumulate over the 200 year interim, it is important to remember that source. The basic landscape format maintaining a structure of the foreground, middleground and background, that was established from the earliest topographical works, seen in the previous chapter can be seen in all four images. Another

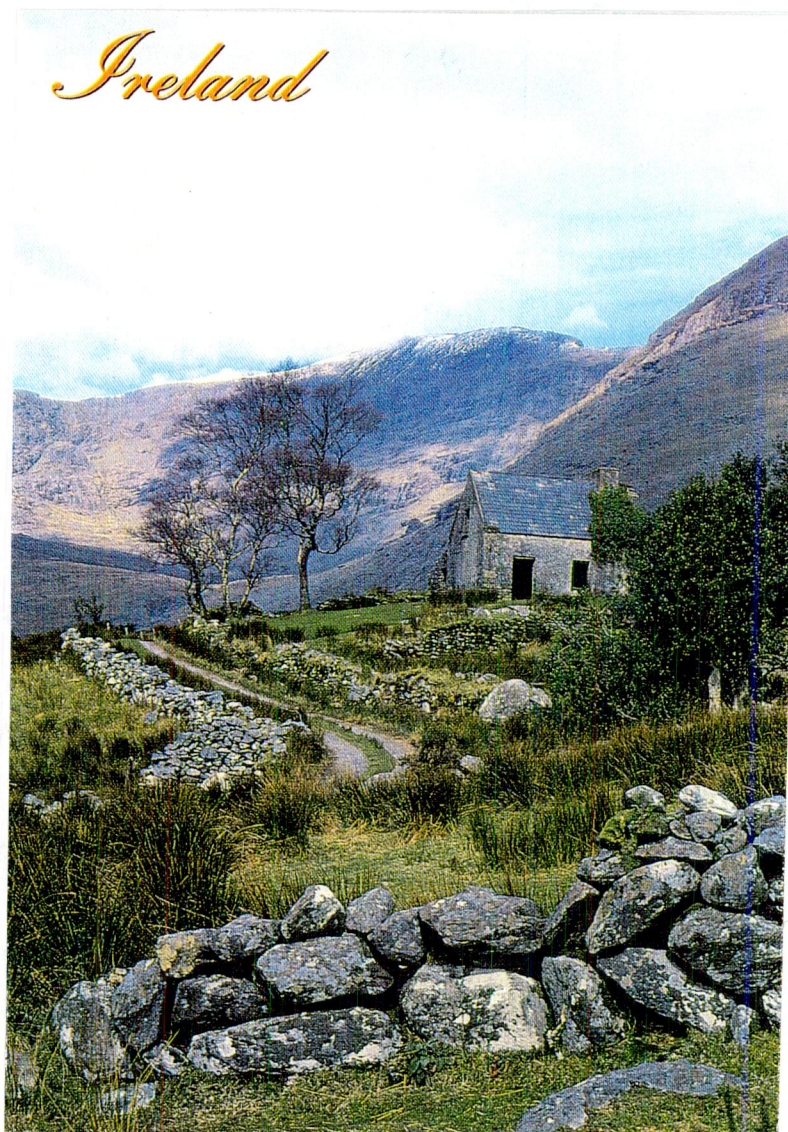
Figure 13

*Rock of Dunamase, Co. Laois, Bord Fáilte, 'Discover Ireland', Holiday
Breaks, 1996*



Figure 14

John Hinde Ltd., Photo; Arthur O'Brien



feature all three images have in common is their distinct lack of human presence. The abandoned boat (Figure 15) and the joke of 'rush hour' in Ireland (Figure 16) consisting of some sheep running down a road, amount to the same.

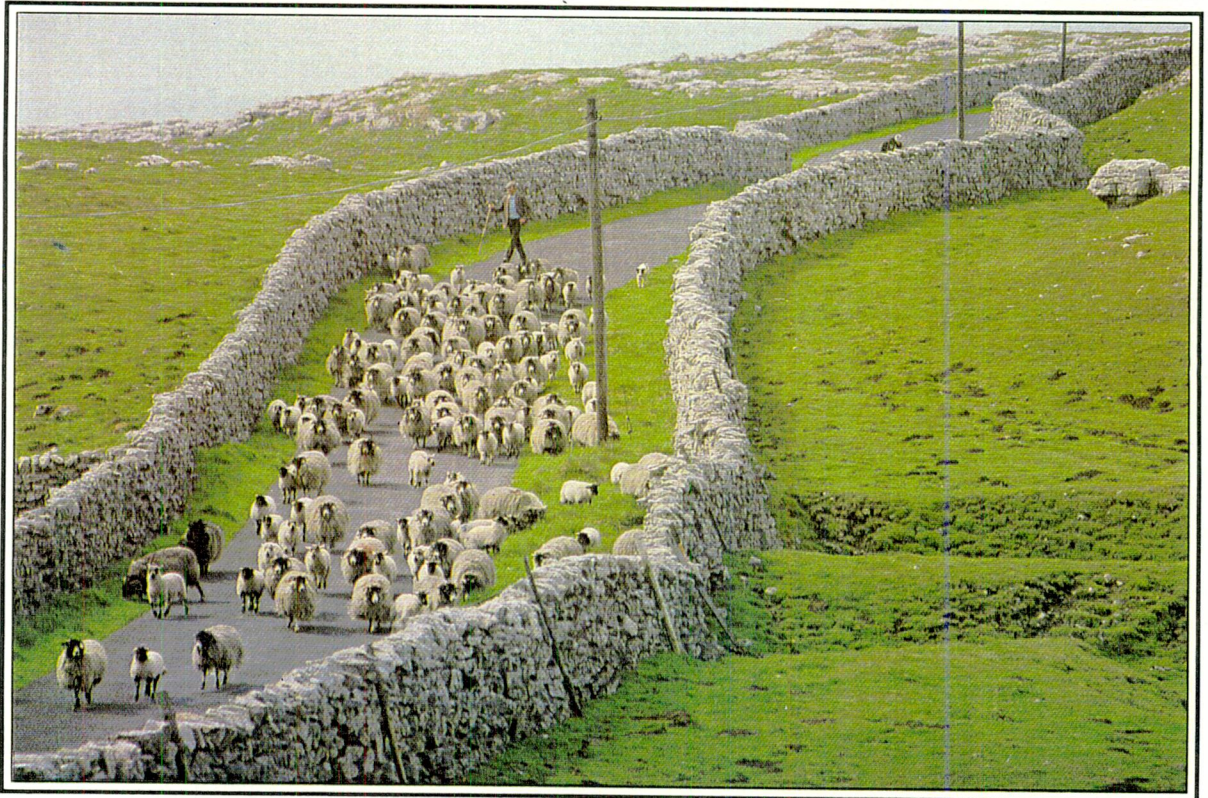
It has been recognised that the representations of tourist space as empty or virgin territory is a feature shared with the colonial perception and construction of land (O'Connor, 1993, p. 34). Robert Ballagh comments that, "you have Bord Fáilte eulogising roads where you won't see a car from one end of the day to the other: it's almost as if they are advertising a country nobody lives in" (O'Connor, 1993, p. 34). A direct illustration of this is the Avoca Road (Figure 17). The landscape becomes a commodity, a zone free of conflict where the tourist can do as he/she pleases and have the ultimate power. Uncontentious representations of the landscape equally suited the colonisers and new estate owners that Thomas Philips' images were destined for. This is perhaps the most direct similarity between the tourist and the conqueror, referred to in Chapter Three.

If the above gives a brief insight into the aspects of Ireland that are represented and their source, then we must now examine how this caters for the needs of the tourist. Apart from wanting a holiday where it is not necessary to politically negotiate your surroundings, the tourist also seeks a kind of 'home-coming'. This was referred to earlier by McCannell (Chapter Two) and is also identified by Gibbons in relation to postcard

Figure 15
Bord Fáilte, 'Golden Holidays', 1996/1997



Figure 16
'Rush Hour', Useful Gifts Ltd., Photo; T. Stone

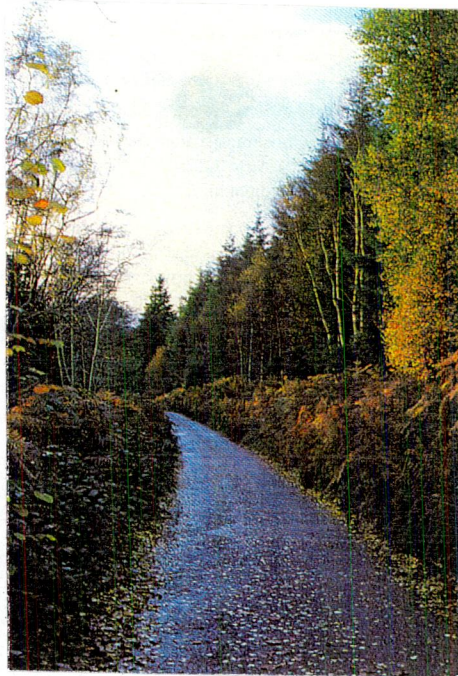


RUSH HOUR

IRELAND

Figure 17

Avoca, Bord Fáilte, "Discover Ireland", Holiday Breaks, 1996



imagery. "This is not simply an evocation of an idealised past, but a very distinctive form of longing; nostos; to return home; algos, a painful condition, the painful desire to restore the sense of belonging that is associated with childhood and the emotional reasonance of the maternal" (Gibbons, 1996, p. 101). The image of the ancestral cottage in 'The Quite Man' comes to mind again. There are two elements in the idea of homecoming. The first or second generation American, for example, goes on holidays to the country that they have heard their parents or grandparents talk about throughout their childhood. "Attempts to locate relatives and forge links with them are often essential rituals of their trip." (O' Connor, 1993, p. 43). There is a sense of sentimentality and idealisation of the time that your forefathers lived and the small, wholesome environment they

lived in. Secondly, home-coming, refers to the notional longing of the isolated individual for unified simple existence, associated with childhood and the home. The past is again inferred by this idea. The past, not only of your own life, but of the good old days and a time when you imagine life could not have been as out of control, fragmented and ever changing as it is today.

There are two elements again, of tourism imagery, that appeal to the above. Firstly, the idea of the unifying view of the landscape as referred to in Chapter Two. It was discussed there, how by initially reducing surroundings to a map or topographical landscape, the bearer of the image gained knowledge and control of that area. The function of the overall view was also discussed by Barthes in relation to the Eiffel Tower. The unifying, simplifying experience of seeing what is a confusing maze at ground level, from above gives the viewer a sense of order and control. It has been discussed throughout this study how these ideas are ancestors of contemporary tourism landscape imagery. Rather than negotiate the experience of the actual landscape, the tourist can picture it, often from designated points, photograph it or buy the postcard. This is not a particularly active or contentious experience. In fact, it is the opposite and probably partly accounts for the sustained popularity of such imagery. It appeals to the need for unity, control and simplicity associated earlier with the idea of the past or home. Less abstract is the second element of the imagery that appeals to the longing described in the previous paragraph. This comes in the form of the appearance of several thatched cottages or

ruined houses. These can be seen in figures 13, 14, 18 and 19. In figure 19 one of these images actually shows a motherly looking woman outside of the thatched cottage. These are subtle but definite references to what Luke Gibbons pointed out in the last paragraph.

Another aspect of representing the traditional thatched cottage, the ruined house or the horse and cart (Figure 20), is the portrayal of Ireland as somehow pre-modern. To portray a country as such holds great appeal for the sense of nostalgia referred to earlier. It may also have connections with the colonial tendency to portray the colony and its inhabitants as somehow less advanced and unthreatening. However, the tourist can still be part of this partly idealised world. We see activity tourism portrayed in figure 20 and the almost obligatory lone figures in figures 21 and 22. The tourist can partake in this way of life or use the natural resources his/her own country have polluted. This objectification of the 'other' in terms of people and lifestyle is common again to both colonial and tourist representation. The ability to feel somehow superior or more advanced than the natives, while harking after their supposedly simple, wholesome way of life holds almost perfect appeal. The landscape is always the backdrop, it is the site where culture and nature become one.

The connection between Ireland and the more recent growth markets of the Metropolitan centres of Europe, namely Germany, is less obvious.

Figure 18

John Hinde Ltd., Photo; Michael Diggin, 1996



Figure 19

Insight Ireland Ltd., Photo; Peter Zöller, 1996



Figure 20

Bord Fáilte, "Discover Ireland", Holiday Breaks, 1996



Figure 21

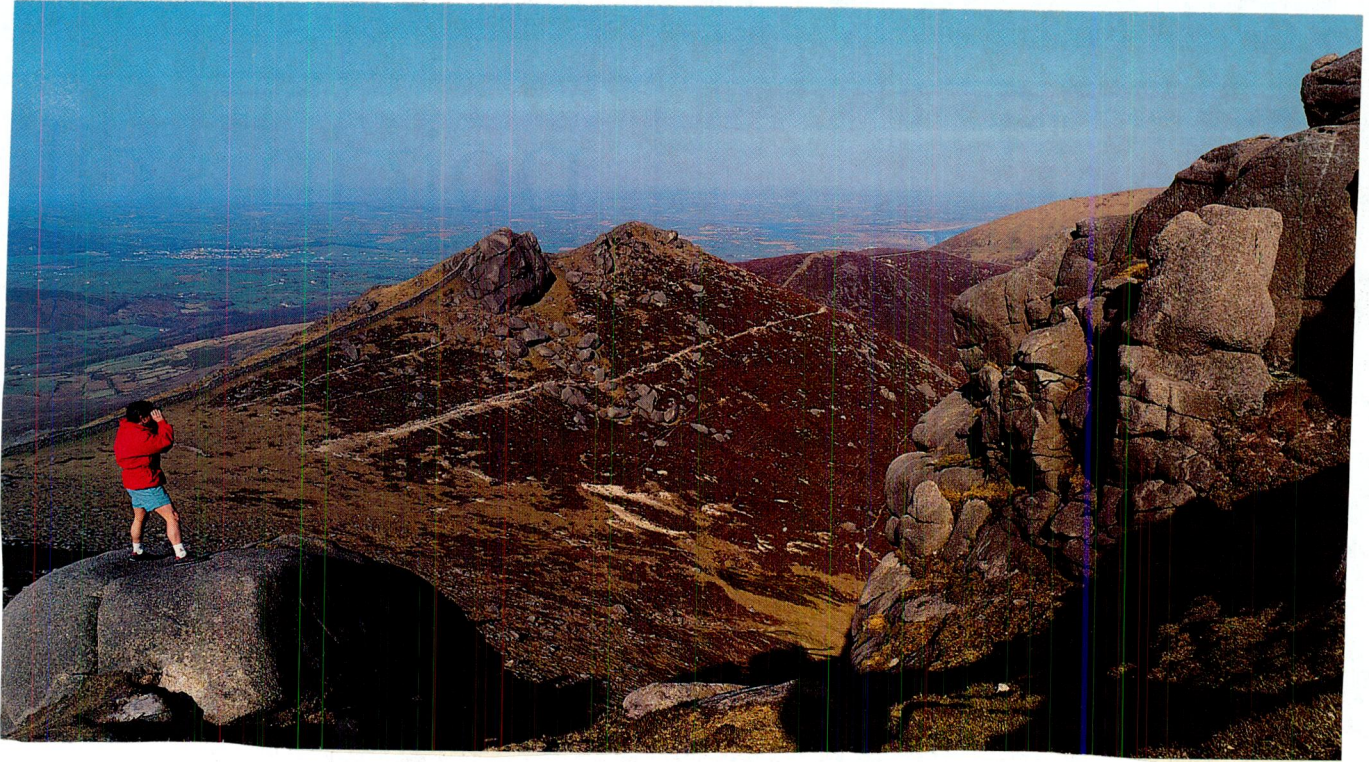
Bord Fáilte, "Discover Ireland", Holiday Breaks, 1996





Figure 22

Bord Fáilte, "Discover Ireland" Holiday Breaks, 1996



However, "this severance from the past that once characterised the immigrants' experience becomes a general cultural condition in modernising society" (Gibbons, 1996, p. 15). Consumers from these areas have the financial power to seek out experiences that will cater for their needs. Their "sense of unreality, not belonging, isolation, being out of touch" that Rutherford believes becomes "endemic in such a culture" is somehow temporarily salved by this experience (Rutherford, 1990, p. 88). The power relation involved is less obvious than colonialism, but it is clear in whose court the power lies.

As Raymond Williams suggested, to compare the images presented here to "the common history of the land and its societies" (Cosgrove and Daniels, 1988, p. 212) is again difficult from this vantage point. Some basic facts however, about the decline of agriculture and the small-holding in particular can be ascertained. The reliance on European Union policy and funds and the general trend of the economy has forced those who stay to diversify and develop off-farm enterprises. Overall, however, it is fair to say that it is a relatively bleak and uncertain time in rural Ireland. The roads are deserted and the countryside is empty because it is virtually impossible to live on this 'beautiful' land. The communities who do live there and nearby suffer an extremely high rate of emigration and often tourism is the only major source of income. Quota's, set-aside, intervention, subsidies to grow, subsidies not to grow, rural environmental protection schemes, disadvantaged and severely disadvantaged areas are all the common currency of current agricultural language. From this, a surreal situation of hyper-reality; where farmers will only pretend to be farmers, keeping and producing token amounts for the purpose of exhibition for tourists, is envisaged by Barbara O'Connor (O'Connor, 1993, p. 56). Whatever the future, this situation again, clearly points to where the power lies. Perhaps the contemporary equivalent to the blanks left on the colonial maps for unforfeited lands are productive farms, motorways, industrial estates and maybe chain-store ridden high streets.

The most complex implications of that original question, lies in the 'who' of the 'who is representing what for whom?' If we have looked at the images and if the tourist has been set-up as having a stake in the less direct form of colonising that has been linked to tourism, then it would seem to follow, as in the 18th century that the coloniser or his agents would produce the images. Conversely, Bord Fáilte are a national body and the postcard companies are almost entirely native. If the lineage of these images has been correctly traced back to the late 17th and 18th century, this is actually not a particularly surprising situation. It could be argued, however, that it is a more abstract action of a deviant culture, associated with colonialism, who have re-appropriated the initial meanings and codes of the landscape. It could be a classic case of speaking "our language with their words" (Fiske, 1989, p. 60). Less dramatically, it could represent a case of Gibbons' 'cultural translation', where certain signs and symbols come to represent something else and be accepted in a less threatening way, as time passes.

It is argued here, however, that the landscape and visual culture in general in Ireland is not high enough up on the ladder of collective consciousness to ever have warranted such treatment. The economic benefits of tourism, the lack of questioning surrounding landscape due to its status as natural, therefore uncontentious and the classification of such culture as unpolitical, all dampen the critical faculties. Referring to John Hinde's postcards and 'The Quiet Man' Gibbons again states that "the emigrants break with the past has been internalised within Irish culture"

(Gibbons, 1996, p. 113). This process as we have seen, goes back much further. The earliest images of our landscape are made by colonisers and therefore, our first view of ourselves was by somebody else with a specific agenda. If the specific agenda is linked to that of the contemporary tourist then perhaps, the fact that we are now the ones producing the images, is a telling symbol of our national perceptions of power and our position in history, as referred to in Chapter One. The implications of overlooking a possible indicator of our identity, such as this will be explored in the next section.

Conclusion

It has been proposed throughout that the images used in Chapters Three and Four are somehow indirect indicators of the current state of our national identity and position in 'history'. Desmond Bell's reference earlier to how this imagery eventually comes to mediate our experience of the landscape (Bell, 1984, p. 15), is significant as it gives an example of some reciprocal effects. A more practical example again is given by Urry when he talks about the kinds of landscape represented: "the tourist appraises the scenery with the word 'picturesque' and takes a photo of it to confirm its pictorial value" (Urry, 1990, p. 190). The aesthetic validation that tourism imagery and its sources gives to certain kinds of landscape imbues a high commodity value on the scenery itself. To represent certain landscapes in this way becomes, therefore an economically significant practice. As stated in the previous chapter, this reality is often responsible for the overlooking of the broader cultural symbolism of the imagery. The reciprocating effects of representing our culture and our landscape in such ways can be elaborated on. When there are instances where such scenery and landscapes are preserved in certain ways for the benefit of tourists only, the political motivation becomes problematic. When more importance is attached to "the perceived opinions and needs of tourists than to those of the local population" (O'Connor, 1993, p. 26), the power relation becomes almost akin to cultural prostitution. Another telling assumption is that of the first perception of Connemara, for example as

being a very beautiful place, rather than one of the most cruel landscapes, in terms of socio-economic reality, in the country.

This perception of power as something outside oneself has very colonial and post-colonial overtones. How the study of these images can help to historically position ourselves in terms of Chapter One, is another question. If the contemporary images used show a state board and industry representing the landscape in similar ways to the 17th and 18th century colonists, what can it say about our readiness to enter into a post-nationalist society? Is it the case that we too are suffering from "the severance from the past that once characterised the emigrants experience, a general cultural conditions of a modernising society?" (Gibbons, 1996, p. 99). Moreover, is this experience exclusive to a post-colonial society or is it a general modernising condition? It is acknowledged that the situation is complex but in Ireland there are elements of both conditions. The "intertwined national identities" (Dalsimer, 1993, p. 17) present a cocktail of the above and are surely the very elements that make this country a useful theoretical location. To mistake this virtue for a readiness to take on post-modern political prescriptions is the proposition that is at variance here.

The question of whether we are somehow creating a wholesome, home-coming experience with these images for ourselves, as much as the tourist would probably require several more chapters. It is, however, necessary to go some way towards resolving the notion of 'home' as it has arisen so far.

It is agreed that the idea of home is a central ingredient missing in the modern and even more so, post-modern experience. The desire to recapture a home, or at least the associated feelings of security, simplicity and wholeness, is a common theme expressed so far. This has been primarily associated with emigrants, tourists and those living the quintessential fragmented urban life. Apparently this country has strong appeal for people in the above categories. The category most likely to reveal whether this is a realistic appraisal of the virtues of this country, are the emigrants. The practical example of their exile, an exile that "presumes an initial home and an eventual promise of return" (Chambers, 1994, p. 55) can be seen more abstractly in the form of tourism. While we can see the futility of the quest of the exile, we actively cater for the quest of the tourist. The motivation is obviously financial but as we have seen this constant "construction of ourselves as the other for the leisure needs of Europe and North America" (O'Connor, 1993, p. 25), has more serious repercussions.

"Cultures of displacement and transplantation are inseparable from specific, often violent histories of economic, political and cultural interaction, histories that generate what might be called discrepant cosmopolitanisms" (Clifford, 1992, p. 60). Although this statement was made with no reference to Ireland, its appropriateness is stark. If this is such a large element of our society and yet it is given minimal consideration in the more optimistic readings outlined in Chapter One, then by association neither is tourism. O'Connor warns also of the

repercussions of not analysing fully, the nature of tourism in Ireland in the context of its phenomenal financial significance and potential (O'Connor, 1993, p. 35). What emerges here is a country, a little bit less advanced along the post-modern path, as some would see us. The landscape emerges as a significant national symbol, whose representation has gone largely untheorised. The story of the complexity of our colonial past, in relation to landscape imagery and when the colonisers were white and just next door, begins in the late 17th and 18th century. This legacy, in terms of imagery has been swallowed up in the financial tourism boom. However, if the 'legacy' is closely examined tourism certainly emerges as an agent to bring us closer to European financial targets but places us firmly on the cultural periphery. Jim Smyth's question must be asked again: "can post-modernism and its Irish variant be seen as the outcome of a set of historical circumstances?" (Smyth, 1988, p. 165). The danger of being carried along this relatively uncritical route is that the periphery may come to be seen as the new centre. Furthermore, Spivak warns that, "this longing for a centre may spawn hierarchical oppositions" (Chambers, 1994, p. 19) and surely this is the opposite of what the well-intentioned intend.

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