

Spatial Stories: Mapping the Social Relations of Power on 19th Century Ordnance Survey Maps of Ireland

Introduction

It was a grey summer evening and I was helping a couple of friends conduct some fieldwork in the southwest of Ireland. The six of us had piled into a small car and had been driving in those tight quarters for a couple of hours along narrow roads with high hedgerows. It was impossible to see much but the road ahead of us. We finally stopped, much to the relief of my cramped and numb legs, and climbed into the nearest field to locate some archaeological sites that the road map promised would be there. Alice stood looking down at the map in the middle of the field for some minutes, not lifting her head. “Where am I?” she finally spoke, “I can’t figure out where I am?” “We’re ‘Here’”. Put down the map and look around”, I urged. “But I don’t know where we are” she insisted still peering at the map in her hand.

When we come to a crossroads and find no school, that the map tells us is supposed to be at this spot, our tendency is to proclaim, “I am lost” rather than “The map is wrong”. These examples suggest the power that maps have over us. We tend to assume that the map (unless it is an overtly propagandist map) holds the authority of knowledge of the landscape and all that is attached to it. Certainly, traditionally, maps have not been the subject of much critical analysis, but rather have been regarded as recording the world as a quantifiable and objective reality (Thrower 1996, Tooley 1978). More critical analysis of maps recognizes their sensitivity in representing the cultural “way of seeing” of the map-maker, legitimizing and reinforcing those views over others (Monmonier 1991, Pickles 1992, Wood 1992a and 1992b). This is especially obvious in the case of colonial map-making.

In the first half of the 19th century, the British Ordnance Survey (hereafter referred to as BOS or OS) produced a map of Ireland at the exacting scale of six map inches for every mile on the ground, producing an unparalleled detailed description of the Irish landscape. This was a tremendous enterprise, but one that has largely gone un-examined¹. Today, there are some specialists who still make use of versions of these Victorian maps, including archaeologists who employ them in their surveys and excavations, and historians seeking to picture the pre-Famine nineteenth century landscape. Tourists also make use of these early maps, guided by the tourist industry that works to package images of “authentic” and “traditional” Irish landscapes.

In other research, I have focused on the analysis of the first edition 6-inch maps of 1837 for the area of Carrowkeel-Lough Arrow in southern Co. Sligo, situated in the northwest of Ireland (Smith 2001, 2003). However, for the purposes of this paper, I am most interested in examining the mapping process itself, looking at the maps as an artifact of their times, and as an artifact of the complex web of social interactions and

¹ For the excellent historical overview of the cartography see J.H. Andrews’ (1975) *A Paper Landscape: the Ordnance Survey in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*. Also, see the more recent historical discussions of the Ordnance Survey in Gillian Doherty (2004).

social mediation which ultimately found its way onto the map documents. I explore the process of maps and map-making as the negotiation of many multiple voices and knowledges. Further, I argue that the reading and use of the map, once produced, result in still more understandings of the land and place. Using the case study of the nineteenth century British Ordnance Survey mapping of Ireland, I will show that the map is best analyzed as a social artifact by looking at the map as a process of negotiation of the multiple and fluid of experiences and understandings of the landscape. Knowing the agents of the mapping project allow us to rethink the map. Recognizing that the maps are hermeneutic and hyper- and inter-textual, that once authored they do not hold a single unwavering and uncontested authority over the landscape and its people, we are better able to explore how maps are constantly being re-used and reinterpreted in their meaning and knowledge of the land and its people. And how maps can be spatial stories.

Spatial Stories:

Some of the literature on ‘place’ and ‘space’ set up these two concepts in a structuralist model of binary opposites rather than as a dialectical process that connects the two. In order to understand that dialectic, it is first necessary to understand how these two concepts are different. In defining space, de Certeau (1984) and Tuan (1977) argue for a clear distinction between ‘place’ and ‘space’. Place is considered to be a tangible physicality. De Certeau defines it as the order and relationships of coexistence of distributed elements, implying a configuration of stability (1984, 117). Tuan defines place as static, rooted, “place as time made visible, or place as memorial to times past” (1977, 179).

Space on the other hand is more abstract and more difficult to describe. It is the process and practice of activity. Space is defined not by fixed concrete points but by action, movement and freedom (Tuan 1977, 6). De Certeau explains that “Space occurs as the effect produced by the operations that orient it, situate it, temporalize it, and make it function in a polyvalent unity of conflictual programs or contractual proximities... Space is a practiced place” (1984, 117).

De Certeau then extends this analysis of place and space to examine the supposedly equally and parallel binary opposition between “maps” and “tours”. Lkening the “map” to what Foucault deemed “the dead, the fixed, the undialectical, the immobile” (1986, 23), De Certeau argues that the static and fixed portrayal on the map represents the colonial and scientific control over and appropriation of the landscape. That is, maps make social space concrete, static, knowable, tangible and definitive. Maps, according to De Certeau, see the world as unchanging and without variation. Thus every pond or river is drawn on maps as a never-changing place of water with strict boundaries. Maps represent ultimate authority and control of landscape knowledge. Conversely, “tours” are dynamic and are the sensory lived experiences of moving through and knowing a landscape.

For de Certeau “Every story is a travel story – a spatial practice” which produces “geographies of actions” (1984, 115-116). Tours chronicle action and movement through space. Tours are fluid narratives of the social experience of living and being in the landscape (see Tilley 1994). This is in direct contrast to maps which fix places in a configuration of positions relative to each other. De Certeau regards mapping as a process of making space inactive, transforming spaces into places. However, although I

think that maps do impose stasis rather than action, I argue in this paper that the supposed “static” nature of maps requires further consideration.

Usually, the representation on a map is *not* the end in itself. The action of maps goes beyond perception and reflection; maps are also used as guides or tools for future actions. The role of the maps is to actively guide, direct, demarcate and interpret. For example, marking out boundaries for map production creates and authorizes areas for particular actions, mediating frontiers and connections as lines are drawn to separate one space from another. “In this way a dynamic contradiction between each delimitation and its mobility is introduced” (de Certeau 1984, 126). In addition, maps evoke stories from map-readers’ own experiences and memories of the places being mapped (Ryden 1993). Thus, through the act of *reading*, the maps are always in process as the reader continues to interact with and experience the landscape.

The act of mapping firstly, followed by the acts of using and knowing a map, is itself a complex spatial story. It is a journey of the multiple experiences, perceptions, understandings and readings of the landscape and the map. Thus recognizing the hermeneutical and hyper-textuality of the map is important for recognizing that rather than the map having uncontested and complete control over the representation of the landscape and the social relations of place, the map itself is a tour or a spatial story of the social process of mapping and the negotiation of the meaning of the landscape.

To illustrate this, in the remainder of the paper I will focus on the case study of the 19th century mapping project of the Ordnance Survey in Ireland. I will first outline the social and political context of the Survey in order to examine why colonial Britain undertook the mapping of the Irish landscape and people. I will then examine the individual players involved in making the maps. This is critical for better understanding the complexity, and sometimes conflicting, motivations and perspectives that shaped the map. Where possible, I will provide specific examples from the actors involved in mapping the area of my case study in Carrowkeel-Lough Arrow in the northwest of Ireland. In this way, I make the argument that while colonial agents author these Irish maps, these maps do not represent complete power or authority of the mapped landscape. The degree to which the mapping project is a product of negotiated social relations of power with and in the landscape turns these maps, in the words of de Certeau, into tours or spatial stories of the contest of land, people and power in nineteenth century Ireland.

The Ordnance Survey of Ireland: Purpose, Goals and Process

There is a long history of Britain mapping colonial Ireland. However, the 19th century mapping undertaken by the British Ordnance Survey of Ireland is remarkable in that it was not initiated as part of a military operation of land clearance.

In 1824, the British Ordnance Survey of Ireland was established to produce a national map to re-evaluate (and make more equitable) the county cess tax. This tax paid for many of the country’s roads and bridges and much of its local governmental machinery. The tax rate was based on townland units and on the assessment of the land value, dependent on its agricultural productivity, and was paid by the land tenant. But the system was inequitable, complicated by unfair rent rates and multiple levels of middlemen between the landlord and tenants. The map was to be an administrative tool aimed at governing more efficiently the politics and economics of the local landscape.

But to put this in historical context, it can be argued that this was also a military map (albeit not officially so). Although the Napoleonic wars (1800-1815) were over, the British still feared French invasion along the Irish coast. Thus an accurate coastal map was required. In 1776, the British parliament commissioned Col. Charles Vallancey to undertake a thorough “military survey” of the whole country focusing on coastal topography, especially of the shoreline in the south of Ireland where the threat of French invasion supporting rebellious Irish factions was greatest. Vallancey’s work was never completed. The OS maps would rectify this.

Perhaps more pressing was the growing awareness of rural unrest and the formation of Irish secret societies. Internal control and defense could be maintained through a mapping project which unleashed an army of military surveyors into the countryside to plot the landscape at the exacting scale of six map inches to every mile. This conspicuous colonial presence in the landscape was one way to manage and control, another way was through the maps themselves. Through the Ordnance Survey, mapping was centralized and standardized in ways that had never been accomplished in the past. At such a detailed scale, the maps reduced to mathematical exactness the number of people, and where and how they lived on the landscape. The maps thus became the official representation of the landscape, the people, their language and their past (in the mapping of archaeological and historical places of interest). If I were to stop here and not attempt a deeper analysis, the OS colonial mapping might indeed be understood as evidence of an uncontested and complete control over the social relations of place in 19th century Ireland. However, the final maps were the product of social negotiations of multiple perceptions and understandings of the Irish and the Irish landscape. Further, that the maps became public documents meant that they were accessible to a wider audience and were put to a greater number of uses than the initial scope and perspective ever intended.

The British Ordnance Survey issued an army of soldier surveyors into the Irish landscape to map and record the land, the people and their way of life. While ultimately controlled by the London Office, the Survey in Ireland had its own administrative hierarchy in Dublin under the direction of Superintendent Col. Colby. Five district parties comprised of Royal Engineers and the lower ranking Royal Sappers and Miners systematically mapped the country, starting in the North and advancing steadily southward. Along the way, these parties recruited assistance for short periods from local civilians.

These field surveyors sketched the boundaries and content of the country, evaluated the land use and recorded placenames. Sometimes referred to as the Townland Survey, the final map was to mark the boundaries of the approximately 60,000 townlands throughout the country, as well as the defining features within each of these land units, including natural topographical elements as well as buildings, roads, field fences, archaeological structures, etc.. Indeed, at the close scale of six inches to the mile, an incredible amount of detailed information could be recorded on these maps². Surveyors would then send completed fieldbooks and “fair plans” (draft sketches of the map) to the

² In many ways, this survey project represented the necessary precursor to the first accurate census of Ireland: once it was known who lived where and in what conditions, it is not surprising then that the first official British census took place in Ireland in 1841 after the first edition maps were completed.

Dublin office where it was to be verified and produced in the final map sheets. In order to be “verified” the Assistant Superintendent, Lt. Larcom, established an Orthography department which was responsible for accurately providing spellings for placenames. This department, headed by the antiquarian, George Petrie, also recorded cultural information in the form of local stories about monuments and places as part of the “Memoir” (a social survey) meant to accompany the final map document. John O’Donovan is most often associated with this work, which entailed extensive archival research in addition to the fieldwork to collect local information from the gentlemen landowners and Irish tenant farmers alike.

The Actors Involved in Making the Map

It is important to recognize the many people involved in the production of these maps, who had varying vested interests in what was and what was not represented in these “paper landscapes”. These individuals contributed to the complex negotiation of ideas about the land, its past and people, and how that was to be represented in the map artifact. I would argue that although the map sought to create a standardized uniform authority over the colonized space, through the use of the English rather than the Irish mile, the anglicization of many placenames, the reshaping of some ancient townland boundaries and the highlighting of the land estates of the local landed gentry class, the maps had many “authors” and thus represented many differing, sometimes conflicting, ways of understanding the Irish landscape.

Rather than focusing solely on the “official” decision-makers, the Directors and administrators of the Survey, I believe that a “bottom-up” approach is necessary since it was the people in the local landscape – the soldier surveyors and local Irish tenants – that were responsible for carrying out the actual work. It was the tenantry who knew the landscape most intimately; it was the surveyors who were most intimately responsible for recording the landscape; and so, it is inevitable that it was the negotiation and interaction between these groups in the local landscape that significantly shaped the maps. However, these interactions were often “unofficial” and thus went largely undocumented in the otherwise intensely archived process of the Ordnance Survey. Thus the information (about the social interactions and about actual individuals) must be gleaned and interpreted from what sources are available.

Local Irish Tenant Farmers

There is a real scarcity of documentation about who were the local Irish tenant farmers. We know these actors so little, that we are forced to make their acquaintance through fiction. Brian Friel’s play *Translations* set in a small rural village of Donegal, brings to light the social relations between two Surveyors (Lt. Yolland and Capt. Lancey) and members of the local community. For the villagers of Baile Beag, the personal and cultural effects of the interactions with the surveyors end in tragedy and a foreshadowing of worse things to come. Friel also presents an image that the local Irish were engaged in resistance: first in the suspicious disappearance of Lt. Yolland and then in the setting fire to the surveyors’ encampment.

In the area of Carrowkeel-Lough Arrow where I did my study, there is no record that the locals such as Daniel Clancy, Richard Fairbanks or Thomas and Michael Breheny undertook violent resistance against the intervention of the OS. But there is evidence in

the OS Correspondences that tension between the members of the Survey and the local inhabitants was real. One such example is found in a letter from Captain Waters dated February 28th, 1836 reporting that robbers had broken into the field surveyors' lodgings, had taken their bayonets and had torn and ruined survey fieldbooks. There is another incidence of bayonets being stolen from the lodgings of a Private Frazer on August 8th, 1836, by persons disguised in women's clothes (a trademark associated with the secret societies). Also, there were OS guidelines established regarding how to deal with locals who were caught defacing boundary marks or tampering with trigonometric stations, suggesting that this must have been a problem.

While such overt resistance was not noted in my study area, the maps of the area do document what I have elsewhere interpreted as the "silence of resistance". The local farmers do not make specific features of the local topography known to the surveyors. This silence appears on the maps as missed or mis-identified information. In this way the local community maintained some control over the access to intimate knowledge of the landscape.

British Soldier-Surveyors

The surveyors, like the local inhabitants were not well documented. Each man signed his name to the field notebooks that he was responsible for, but little more than that is known about these individuals. One officer's complaint of his men's lack of skill in collecting cultural information from local residents helps to identify these men: "many of them are presbyterians from the north who care not for 'eremites and friars, white, black and grey, with all their trumpery'" (in Andrew 1975, 127). Both religion and language would have been barriers to the interaction between many locals and the surveyors (although we know that some civilian assistants were hired locally for short periods and these presumably spoke English).

While the surveyors were trained soldiers and thus, we assume, followed orders in a systematic and regimented way, they were far from home and at times likely suffered themselves because of their lowly position in the military hierarchy. Military "disorderliness" was noted in the list of crimes and punishments. For example, Privates John Elliot and Richard Curle were guilty of "Quitting the Detachment on its march from Monaghan to Drummark and intoxicating themselves to a shameless degree" for which they were punished with "Drill in heavy marching order and fatigue duties until further notice". Subsequently, Private Curle was charged with "Intoxicating himself on the march from Augher to Dungannon, when in charge of a 5 inch Theodolite and either breaking, or permitting the seal of a letter to be broken, containing the key of the Theodolite, and allowing the box to be opened and the Theodolite injured". He was sentenced to "one week's confinement in the Dark Room" (Ordnance Survey of Ireland 1829).

In my study area, cairns on top of hillsides were often not marked on the map -- even when Trigonometric stations were erected on top of them! These stations were meant to be marked by a pile of stones and earth according to the Boundary Survey instructions. Was this a case of laziness on the part of the surveyors? Were they making use of the existing mound of stones and earth of the cairn to lessen their workload? Omissions such as these are part of the final artifact of the map and in this way the surveyors themselves shape the map.

It is not likely that the average surveyor communicated in any way with the local landlord of the Anglo-Irish class. This was reserved for the district directors of the field parties, and for the antiquarian scholars from the Orthography department.

Landlord John Ffolliott, Esq.

In the area of Carrowkeel-Lough Arrow in South Co. Sligo, John Ffolliott was the local landed gentry. He was an Anglo-Irish protestant landlord, who lived on the large demesne of Hollybrook on the shores of Lough Arrow, and leased out a large portion of his total holdings to Irish farmers. Landholders, like Ffolliott, made up a small percentage of the population but owned most of the Irish countryside. With increased economic expansion, increased population, and increased pressures on the land resources, landlords took on a more assertive role both politically and economically. Fueled by increased tenant rents, the gentry focused their attention on aggrandizing their estates. Enclosed by a tree-lined boundary, the estate's focus was the big house set on manicured landscaped grounds. As a symbol of this control and ownership of land, the landed gentry had private surveys done of their own property.

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, new estate maps were created to document, and legalize, new or changed relationships between tenant and landlord. But a new map might also serve to interrupt existing relationships between tenant and landlord. Because a survey often meant a reassessment of tenant rents to the landlord, the surveyor was caught between the landlord and the tenant in a “cartographic battle”.

The tradition of estate mapping was carried on in the OS mapping project. The result was that the demesnes of the landlords were meticulously recorded on the maps. They were shaded grey against the otherwise black on white maps, and so were highlighted prominently. This had the effect reinforcing, at the local level, land ownership and control which was in the hands of the Anglo-Irish landlords.

While the field surveyors operationalized the survey – conducting the boundary survey and plotting the content details on the landscape – it is clear that they were not the “official” decision makers of the mapping project. That fell to others: the directors of the Survey, Superintendent Colby; his assistant Larcom; and the head of the Orthography department, George Petrie, and his assistant John O'Donovan.

John O'Donovan, antiquarian of the Orthography Department.

The Orthographic Department of the Survey was responsible for making decisions on place-names, simplifying and in some cases anglicizing them for easier comprehension on the maps. John O'Donovan was the chief Irish scholar of his time and was the principal researcher for the Survey.

Seymour writes (1980, 92):

While Petrie's assistants were copying and abstracting documents, O'Donovan was in the country listening to the local pronunciations of the names and on the look-out for topographical and archaeological indications of their meanings. With Larcom's encouragement, his journeys evolved into what was virtually a one-man survey of Irish local history. From field and bookshelf alike, the orthography brought in a richer harvest of scholarship than could ever be displayed on the face of the maps themselves.

O'Donovan's letters from the field (usually penned to Larcom) form a series of 103 volumes in which he describes the history, antiquities, genealogies, legends, and observations of the pre-Famine customs in the Irish countryside. In his work, O'Donovan investigated the history and spelling of some 62,000 townlands and an additional 144,000 names of other features on the printed maps.

In addition to the placenames, O'Donovan recorded the cultural information of the people and their past. This was the basis of the social "Memoir" inspired by Lt. Larcom.

Lt. Larcom, Assistant Superintendent of the Irish Survey

Lt. Larcom, Assistant Superintendent, was posted to the Irish Survey in 1828. It can be argued that Larcom was the real genius and creative force behind the OS in Ireland. Although English, he was politically pro-Irish and took immense interest in all that concerned Ireland, including its history, archaeology, language, literature, placenames and folklore. Likely it was this interest that motivated his desire to produce, alongside the maps, the "Memoir" which was to be a social survey of the people and their way of life. Larcom wanted it to be a "full-faced portrait", that depicted everything from customs and traditions, to local stories and histories, as outlined in the extensive instructions he provided the field surveyors and the antiquarians and Irish scholars of the Orthography department who were to collect this cultural information from the local inhabitants.

The Memoir of only one county - Londonderry - was completed and ran some 350 pages, costing not the proposed £400-500 but rather £1700. The Treasury Chancellor observed that the Memoir scheme could only divert the Survey officers from their proper duties of map-making and further that the enterprise was far too expensive. When the British parliament under Peel stopped the Memoir, many felt that it was a direct assault on Irish national feeling. Whether it was an intentional act of subduing Irish nationalism, or was strictly one of expense, what is most important was the impact the abandonment of the Memoir scheme had on the public. Forever associated with the Memoir, the OS maps themselves, as a result, have been a symbol of Irish nationalistic pride, despite the unquestioning fact that they were an act of British colonialism.

It was Larcom's duty to publish the maps, and, in short, to bring the work of the Survey to the public. By 1846 an average of sixty-one copies of each sheet (there were 1907 sheets for the whole of Ireland) had already been sold, a far cry from the eight copies thought to be sufficient twenty years earlier (Seymour 1980, 90). But beyond this, Larcom took a prominent role in seeking new arenas for the use of the Ordnance maps. The result was that the maps were more widely known and more widely used than their original narrow purpose could have envisioned. Under Larcom's direction, they served a role in helping to reform Ireland's administrative geography, providing the means for defining parliamentary borough boundaries in 1831-32, and municipal boundaries in 1836 and again in 1841-43. They were further used by the Irish Poor Relief Act of 1838 to delimit unions and electoral divisions, and later to aid in the first official census of 1841 and the reform of the poor-law divisions in 1849 during the height of the famine.

While Larcom ingratiated himself with the Irish public and scholarly class, he was not immune from the conflicts incited by the clash of his perspective of the OS maps with that held by his superior, the Superintendent of the Survey.

Col. Colby, the Superintendent of the Irish Survey

Having been trained in the Royal Engineers of the British Army's trigonometrical survey, Colby's reputation was as a "Man of Science", with great interest in geology, statistics, and astronomy. Colby was driven as a scientist and consequently considered that the work of the OS was justified in itself because of its scientific basis. But beyond that, Colby was competitive and ambitious. He was driven by the desire that this mapping project would restore Britain to its "proper place" in the cartography of Europe, surpassing both French and Dutch map-makers. In a letter by Sir George Airy to Mrs. Colby in 1869 on the death of her husband, he wrote: "I never heard a word from him which implied that he was looking abroad for personal glory, or for any expression except the recognition of his results as producing a scientific survey superior to any that had ever been made, and a cadastral mapping to which no other, I believe, can be compared"(in Close 1969, 98).

Only four years after the commencement of the Survey, Colby had to prove to a review board the accuracy and capabilities of the Ordnance Survey and prove the efficacy of his leadership to complete the operation. After much aggravation and contention, Colby's place as Superintendent was secured.

He accomplished this, and the ultimate success of the Survey, through his persistence in using soldier-surveyors of the Royal Corps of Engineers and personally choosing his officers and training his soldiers to the standards he expected in the mapping process. Colby himself detailed the code of instructions in 1825 in what has come to be known as the "Blue Book". In addition to the demands for plan drawings, these instructions stipulated that elaborate field documents be kept which recorded the day to day work of the detailed survey. Field books of content surveying and theodolite 'levelling', together with the 'registers' in which the results were calculated, allowed for detailed documentation of each part of the survey which could then be traced back to the surveyor and the instrument responsible on the day in question.

The Ordnance Survey set out to regularize and standardize the physical environment, and indeed even to modify that environment by changing ancient boundary lines and anglicizing place-names. Standardization with the English counterpart (in the use of the scale of six inches to the English mile) sent the message that Ireland was part of the United Kingdom – its lands were English lands. The fact that all private, small-scale cartographic projects (such as the estate mapping) were to be abandoned was an endeavor to systematize the entire colonized space under a single series of institutionalized and official representations. Colby's military and scientific training made possible (and successful) this colonial mapping project.

Spatial Stories: Mapping the Social Relations of Power

In this paper, I have tried to illustrate the mosaic of individuals involved in and affected by the OS mapping and the final map. From the local Irish tenant farmers and soldier surveyors in the local landscape; to the landlord in his demense; and the antiquarian collecting stories and placenames; and finally to the assistant superintendent and superintendent giving (contrary) orders and controlling the mapping process, the OS maps weave together many perspectives and perceptions of the landscape and the people. This is a complex web of sometimes conflicting motivations and experiences, that goes

far beyond essentialist views of "colonialist" vs. "nationalist"; "institutional" vs. "local"; or "domination" vs. "resistance". By identifying individuals and individual agency, we are better able to understand that maps are the site of social relations of power, and that social interactions are negotiated through this artifact.

The early part of the 19th century in Ireland witnessed a high population of approximately 8 million resulting in a congested local landscape. Many were forced onto more marginal lands, renting out small plots per year to survive. Much of the rural population lived in small cabins with few material possessions, planted garden fields and held some lands in common with the community. Agrarian unrest was gaining momentum, and was often levied against local landlords who owned much of the countryside. Rent rates, complicated by a hierarchy of middlemen, were inequitable and many of the poorest in the country carried the greatest burden. Into this unstable landscape appeared an army of surveyors, conspicuous in their red-coats to map the landscape in exacting detail. These military trained men followed orders from supervisors who had very different goals for the Ordnance Survey of Ireland. Larcom is especially interesting as he not only sought to portray on the maps the landscape but also hoped to document the social condition of the people, their culture and their past. Larcom, too, was responsible for hyper-textualizing the maps: as an political administrator in his years after serving in the Ordnance Survey, he was the driving force for distributing the maps to a larger audience that read and used them in very differing ways. While the mapped landscape was intended to represent uncontested colonial control, fixedness and stasis, the multiple voices incorporated into the making of the map, as well as the many ways the maps were read, used and understood suggests something very different: that the maps and mapping are spatial stories of the social relations of power on the 19th century Irish landscape.

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