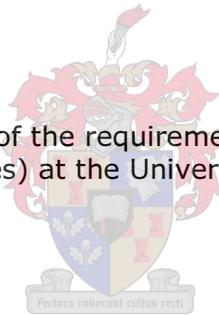


**The Contextual Compass: A Literary-Historical Study of Three British  
Women's Travel Writing on Africa, 1797 – 1934**

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Thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of  
Arts (English Studies) at the University of Stellenbosch.



Supervisor: Professor D.C. Klopper

December 2009

## **Declaration**

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

Signature: A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Blisser". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the word.

Date: 25 November 2009

## **Abstract**

Texts by women travellers describing their journeys date back almost as far as those produced by their male counterparts, yet women's travel writing has only become an area of academic interest during the past ten to fifteen years. Previously, women's travel writing was mostly read for its entertainment value rather than its academic merit and – as Sara Mills notes in her *Discourses of Difference* – appeared almost exclusively in the form of coffee table books or biographies offering romanticized accounts of heroic, eccentric women who undertook epic journeys to Africa (4). The growing interest in women's travel writing as part of colonial discourse coincides with the emergence of gender studies and related subjects. The emergence of these areas of academic enquiry can be attributed to the systematic dismantling of the patriarchal structures, which previously dominated social and academic domains.

The aim of this study is to examine European women's travel writing as a subversive discourse which, while sharing some characteristics with traditional male-produced travel texts from the colonial era, was informed by the discursive constraints of femininity. These texts thus differ from male-produced texts in the sense that, because of the different discursive constraints informing women's travel writing, they offer commentary on aspects of Africa and its peoples which men had omitted in their travel accounts. Three specific texts by British women who recorded their travels in Africa form the basis of the discussion in this dissertation: the travel writing of Lady Anne Barnard (South African Cape Colony, 1797 – 1801), Mary Kingsley (West Africa: Gabon and the Congo, 1896 – 1900) and Barbara Greene (Liberia, 1935). Since, as Mills argues, "feminist textual theory has restricted itself to the analysis of literary texts and has been concerned with analysis of the text itself" (12), which limits the extent to which one can provide interesting, discerning, and relevant comment on women's writing, the readings of these texts are not limited to feminist theory of women's travel writing.

Social expectations until as recently as the early twentieth century located women firmly in the domestic sphere. It was almost unthinkable for women to undertake travels other than the traditional Grand Tour. To attempt to venture

into the predominantly male territory of travel writing was to expose oneself to harsh criticism and to risk being labelled as eccentric and unfeminine. Thus women had to find a way of making both their travels and writing seem acceptable by social standards, while still presenting as true as possible a picture of Africa in their writing. These constraints of the discourse of femininity on their texts necessarily make women's writing seem concerned almost exclusively with matters of feminine interest. Mills attributes this to women travel writers' "problematic status, caught between the conflicting demands of the discourse of femininity and that of imperialism." (Mills, *Discourses of Difference* 22).

## Opsomming

Reisbeskrywings deur vroue dateer byna so ver terug as dié wat deur mans geskryf is. Tog het vroue se reisbeskrywings eers in die afgelope tien tot vyftien jaar akademiese belangstelling begin ontlok. Voorheen is vroue se reisbeskrywings meestal vir vermaak eerder as akademiese meriete gelees, en – soos Sara Mills in haar *Discourses of Difference* opmerk – het dit byna uitsluitlik verskyn as koffietafelboeke of verromantiseerde biografieë van heldhaftige, sonderlinge vroue wat epiese reise na Afrika onderneem het (4).

Die toenemende belangstelling in vroue se reisbeskrywings as deel van koloniale diskoers val saam met die verskyning van gender-studies en verwante vakgebiede. Die ontstaan van hierdie akademiese vakgebiede kan toegeskryf word aan die stelselmatige aftakeling van die paternalistiese strukture wat sosiale en akademiese arenas voorheen oorheers het.

Die doel van hierdie studie is om Europese vroue se reisbeskrywings te ondersoek as 'n ondermynende diskoers wat, hoewel dit sekere eienskappe van tradisionele reisbeskrywings deur manlike skrywers uit die koloniale tydperk toon, gegrond is in die beperkende diskoers van vroulikheid. Hierdie tekste verskil dus van tekste deur manlike skrywers in die opsig dat dit, as gevolg van die verskillende diskoersbeperkinge waarin dit gegrond is, kommentaar lewer op aspekte van Afrika en sy bevolking wat mans in hul reisbeskrywings uitgelaat het. Drie spesifieke tekste deur Britse vroue wat hul reise beskryf het vorm die grondslag van hierdie verhandeling; dit is die reisbeskrywings van Lady Anne Barnard (Suid-Afrikaanse Kaapkolonie, 1797 – 1801), Mary Kingsley (Wes-Afrika: Gaboen en die Kongo, 1896 – 1900) en Barbara Greene (Liberië, 1935).

Mills voer aan: "*Feminist textual theory has restricted itself to the analysis of literary texts and has been concerned with analysis of the text itself*" (12). Dít beperk die mate waartoe interessante, skerpsinnige en toepaslike kommentaar oor vroue se reisbeskrywings gelewer kan word; dus is die interpretasie van hierdie tekste nie beperk tot feministiese teorie met betrekking tot vroue-reisbeskrywings nie.

Tot so onlangs as die vroeë twintigste eeu het die samelewing se verwagtinge vroue streng tot die huishoudelike sfeer beperk. Afgesien van die tradisionele Grand Tour was dit bykans ondenkbaar vir vroue om te reis. As 'n vrou inbreuk sou probeer maak op die tradisioneel manlike gebied van die skryfkuns sou sy haarself blootstel aan skerp kritiek en onwenslike etikettering as eksentriek en onvroulik. Dus moes vroue 'n manier vind om sowel hul reise as hul skryfwerk sosiaal aanvaarbaar te maak en terselfdertyd so 'n egte beeld as moontlik van Afrika te skets in hul skryfwerk. Die beperkinge wat die diskoers van vroulikheid op hul tekste plaas, lei noodwendig daartoe dat vroue se skryfwerk as byna geheel en al beperk tot sake van vroulike belang voorkom. Mills skryf dít toe aan vroue-reisbeskrywers se *"problematic status, caught between the conflicting demands of the discourse of femininity and that of imperialism."* (Mills, *Discourses of Difference* 22).

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- I would also like to thank Jonathan Smith and Joanna Ball, sub-librarians at the Trinity College Library, Cambridge, for arranging the purchase and permission to reprint caricatures of Mary Kingsley.
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- Finally, I would like to thank my parents, Deon and Una Visser, without whose unwavering love, support and encouragement I would have given up long ago.

## **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to my friend, Wynand le Roux, whose journey was cut short.

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## Introduction

### **The Contextual Compass: a Literary-Historical Study of Three British Women's Travel Writing on Africa, 1797 – 1934.**

*To those bred under an elaborate social order few such moments of exhilaration can come as that which stands at the threshold of wild travel. The gates of the enclosed garden are thrown open, the chain at the entrance to the sanctuary is lowered, with a wary glance to right and left you step forth and behold! the immeasurable world. ~ Gertrude Bell<sup>1</sup>*

Texts by women travellers describing their journeys date back almost as far as those produced by their male counterparts, yet women's travel writing has only become an area of academic interest during the past ten to fifteen years. Previously women's travel writing was mostly read for its entertainment value rather than its academic merit and – as Sara Mills notes in her *Discourses of Difference* – appeared almost exclusively in the form of coffee-table books or biographies offering romanticized accounts of heroic, eccentric women who undertook epic journeys to Africa (4). The growing interest in women's travel writing as part of colonial discourse coincides with the emergence of gender studies and related subjects. The emergence of these areas of academic enquiry can be attributed to the systematic dismantling of the patriarchal structures, which previously dominated social and academic domains.

The aim of this study is to examine European women's travel writing as a partly subversive discourse which, while sharing some characteristics with traditional male-produced travel texts from the colonial era, was informed by the discursive constraints of femininity. These texts thus differ from male-produced texts in the sense that, because of the different discursive constraints informing women's travel writing, they offer commentary on aspects of Africa and its peoples which men had omitted in their travel accounts. These discursive constraints are grounded in shifting social constructs of femininity. Hence, at the outset of each chapter it is necessary to consider the social and historical positioning of the woman whose writing is under discussion. The travel writing of three British women, Lady Anne Barnard (South African Cape Colony, 1797 – 1801), Mary

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<sup>1</sup>Bell quoted in Carr 81.

Kingsley (West Africa: Gabon and the Congo, 1896 – 1900), and Barbara Greene (Liberia, 1935), form the basis of the argument in this dissertation. Since, as Mills argues, “feminist textual theory has restricted itself to the analysis of literary texts and has been concerned with analysis of the text itself” (12), it limits the extent to which one can provide interesting, discerning, and relevant comment on women’s writing. Consequently, the readings of these texts are not limited to feminist theory of women’s travel writing. In order to create a theoretical framework for the discussion of these women’s work, this chapter will present an overview of theory concerning the social and historical positioning of women in general, and specifically women travel writers. The problematic authorial position of women travel writers, and the rationale behind the strategies they traditionally employed to negotiate the textual constraints of the discourse of femininity will also be elucidated. To the same end, the history of colonialism, the historical development of colonial discourse, and the influence of colonial discourse on both male and female travel writers will be discussed briefly.

Social expectations of women until as recently as the early twentieth century located women firmly in the domestic sphere. It was almost unthinkable for women to undertake travels other than the traditional Grand Tour. To attempt to venture into the predominantly male territory of writing was to expose oneself to harsh criticism and to risk being labelled as eccentric and unfeminine. Thus women had to find a way of making both their travels and writing seem socially acceptable, while still presenting as true as possible a picture of Africa in their writing. Kristi Siegel summarises women’s problematic authorial position in *Gender, Genre, & Identity in Women’s Travel Writing*:

Early women travel writers skirted a delicate course. To get an audience, a woman needed to provide material that was reasonably exciting; to keep an audience, she needed to remain a lady. Given that travel – and particularly unescorted travel – was deemed inappropriate for a lady, women often employed a narrative stance that could be described as the decorum of indecorum, a fine balance in which they strained the conventions of femininity, but did not break them. (2)

Mills puts this phenomenon into context by looking at a popular advice book for female travellers published in 1889, *Hints to Lady Travelers at Home and*

*Abroad*, by Lillias Campbell Davidson. This book advises women as to their conduct, supplies they should take, and what they should wear in order "to look respectable" (Davidson quoted in Mills, *Discourses of Difference* 100). The extracts from Davidson's book quoted by Mills all deal with appropriate clothing and behaviour, and apart from the fact that Davidson's text makes it seem as if women are completely unable to fend for themselves, the advice seems impractical. She advises women to take along "air cushions suitably covered with chintz or satin" to sit and rest their feet on (Davidson quoted in Mills, *Discourses of Difference* 102). A satin-covered cushion hardly seems the most practical thing to take along when travelling in Africa with the bare essentials. Davidson is also concerned with how women should behave in case of an emergency or accident. Predictably, she advises that women "keep still and be ready for action" and as far as possible leave male companions to "manage matters without the hampering interference of feminine physical weakness" (Davidson quoted in Mills, *Discourses of Difference* 102). This is just one example of her depiction of women as weak, helpless, and in constant need of male protection and assistance.

Davidson also warns women that their conduct should always be of such a nature as to discourage the "annoyance from impertinence or obtrusive attentions from travellers of the other sex"; she then goes on to say that should a woman be treated "with undue familiarity or rudeness", it can invariably be attributed to her own inappropriate behaviour (Davidson quoted in Mills, *Discourses of Difference* 101). Her recommendations concerning appropriate apparel for mountaineering seems equally ludicrous to a modern-day reader: "Let skirts be as short as possible – to clear the ankles. I must however draw the line at the modern feminine costume for mountaineering and deer-stalking where the skirt is a mere polite apology – an inch or two below the knee, and the result hardly consistent with the high idea of womanhood." (Davidson quoted in Mills, *Discourses of Difference* 102).

Yet, as impractical - and at times even chauvinistic - as Davidson's advice seem, her sentiments are indicative of the prevalent social expectations of women's conduct and dress during the Victorian era. Women knew that they were expected to act and dress in the manner described by Davidson, and their

writing and behaviour reflect this. These constraints of the discourse of femininity on their texts necessarily make women's writing seem concerned almost exclusively with matters of feminine interest. Mills attributes this to women travel writers' "problematic status, caught between the conflicting demands of the discourse of femininity and that of imperialism. The discourses of colonialism demand action and intrepid, fearless behaviour from the narrator, and yet the discourses of femininity demand passivity from the narrator and a concern with relationships" (*Discourses of Difference* 22). Issues traditionally associated with the domestic sphere, such as relationships, children, clothing, philanthropy, and details of domestic affairs were considered to be appropriate subject matter for women's writing. Another way of producing writing of an appropriately feminine nature was for women to publish their writing in the form of diaries or letters to friends and family. Mills refers to this type of writing as "confessional writing" (*Discourses of Difference* 19) and defines it as follows:

all manner of disciplinary practices, from diary and letter writing (interestingly gendered activities) to the religious confessional. The confessional can be analysed, as Francis Bartkowski has suggested, not as the expression of 'the voices of women, children, homosexuals, perverts, but the voice of power as it institutionalises, domesticates and suppresses those very discourses by which it shores itself up' (Bartkowski, 1988: 45). In describing confessional writing, we are thus describing the way power is resisted (and I would add also the complicity with power) and the way it is enacted. Women's travel writing can be seen as a response to disciplinary pressure, tending to exhibit a concern with displaying the 'self'. (19)

Texts such as letters and diaries were perceived to be of a personal nature and thus belonging to the feminine domestic sphere. Ironically, conforming to these social expectations with regard to acceptable content and form for women's writing gave rise to the most common criticism of women's writing, namely that it was too personal to be considered scientific or of academic value. Precisely because of their awareness of the social expectations as to the content of their writing, most women were anxious not to appear to be challenging patriarchy or the colonial effort through their work. As Mills puts it:

women travel writers were unable to adopt the imperialist voice with the ease with which male writers did. The writing which they produced tended to be more tentative than male writing, less able to assert the

'truths' of British rule without qualification. Because of their oppressive socialisation and marginal position in relation to imperialism, despite their generally privileged class position, women travel writers tended to concentrate on descriptions of people as individuals, rather than on statements about the race as a whole. It is in their struggle with the discourses of imperialism and femininity, neither of which they could wholeheartedly adopt, and which pulled them in different textual directions, that their writing exposes the unsteady foundations on which it is based. (*Discourses of Difference* 3)

This is evidenced by the common practice of women prefacing their published work with a self-deprecating disclaimer in which they profess not to lay claim to any scientific or academic merit for their writing. Another factor resulting from social norms at the time, which served further to discredit women's writing, was their relatively limited formal education. Because a woman's place was considered to be in the domestic sphere, anything beyond the most rudimentary education was deemed redundant, and tertiary education was a privilege reserved almost exclusively for men. Furthermore, men had the advantage of being able to claim the authority deriving from their education and their status to travel to Africa as representatives of their governments. The work of leading theorists in the field of women's travel writing - such as Casey Blanton, Shirley Foster, Sara Mills and Mary Louise Pratt - forms the basis of the discussion of discursive constraints unique to women's travel writing in this dissertation.

It is impossible to study travel writing, specifically travel writing concerning Africa, without taking into consideration the influence of colonialism and colonial discourse on both male and female European travel writers, as well as on their readers' conceptualisation of Africa. To this end it is necessary to examine the history of the colonisation of the African continent and how it "opened" Africa to European women travellers. Colonialism is a system in which one state claims sovereignty over a territory and people outside of its own boundaries in order to facilitate economic domination over their resources, labour, and trade. Colonising states claimed that this system would benefit the colonised country and would promote the superiority of their own culture, leading Europeans to see Africa as 'the white man's burden'. When justifying colonial expansions in Africa, the obvious capitalist motivations for colonialism were downplayed in favour of claims that it was Europeans' divine duty to convert Africans to Christianity,

introduce them to western civilization, and educate them. The attempts of colonising powers to transfer their culture, religion and morals to their African colonies, to produce so called Westernised Africans, caused cultural corrosion, the effects of which can still be seen in Africa today.

In *Travel Writing: The Self and the World*, Casey Blanton explains that during the late thirteenth century the determination of the Italian Marco Polo to explore the world beyond his continent led him to the Far East and that in the 1299 account of his journey, *Travels*, he introduced Europe to a new world. This new world was rapidly targeted for its potential to become integrated into Europe's capitalist economy, as well as for the possibilities it offered for expanding the European powers' territory (7). The first successful attempt to explore the African coast occurred when the Portuguese Vasco Da Gama, under the instructions of King Emmanuel, undertook a voyage to find a sea route between Europe and India in 1450. Portugal's success in this endeavour sparked widespread European interest in Africa. Most European powers dispatched representatives to explore the possibilities Africa offered in respect of natural resources, cheap labour, and new markets. Blanton refers to these early journeys of exploration as "object-bound" (3) and argues that because of their "necessity or well defined purpose" (3), these earliest travel narratives describe landscapes and people "in what is taken by the narrator to be a factual, disinterested way" (3). Consequently, the first travel writing and other texts on Africa to reach Europe in the fifteenth century were all similar in as much as they described Africa as a possible resource. These reports contained virtually no commentary on the cultures and lifestyles of indigenous African peoples.

It is important to note that, as Bruce Vandervort points out in his *Wars of Imperial Conquest in Africa, 1830 - 1914*, the European presence in Africa was relatively limited and mostly involved trade along the west-and east coasts until the late nineteenth century (26). Cohen attributes the failure of European powers to explore the interior of the continent until then to the fact that "European subjugation of Africa was preceded by another conquest, the conquest over malaria, the main killer of Europeans" (23). It was only in the mid-nineteenth century, after the introduction of quinine - a salt derived from the bitter crystalline alkaloid extracts of cinchona bark - proved to be successful

in the prophylaxis of malaria, that the so-called Scramble for Africa gained momentum, and European countries established informal colonies all along the African coast (25). Once the obstacle of disease was overcome nothing could stop the European powers in their quest to conquer Africa. Competition to expand their colonies was fierce and gave rise to disputes concerning territorial rights over the lower Congo River area, which prompted the decision to have an international conference on African affairs. The outcome of the Berlin Conference (1884 - 1885), the so-called 'General Act', regulated European colonisation and trade in Africa. It defined "effective occupation" and the imposition of direct rule as conditions for international recognition of colonial claims (Vandervort 35 - 37). In fewer than 40 years an immense power shift had taken place. As Vandervort explains: "In 1876, more than 90 percent of the continent was still ruled by Africans. By 1914, all but a tiny fraction of Africa was in the hands of European powers. Only Liberia and Ethiopia had managed to stay independent" (28).

With Africa now almost entirely under European control, it was considered safe for women to travel on the continent. Only then, as Blanton puts it, did "travel for its own sake" (3) become possible, giving European women thus inclined the opportunity to travel and present their views on African landscapes and cultures to the world. This allowed women to embark on an area of literary production previously reserved almost exclusively for men. Traditionally, male travel writing was considered to be representative of public and professional concerns, while female travel writing was seen to address issues of a more domestic nature, such as the treatment of indigenous women in colonised areas. But in *An Anthology of Women's Travel Writing*, Shirley Foster and Sara Mills argue against such a simplistic and artificial distinction between male and female travel writing. Instead, they propose to consider texts produced by Western women travellers with regard to "the way that communities of readers evaluate and interpret those texts according to their social and historical positioning" (4).

The "social and historical positioning" that Foster and Mills refer to is the discourse of femininity. The essence of their argument, which coincides with that of this dissertation, is that women travel writers

have always been subject to a range of constraints which are different from those affecting the behaviour and writing of men, while at the same time partaking in some of the same ones, but on different terms. This mediated relationship to discursive constraints can result in different types of writing or different emphases in writing. Sometimes it results in women producing very similar writing to men, but which is then judged to be different by critics and the reading public who...may read from an essentialist viewpoint. (4)

Or, as Mills puts it in her *Discourses of Difference*:

women's travel texts are produced and received within a context which shares similarities with the discursive constructions and reception of male texts, whilst at the same time, because of the discursive frameworks which exert pressure on female writers, there may be negotiations in women's texts which result in differences which seem to be due to gender. (6)

This dissertation contends that women's texts were informed by their ambivalent position in the colonial context. Although women were part of European society and thus participated in the imperial effort, they were seen as not being actively involved in the process of colonialism. They served as "symbols of home and purity", and as such "struggle[d] with the discourses of imperialism and femininity, neither of which they could wholeheartedly adopt" (Mills, *Discourses of Difference* 3). There are, however, areas where colonial discourse and discourses of femininity overlap, resulting in shared elements in male and female produced texts, and making a general rhetorical framework for discussing colonial discourse - such as those of Foucault, Said, and Pratt - useful for this study.

Since the aim of this dissertation is to consider women's travel writing in the colonial context as a sometimes subversive discourse, it makes sense to first examine the inherently subjective nature of discourse. One would be hard pressed to find a theorist concerned with colonial writing who does not refer to Michel Foucault's discussion of discourse described in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Foucault, a philosopher interested in very diverse subject matter, ranging from the history of medical practice and the development of the prison system as a means of punishment to the discourses of sexuality and insanity,

did not produce one specific, consistent theory or system of analysis. His primary interest was epistemology, and through his studies in the above-mentioned fields, Foucault attempted to develop tools to help “analyse discursive practices and trace the formation of disciplines while avoiding a science versus ideology perspective” (Winch 179). Foucault contends that, while scientific methods can be used effectively to produce knowledge in the natural sciences, where the subject-matter is quantitatively measurable and thus objective, the same scientific methods cannot be used in the human sciences, since knowledge and truth are produced in these disciplines through discourse, which is by nature subjective and thus cannot produce verifiable truths.

Mills, who uses a conflation of Foucault’s work and feminist theory in her *Discourses of Difference*, draws attention to Foucault’s own recommendation that readers use his work as a “tool-box” and not as “totalising theory, able to explain everything, but rather as a fragmentary theory which is descriptive of changing contexts, and therefore subject itself to change and re-evaluation” (8). Rather than offer one homogenous definition of discourse, Foucault describes it as including any language and its rules through which meaning – whether in spoken or written form – is produced, the meaning which was produced resulting from the use of any language and its rules, and any areas of meaning which can be sorted according to similar characteristics. Foucault’s notion of discourse, then, is that it denotes any way of conveying meaning, and that it cannot exist in isolation, but is informed by a society and its prevalent culture and norms, which can be seen as pre-existing discourses.

According to Foucault we are not conscious of the extent to which society’s production of meaning is informed by pre-existing discourses which dictate what is right or wrong, true or false, and which subjects are acceptable or unacceptable (Van der Merwe and Viljoen 177). In the case of colonial discourse, one could say that when a Westerner observes another culture, discourse is the way in which language (which is known to the observer and his or her audience) is used to negotiate the unknown in familiar terms, thus making it understandable. Since he perceives discourse as being informed by a volatile collection of pre-existing social rules, Foucauldian epistemology challenges the assumption that colonial discourse can produce “real” or “true”

knowledge about other countries and its people. About this production of "reality", Foucault says: "We must not imagine that the world turns towards us a legible face which we only have to decipher. The world is not the accomplice of our knowledge; there is no pre-discursive providence which disposes the world in our favour" (Foucault quoted in Pratt, 9). This Foucauldian notion of discourse as being predicated on and informed by pre-existing discourses allows contemporary feminist readings of women's travel writing as a unique genre where the discourse of femininity is one of the formative factors influencing the production of texts by women.

In his groundbreaking study of colonial discourse, *Orientalism*, Edward Said also refers to the biased nature of discourse when he takes exception to the "enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage – and even produce – the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period" (3). Said argues that the entire western concept of the Orient is fictional and that this phenomenon, which he calls Orientalism, was a way for Europe to gain power over the Orient and also that "European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self" (3). Said examines a wide variety of texts describing the Orient in order to show similarities in the way in which individual authors represent the Orient and finds that "[i]n quite a constant way, Orientalism depends for its strategy on this flexible *positional* superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand" (7). This contention that all knowledge on the Orient and other non-western countries produced by Westerners is to a large extent fictional led to fiery debate in academic circles, and as Herb Swanson points out, "Many scholars are beginning to see that "Orientalism" as described by Said was actually but one of the instances of a larger assemblage of Western ways of dealing with the Other, be they Asians, Africans, the urban poor, Native Americans and aboriginals, Jews or the many other peoples who stand at the margins of local, national, or global society" (108). This echoes a passage from Said's introduction to *Orientalism*, where, in a noticeably Foucauldian vein, he says:

For if it is true that no production of knowledge in the human sciences can ever ignore or disclaim its author's involvement as a human subject in his own circumstances, then it must also be true that for a European or American studying the Orient there can be no disclaiming the main circumstances of his actuality: that he comes up against the Orient as a European or American first, as a individual second. (11)

This is not only relevant to people visiting the Orient, but can be applied to anyone of any nationality visiting a foreign country.

Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes* provides a systematic approach to the historical development of colonial discourse and the influence it had on trends in travel writing. It makes sense, therefore, first to consider her theoretical approach to travel writing. With *Imperial Eyes* Pratt offers what she terms "both a study in genre and critique of ideology" with regards to how "travel books by Europeans about non-European parts of the world went (and go) about creating the "domestic subjects" of Euroimperialism; how they have engaged metropolitan reading publics with (or to) expansionist enterprises whose material benefits accrued mainly to the very few" (4). Her study of "how travel writing and exploration writing produced the 'rest of the world' for European readerships at particular points in Europe's expansionist trajectory", and how this "production" aided and abetted the European colonial effort and served to reinforce the ideologies informing Europe's self-declared cultural and moral superiority over the rest of the world (Pratt 5), is reminiscent of Said's concerns.

Pratt discusses travel writing spanning the eighteenth and nineteenth century in order to illustrate the development of different and complementary modes of writing in the colonial context. Using the "emergence of natural history as a structure of knowledge, and the momentum toward interior, as opposed to maritime, exploration" in the mid-eighteenth as a starting point, Pratt traces the development of "representational practises" in European travel writing of the colonial era. She introduces her discussion by explaining a set of terms she developed in order to analyse modes of representation in colonial discourse. The first of these is "contact zone", which she uses to refer to "the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually

involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict" (6). Pratt uses this term to examine the devices the coloniser and colonised employ when forced to engage with and relate to one another in the colonial context. She argues that, although it is mostly "ignored or suppressed by diffusionist accounts of conquest and domination", (7) these instances of confrontation necessarily require interaction between the two inherently different cultures and thus cannot be ignored in the study of colonial discourse.

According to Pratt, the publication in 1735 of Carl Linnaeus' *Systema Naturae* (The System of Nature) signalled a watershed in the genre of travel writing, as it introduced Europe to the "systematizing of nature" (38) as a way of producing knowledge. In *Systema Naturae* the Swedish naturalist Linnaeus cited a system by which all the plants on earth could be classified and categorised. This classification system, together with the combined efforts of European countries to launch an expedition to determine the shape of the earth, lead to the development of what Pratt calls a new European "planetary consciousness" (15). With Linnaeus' classification system of plants as a template, Europeans started exploring the interior of other continents with the aim of developing an all-encompassing, global system of knowledge "through the descriptive apparatuses of natural history" (15). The resulting collaborative European quest to establish a global system of knowledge, Pratt argues, was *the* crucial factor in the formation of European identity as well as the way in which Europeans thought and wrote about non-European nations. The impact of the emergence of natural history as a means of producing knowledge is evident in the type of travel writing produced in the latter half of the eighteenth century, where travellers - regardless of their qualifications or the motivation of their travels - gathered specimens of plant and insects and devoted pages to detailed descriptions of the fauna and flora they encountered. Pratt describes the effect of this naturalist movement as follows:

One by one the planet's life forms were to be drawn out of the tangled threads of their life surroundings and rewoven into European-based patterns of global unity and order. The (lettered, male, European) eye that held the system could familiarize ('naturalize') new sites/sights immediately upon contact, by incorporating them into the language of the system. (Pratt 31)

Pratt argues that natural history enabled Europeans to narrate travel and exploration in a distinctly different way from previous "imperial articulations of conquest, conversion, territorial appropriation, and enslavement" in order to create what she terms a "utopian, innocent vision of European global authority" (39). This idea of an innocent European vision is the basis for the second term Pratt coins to deal with colonial discourse, namely "anti-conquest" (39). This term refers to the "strategies of representation whereby European bourgeois subjects seek to secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert European hegemony" (6). Pratt chose this specific term since "in travel and exploration writings these strategies of innocence are constituted in relation to older imperial rhetorics of conquest associated with the abolitionist era. The main protagonist of the anti-conquest is a figure [she] sometimes call[s] the 'seeing man', an admittedly unfriendly label for the European male subject of European landscape discourse – he whose imperial eyes passively look out and possess" (7). She illustrates the applicability of her theories concerning the "discursive impact of natural history and the new planetary consciousness" in relation to travel writing by Peter Kolb, Anders Sparrman, William Paterson and John Barrow – all of whom described their travels in Southern Africa between 1719 and 1801.

Pratt uses Kolb's book, *The Present State of the Cape of Good Hope*, as an example of pre-Linnaean travel writing; a mode characterised by ethnographic descriptions of the manners and customs of colonised people. Kolb describes the Khoikhoi communities in the Cape Colony "above all as cultural beings" using "categories through which Europeans recognise other societies as real and human: religious, government, laws, professions" (44) and through which Europeans define themselves and compare themselves with others. This assimilation of the Khoikhoi to European cultural paradigms, argues Pratt, exposes the limits of Kolb's (and Europeans') conceptual framework when Khoikhoi customs fall outside the European paradigms, become inaccessible to European discourse, and are consequently expressed as "absences and lacks" (44). Drawing on J. M. Coetzee's *White Writing: On the Culture of Letters in South Africa*, Pratt uses the following example to back her argument:

Europeans criticized the 'Hottentots' incessantly for their idleness and sloth – that is their failure (refusal) to respond to opportunity (demand) to work for material reward. What is missing, Coetzee argues, is recognition of the internal values of Khoikhoi society and its subsistence lifeways. 'The moment when the travel-writer condemns the Hottentot for doing nothing marks the moment when the Hottentot brings him face to face (if he will only recognize it) with the limits of his own conceptual framework'. (44-45)

The failure of Europeans to recognise differences between their culture and the culture of colonised peoples as a difference rather than a lack or absence, is present in most travel writing of the early colonial era. Despite Kolb's failure in this regard, his writing was of a decidedly humanist nature which would rarely be seen in travel writing produced after the publication of another work by Linnaeus, *Anthropomorpha*, in 1759, in which he expanded his earlier work to provide also a system of classification for animals, including humans (Pratt 45) The term "homo sapiens" was coined by Linnaeus in this work, which marked a shift in travel writing whereby Kolbian anthropological travel writing gave way to writing informed by Linnaeus' system of classification. Here, says Pratt, "the narrative of travel is organized by the cumulative, observational enterprise of documenting geography, flora, and fauna. The encounter with nature, and its conversions into natural history forms the narrative scaffolding" (51). This type of travel narrative is characterised by its scientific nature, where the

landscape is written as uninhabited, unprocessed, unhistoricized, unoccupied even by the travellers themselves. The activity of describing geography and identifying flora and fauna structures as an asocial narrative in which the human presence, European or African, is absolutely marginal, though it was, of course, a constant and essential aspect of travelling itself. (51)

Pratt argues that the "seeing man" described earlier uses natural history as a way of distancing himself (or herself, in the case of female travellers) from the discourse of subjugation present in earlier colonial writing, thus adopting a position of innocent observer through a narrative of anti-conquest.

Pratt, like Mills, argues that women - because they were not seen as active participants in the colonial effort - automatically qualified as innocent observers

and thus become part of the anti-conquest. This naturalised description of colonised people and landscapes as a way of producing knowledge gave Europeans authority over the contact zone; so, even though naturalist travel writers distance themselves from the rhetoric of colonialism and discourse of subjugation and conquest, their very participation in the systemised production of knowledge makes them accomplices of colonial expansion. Pratt explains it as follows:

...the conspicuous innocence of the naturalist, I would suggest, acquires meaning in relation to an assumed guilt of conquest, a guilt the naturalist figure eternally tries to escape, and eternally invokes, if only to distance himself from it once again. Even though the travellers were witnessing the daily realities of the contact zone, even though the institutions of expansionism made their travels possible, the *discourse* of travel that natural history produces, and is produced by, turns on a great longing: for a way of taking possession without subjugation and violence. (57)

According to Pratt, naturalists in the contact zone, while denying that they are active agents of colonialism, tended to produce travel narratives continually interspersed with suggestions as to how the colonial landscape or colonised people could be improved, and so doing confirmed the assumed superiority of Europe and Europeans as opposed to the colonised landscapes and its inhabitants (61). This shows that, as Pratt puts it, "Only through the guilty act of conquest (invasion) can the innocent act of the anti-conquest (seeing) be carried out" again confirming that despite their claims to the contrary, naturalists effectively underwrote the colonial discourse of subjugation (67).

By the end of the eighteenth century another shift in the mode of travel writing had taken place. As Pratt explains, European colonial expansion and the resulting "genocides, mass displacement and enslavements became less and less acceptable as rationalist and humanitarian ideologies took hold" in Europe (74). Europe was forced to justify its involvement in Africa, and this led to the emergence of "new forms of Euroimperial interventions, and new legitimating ideologies: the civilizing mission, scientific racism, and technology-based paradigms of progress and development" (74). Pratt considers Mungo Park's *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa*, which was first published in April 1799, as having introduced sentimental travel in the colonial context. She attributes the new European tendency to view Africa and Africans as victims of colonial

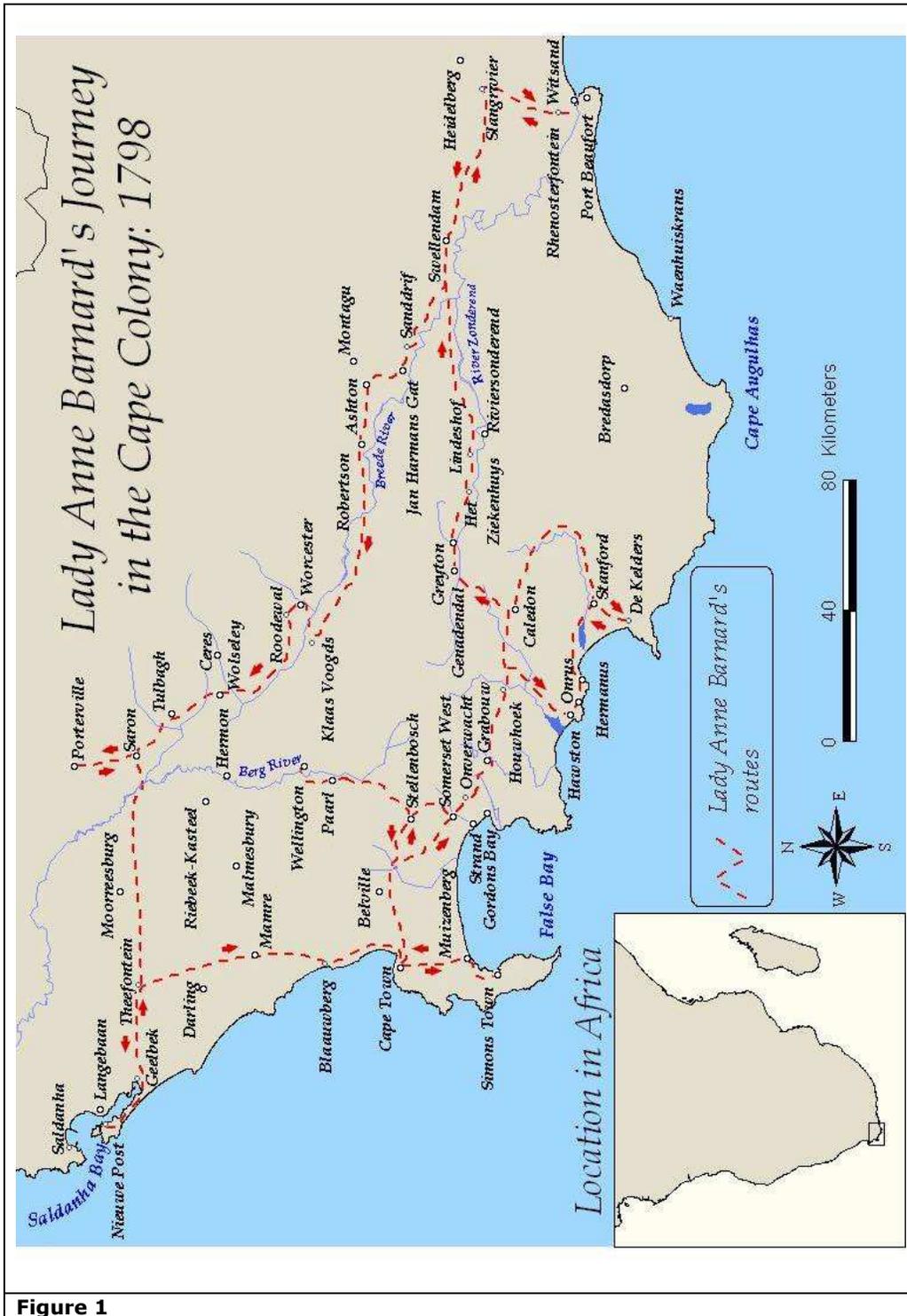
subjugation to the "acceleration of the anti-slavery movement after 1770 and the reconception of Africans as a market rather than a commodity" (71). She contends that sentimental writing on Africa, such as that of Mungo Park, is characterised by the presence of the author's experience, emotions and opinions in the text. Unlike the scientific narrative, the sentimental narrative does not depict the colonial landscape as uninhabited, and the author interacts with the people and landscape. While the sentimental writer, like the scientific writer is, "constructed as a non-interventionist European presence", his or her "innocence lies less", says Pratt, "in self-effacement than in submissiveness and vulnerability" (78). Pratt quotes from Park's book to show how sentimental travel writing is predicated on reciprocity, where Park as an imperial subject is as much an object of interest to the colonised peoples as they are to him. This type of travel writing tries to make sense of the differences between European culture and the culture of the colonised subject rather than portray it as being symptomatic of an inferior race and culture.

The women whose writing will be discussed in this dissertation are all faced with the difficulty of producing meaningful texts recounting what they see and experience on the African continent. Yet, because of the constraints of the discourse of femininity on their writing, there is no clear, stable narrative position from which to do this. Neither the practice of analysing travel writing in its historical context as part of colonial discourse, nor the feminist notion of women's travel writing as a subversive colonial discourse, is new. What this dissertation proposes is to use these two theoretical tropes collaboratively in order to produce a balanced reading of women's travel writing, which will show both the similarities women's travel writing shares with male-produced travel writing and those elements which make it distinctly different.

None of the theorists studied for the purpose of this dissertation include maps showing the travel routes of the women whose writing they study. This is perhaps due to their adamant insistence on avoiding similarities with the coffee-table books and biographies mentioned earlier. Nevertheless, I found this to be a serious shortcoming since I imagine that, like me, other readers would like to be able to see where these women had been. For this reason, each chapter of

this dissertation is prefaced with a map detailing the travels of the woman whose work is discussed in that chapter.

A chapter each is devoted to the work of three women: Lady Anne Barnard (South Africa, 1797 – 1801), Mary Kingsley (West Africa: Gabon and the Congo, 1896 – 1900) and Barbara Greene (Liberia, 1935). Each chapter is introduced with a brief biography of the travel writer under discussion. Literally hundreds of women have written about their travels in Africa. The three women whose work is discussed in this dissertation came from vastly different social backgrounds, and their reasons for coming to Africa range from the purely incidental to the realisation of a childhood dream. Their writing spans almost 200 years, yet it has commonalities with regard to both style and content. These commonalities allow it to be studied as a subversive discourse unique to women's travel writing. Their writing is, however, not blatantly subversive. It would never have been published if it were. When their writing is described as subversive it refers to the fact that these women used the discourse of femininity to their advantage in order to produce socially acceptable texts. As the title of this dissertation indicates, the content of each of these women's writing was largely determined by the social and historical context in which it was produced. In the case of Lady Anne Barnard, this is evidenced by the fact that her *Journals*, which were intended for distribution among her friends and family, differ vastly in content and style from the *Diaries* from which they were derived. Mary Kingsley, on the other hand, used humour and irony to distance herself from situations where the events and behaviour she describes may seem 'unfeminine' or 'improper'. Finally, Barbara Greene frames her work with references to popular culture, rather than literary or psychoanalytic theory, in order to conform to the conservative social expectations of women in post-World War II Europe. This dissertation will show that these three women's travel writing can be seen as subversive because of the strategic manner in which they employ the discourse of femininity.



**Figure 1**

## Chapter 1

### Skirting the Pants: Lady Anne's Fashionably 'Feminine' Accounts of 'Masculine' Matters in the Cape Colony

*In a few words I gave the Admiral a little idea of my style of thinking on such points, and that he was mistaken if he supposed I was one woman, that I was one, two, three different ones, and capable of being more, exactly as the Circumstances I was placed in required, for that if I had a merit in the World it was the facility with which I could fit myself to my Lot, supposing it to be a fixed one, and pick up good amongst the pebbles of Africa, tho' conscious that there was more to be found amongst the granites of the London pavement. He turned round on me rather disconcerted. ~ Lady Anne Barnard*



**Figure 2**  
Lady Anne Barnard

In correspondence with the overall project of the dissertation, this chapter explores Lady Anne's engagement with subversive colonial discourse as a strategy for negotiating the discursive constraints of femininity in her writing. A biography of Lady Anne's life prior to her arrival at the Cape serves to contextualise her social positioning and how it led to her travels.

Lady Anne Barnard (née Lindsay) was born on 8 December 1750 in Balcarres, East Fifeshire, Scotland. She was the eldest of eleven children born to James Lindsay, the fifth Earl of Balcarres, and his wife, Anne Dalrymple (Lenta and Robinson, "Introduction" x - xvi). In the memoir of Lady Anne that prefaces *South Africa a Century Ago*, first published in 1901, W.H. Wilkins describes Lady Anne's mother as "beautiful, clever, and endowed with an almost masculine strength of mind, though somewhat lacking in the feminine virtues of softness and charity" (x). This description in itself speaks volumes with regard to society's expectations and perceptions of women, as it precludes the possibility that women could have strong opinions and still be feminine. Lady Anne Balcarres gave birth to two more daughters and eight sons in the years preceding the death of James Lindsay, and she is often characterised as having been notoriously strict in raising her children, even by eighteenth-century standards (Burman 7; de Klerk 57; Fairbridge1; Wilkins ix).

In his biography of Lady Anne Barnard, *In the Footsteps of Lady Anne Barnard*, Jose Burman speculates whether the mother's strictness and their unhappy family life could have deterred Lady Anne from entering matrimony before the age of forty-two (7). Another, perhaps more popular theory ascribes Lady Anne's late marriage to her affections for William 'Weathercock' Windham, a man she had met socially while living in Berkley Square, London, with her widowed sister, Lady Margaret Fordyce (Burman 8; Fairbridge 3; Wilkins xii). As his nickname indicates, Windham was a fickle man and remained undecided about his relationship with Lady Anne for a number of years, and on one occasion was so rude to her that she decided to give up her romantic aspirations concerning him (Fairbridge 4). Shortly after her decision to abandon hopes of a relationship with Windham, Andrew Barnard – a man twelve years her junior and the son of her long-time friend, the Bishop of Limerick in Ireland - proposed to Lady Anne. She dismissed his suit as a joke and "offered to be an aunt to him" (Burman 9; Fairbridge 4).

Once it became apparent, in 1793, that nothing would come of her tumultuous relationship with Windham, Lady Anne began to regret her rejection of an offer made a number of years earlier by Henry Dundas, a popular young politician and the Solicitor-General for Scotland at the time (Burman 8; Fairbridge 9). In the interim, however, Dundas had married Lady Jane Hope (Burman 8; Fairbridge 8). Lady Anne had declined Dundas' proposal partly because he would not marry before seeing the three daughters in his care settled, and partly because she still hoped to marry Windham. For Andrew Barnard, who had been a regular visitor of Lady Anne's during the four years following his own rejected offer, this proved a blessing.

Barnard had served in the Inniskilling Regiment of the Irish Army for several years, during which time he was stationed in the West Indies and America. He was promoted to the rank of Captain in 1782, but shortly thereafter retired on half-pay due to ill health and joined society life. With his limited income Barnard soon incurred debts of over £2 000 (Burman 9). Appealing to Lady Anne for advice early in 1793, Barnard told her that his father was acquainted with a wealthy widow who had agreed to pay his debts and keep him in comfort if he

would marry her. Knowing the widow to be an elderly woman of a very unpleasant disposition, Lady Anne was noticeably upset by this prospect. Struck by Lady Anne's emotional reaction, Barnard proposed to her again, despite knowledge of her limited financial means (Burman 10; Fairbridge 6; Wilkins xii). She accepted and they were married on 31 October 1793. Barnard's father settled his son's debts and promised the couple a small annual income.

This income, however, was not enough to support the Barnards, and Lady Anne immediately set about finding her husband a suitable government appointment. By then, Henry Dundas was the Secretary of State for War, and Lady Anne prevailed upon him to use his influence to secure an appointment for Barnard. Making no secret of the fact that she thought that Dundas was obligated to help her, as he had married Lady Jane Hope while Lady Anne remained under the impression that he would eventually propose to her again, she wrote Dundas several letters.

When these letters are read alongside her *Cape Journals* and letters from the Cape, it becomes apparent that, while Lady Anne constantly apologises for her feminine perspective and lack of a more objective, factual – masculine, for that matter – knowledge when writing about the Cape, she makes no apologies for her feminine appeals to Dundas concerning employment for her husband. Despite *having chosen* to refuse his proposal, she implies that had he married her, and not Lady Jane Hope, she would not have been in her current precarious financial position. She consciously adopts the position of a helpless woman at his mercy.

It was only after the Dutch had ceded the Cape of Good Hope to the British in September of 1795, and the Home Government assigned him to appoint a colonial administration, that Dundas found himself in the position to offer Andrew Barnard employment. He appointed the Earl of Macartney as Governor and Captain-General of the Cape of Good Hope, and one may infer from the letter Lady Anne wrote to Dundas on 30 April 1796, that he had mentioned to her the possibility of offering Barnard the position of Colonial Secretary at the Cape. Despite earlier claims that they would be appreciative of *any* position Dundas could offer Barnard, Lady Anne did not appear happy with this particular

offer. In reply to her objections, Dundas said that it was the only position he could, and indeed would, offer Barnard (Wilkins xvii). He had thought that Lady Anne, with her love for entertaining, would particularly like the opportunity this position afforded her, since Lord Macartney would not be accompanied by his wife and Lady Anne would act as first lady in the Colony (Burman 10; Fairbridge 26; Wilkins xvii).

Lady Anne Barnard's wrote throughout her life, not only while she was at the Cape. While this chapter is mainly concerned with her *Cape Journals*, the content and style of her *Diaries*, the original writing from which she transcribed the *Journals*, will first be discussed to demonstrate the extent to which Lady Anne was aware of her reading audience, and used the discourses available to her to produce a text which she thought was meaningful, interesting, informative, and accurate. I will draw on the work done by Margaret Lenta and Dorothy Driver for this purpose. The rest of the chapter is devoted to discussing how Lady Anne positions herself ideologically to present a socially acceptable textual self when she comments on what she sees and experiences at the Cape. Some of the differences between the original Lady Anne's original *Diaries* and the edited *Journals* she later distributed among her friends and family are pointed out to draw attention to the fact that the sometimes overly humble and feminine authorial position Lady Anne adopts was a strategy she employed to ensure that she could write what she wanted without overtly overstepping the boundaries imposed on her writing by the discourse of femininity. The extract from Lady Anne's *Diaries* which is quoted below the title of this Chapter demonstrates that, contrary to the textual persona she sometimes presents in her *Journals*, she had confidence in her own opinions and abilities.

Although best known for the letters and journals written during her stay in the Cape and her travels in the South African Cape Colony, Lady Anne corresponded with a wide circle of family and friends throughout her life and also kept a fairly regular, detailed diary in Scotland and later in London. Her autobiographical writing consists of two parts; her *Memoir* in six volumes, covering her early life prior to her marriage to Barnard and the period after her return from Africa, which has never been published, and her three volumes of *Cape Journals*. While Lady Anne's *Cape Journals* and the letters written to Henry Dundas from the

Cape are the focus of this chapter, Margaret Lenta's essay "The Shape of a Woman's Life: Lady Anne Barnard's *Memoir*" is relevant to this discussion, as it shows that throughout her writing life Lady Anne was aware of her reading audience and their expectations. While the information in both the *Introduction* and *Memoir* in Wilkins' *South Africa a Century Ago* is useful, editor H.J. Anderson altered Lady Anne's writing considerably, changing not only her original grammar and spelling,<sup>2</sup> but also the content, thus rendering the letters reproduced in that publication unsuitable for use in this study.

At the age of 65, when she had become too infirm to travel, Lady Anne settled in London and started revising her letters and diaries into a *Memoir* of her life, which she intended to be read by friends and family, but never for publication (Lenta, "The Shape of a Woman's Life" 101). In the revised *Memoir*, titled *The History of the Family of St Aubin and the Memoirs of Louisa Melford*, as well as in her *Cape Journals*, Lady Anne uses what she terms *feigned names*<sup>3</sup> for all the people she describes and corresponds with (Lenta, "The Shape of a Woman's Life" 106). In the introduction<sup>4</sup> to her *Memoir* Lady Anne explains that she had done this out of a sense of "delicacy to [her] contemporaries"; however, by the time she started revising she had "outlived almost the whole and caution ceased to be necessary", and thus she lists feigned names opposite the real in each volume of her *Memoir* and *Cape Journals* (Barnard quoted in Lenta, "The Shape of a Woman's Life" 106).

Diaries dating from her stay at the Cape were revised and transcribed separately into what are now her *Cape Journals*. She did this at considerable expense, giving up her carriage and horses in order to save money to employ

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<sup>2</sup> In her "Literary Appraisal" of Lady Anne's *Cape Journals* Driver notes that one of the reasons for Anderson's editing of the text was ideological; to protect "Dutch settlers from the brunt of Lady Anne's disparaging remarks", and she comments wryly that "no such cuts were made on behalf of potential readers among the country's black population" (2).

<sup>3</sup> She substituted her family's name, Lindsay, with St Aubin, and her own with Louisa Melford, even on her diaries' covers. In the introduction to the first volume of her *Cape Journals* she explains that, though the use of pseudonyms are no longer necessary, she will continue their use for the sake of uniformity. Real names are used in the Van Riebeeck Society's editions of Lady Anne's *Cape Journals* and *Diaries*, and as I primarily make use of these texts I will follow suit.

<sup>4</sup> Lady Anne wrote the introductions to her *Memoir* and *Cape Journals* when she revised them, not while writing the originals.

"transcribers ... portrait painters ... bookbinders"<sup>5</sup>. Margaret Lenta makes the compelling point<sup>6</sup> that, despite her self-deprecating decrees and perfunctory prohibition of publication, the beautiful, durable, and luxurious formats of the *Memoir* and *Journals* strongly suggest that Lady Anne did not wish her work to remain unread or to be without influence, even though she may have been willing to conform to the prejudices of her class and period with regard to the impropriety of women publishing (Lenta and Robinson, "Introduction" xvi).

In "The Shape of a Woman's Life: Lady Anne Barnard's *Memoir*" Lenta discusses the *Memoir* with regard to both its style and her reasons for revising her writing. Lenta begins by stating that Lady Anne's writing is significant, not only because of its sheer volume, but also because "the mixture of intentions and tones within it suggests that its author had several purposes in her narrative, rather than the single intention of self-portraiture" (102). Lenta's argument reinforces the thesis of this dissertation as she says that "a woman who decided to write the story of her life in the early nineteenth century had to be aware of a reluctance in her audience to receive her work as interesting, if it was entirely domestic, or legitimate, if it suggested that she had played a public role" (102). According to Lenta, when "a woman of the early nineteenth century felt that her life story deserved to be recorded, but could not assume that the reading public would agree with her, she had several courses available to her. She need not publish; she might simply bequeath the diaries to her descendants in the hope that some of them might choose to read them" or she might "settle for a tiny readership in her own lifetime and fragment her story into letters" (103). Lady Anne chose another option, "recast[ing] her diaries into the form of a memoir,<sup>7</sup> but [forbidding] publication and restrict[ing] its circulation to a restricted group – that of her extended family and their friends" (102). Thus Lady Anne's *Memoir* "stands midway between the published life story, itself constituting in the period

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<sup>5</sup> Lenta mentions this in both her essay "The Shape of a Woman's Life: Lady Anne Barnard's *Memoir*" (101) and the introduction to Lady Anne's *Cape Journals* (xiv), indicating that it appears on an unnumbered page at the beginning of the first volume of Lady Anne's *Memoir*.

<sup>6</sup> Lenta completed the introduction to Lady Anne's *Cape Journals* since Dr A.M.L. Robinson, who edited and annotated the *Cape Journals*, was unable to do so due to ill health (x). This assessment of Lady Anne's intent is Lenta's, who indicates in a footnote that Dr Robinson "is more inclined to take Lady Anne's instructions at face value" (xvi).

<sup>7</sup> The term *memoir* was used until the 1840's when the term *autobiography* became current (Lenta, "The Shape of a Woman's Life" 102).

a dangerous self-display in the case of a woman whose principal characteristic is not piety, and the collection not intended for the public eye" (103).

Lenta maintains that Lady Anne wanted to record the story of her life and achievements because she was aware that "roles related to class and gender [had] changed in her lifetime" (103). Lenta continues by saying that "[h]er willingness to present herself as rejecting the role of daughter, which in her youth would have implied passivity and subjection, and as unable, in Scotland, to marry ... imply that she discerned, however vaguely, that new possibilities for women were available, though difficult of achievement", but that "women's life-writing of the period [did] not offer her a suitable model" (106).

According to Lenta, the emergent genre of the novel had an "enormous influence ... on women's perception of their lives", and it was Lady Anne's reading of fiction that lead her to recognise the possibility of using the pattern of the female novel, which Lady Anne refers to in her *Memoir* on several occasions,<sup>8</sup> to "give unity and focus to her matter" (105). Lenta suggests that the female novel offered Lady Anne "a way of understanding and presenting her own experience" (104). The use of pseudonyms for the people she writes about in her *Memoir* and *Cape Journals* and in the title of her *Memoir, The History of the Family of St Aubin and the Memoirs of Louisa Melford*, suggests, Lenta points out, that it could be read as fiction by those who prefer to read it as such (106). Lenta argues that, by adopting the strategy of 'fictionalising' her *Memoir*, Lady Anne "persuades her readers to understand and sympathise with her actions which many moralists in the period would have censured, but which the female novel had accustomed readers to accept" (104 – 105).

Lady Anne's motivation for writing is further illuminated in Lenta's essay "All the Lighter Parts: Lady Anne Barnard's Letters from Cape Town". Lenta derives her title from a journal entry in which Lady Anne records Andrew Barnard's response when she asked him whether he had written to Dundas: "Lord M very properly takes the business part and the accounts of everything upon himself & you write

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<sup>8</sup> Lenta uses the term *female novel* for eighteenth century novels such as Richardson's *Pamela* and *Clarissa*, as well as Fanny Burney's *Evelina* which deals with the 'problems of young women' (Lenta, "The Shape of a Woman's Life"104).

all the lighter parts, so what is left for me?" (Barnard quoted in Lenta, "All the Lighter Parts" 59) Here Lenta comments on "Andrew Barnard's acceptance of his wife's correspondence with Dundas as an important part of their joint function" at the Cape, stating that

[t]he decision that financial matters and those which relate purely to administration are 'heavier' than those with which Lady Anne deals may be seen as a way of tapping female talents without allocating defined recognition to them. But the sense that her perceptions and judgements were 'lighter' operated to free Lady Anne, to the advantage of Dundas, to comment on every area of life at the Cape. (59)

In the introduction to the third volume of *The Cape Journals of Lady Anne Barnard 1797 - 1798*, which deals with her travels in the interior of Africa, Lady Anne claims that she has "no more sense respecting the benefit of a certain description of Colony can be to the mother country, than the cat", and that she regrets that she may bore her readers with the inclusion of too much detail, but that she does so "[i]n consequence of the request of Dundas" (293). Jose Burman also suggests that Dundas appointed Andrew Barnard as the Colonial Secretary at the Cape despite his lack of experience and qualification because he wanted "a private and accurate account of happenings there", which Lady Anne could be trusted to provide (10)<sup>9</sup>. He even offers the opinion that Lady Anne herself suggests this to Dundas in one of her letters when she writes that "perhaps some use might be derived from [her] being there to those very plans [he] will have a pleasure in seeing carried into execution in the best manner" (Barnard quoted in Burman 10).

Lady Anne was without a doubt uniquely qualified to act as Dundas's unofficial correspondent at the Cape. Before her marriage, living first in Edinburgh with her mother, and later in London with her sister, she lead an active social life, and "their house became a social centre, and a favourite resort of some of the most famous literary and political men of the day" (Wilkins xiii), such as Henry Dundas, the then Prime Minister William Pitt, and even the Prince of Wales, later King George IV (Fairbridge 2 - 3). The exposure to this society made her more

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<sup>9</sup> Jose Burman's *In the Footsteps of Lady Anne Barnard* provides an interesting overview of Lady Anne's life and writing, but seems to be intended for the casual reader rather than the academic. Burman quotes from Lady Anne's writing without citing references, making it difficult to locate the specific quotations he uses.

informed than her female contemporaries about social and political issues. Lenta remarks:

[t]he truth of her position seems to be that she has been the companion – one might call her the discussant – of able, well-informed men for most of her life and has necessarily, though perhaps informally, acquired the information and experience that fits her to observe and assess matters that in a segregated society might belong to men only. (“All the Lighter Parts” 70)

It is thus not unlikely that Dundas would have seen in Lady Anne the potential of a valuable correspondent at the Cape.

In “Degrees of Freedom: Lady Anne Barnard’s *Cape Diaries*”, Lenta compares the content of Lady Anne’s original text, *Cape Diaries*,<sup>10</sup> to that of her *Cape Journals* with regard to style and the selective inclusion of information. She finds that in her diaries Lady Anne is “significantly franker” (59). Lenta comments:

[i]n the Journal, Lady Anne is always deferential towards her husband’s opinions, and emphatic that she has no share in his work as Secretary. She is less guarded in the diary: ‘Mr B shewd me the letter which he wrote to Mr Dundas,’ she notes in September 1799, and elsewhere writes of herself and Colonel Crawford as toning down an angry letter written by Barnard. She also records a story which her sister has relayed to her from London, of how Henry Dundas’s wife, Lady Jane, asked if her husband was satisfied with Mr Barnard in his department, replied ‘Mr D thought Lady Anne the most official of the two’ (D.3.5.1799). This was the kind of verdict which it was important that the Barnards avoid, and in all her revised writing, as well as in the letters to Dundas, Lady Anne emphasises her own ignorance and Barnard’s knowledge of public affairs. (60 - 61)

Lady Anne herself did not like this pronouncement by Lady Jane. After receiving the letter from her sister to which Lenta refers in the above extract, Lady Anne makes the following entry in her diary:

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<sup>10</sup> Lady Anne’s *Cape Diaries* were published for the first time by the Van Riebeeck Society in two volumes in 1999, edited by Lenta along with Basil le Cordeur. These were never revised, since they were never intended for publication or to be read by others. The originals are currently in the possession of the Earl of Crawford in Scotland. Lenta conducted the research for her essay, *Degrees of Freedom: Lady Anne Barnard’s Cape Diaries*, which was published in 1992, at the National Library of Scotland and at Balcarres, the Lindsay’s Earldom.

I the official person! poor I who never know any thing & can appear *Becky*<sup>11</sup> sometimes from an ignorance of common events which I hear by accident, Mr B never telling us women any thing – it is not his way. I wish, that is to say I begin to wish it had been more so, I might have helpd this Regt misunderstanding – this paragraph in M’s letter prevented me from showing it to him, it woud have been ill judged – what a pity Lord M’s letters by Col Craufurd were lost, in them he expresses himself fully of Mr B. I hope he will do so equally in conversation tho one never knows how a politician will behave as to honesty when his superior shews he has formed an opposite idea – Ill hope the best however tho without much reliance on him. How ill I take to have credit given me on scores I don’t deserve & to see it through the means of my own more active attentions bestowed on me & withheld where it is due. (*Cape Diaries I* 126 - 127)

Ironically, while defending Andrew Barnard’s competency by insisting on her own ignorance regarding “publick affairs” and “common events”, Lady Anne betrays the very knowledge she denies having when she refers to the content of Lord Macartney’s lost official correspondence with Henry Dundas in which he “expresses himself fully of Mr B.” and with which she is clearly familiar. She seems oblivious to the ambiguity of her defence of Andrew Barnard when she is simultaneously self-deprecating, by distancing herself and “us women” in general from being knowledgeable, and expressing her doubts about Lord Macartney’s ability to be honest in communicating his opinions of Andrew Barnard if he thought that Dundas would disagree.

Lady Anne’s emphasis on her own lack of knowledge (Barnard, *Cape Journals* 293) on which Lenta comments, is characteristic of her writing in her *Cape Journals* and her letters to Dundas, which are interspersed with apologies for what she refers to as her “miserable female notions on any thing” and again later as her “poor little impressions & expectations” (*The Letters of Lady Anne Barnard to Henry Dundas* 35, 66). This tendency to apologise for her writing indicates that Lady Anne is aware of the fact that she is writing as a woman on a traditionally male topic, and by showing that she is aware that her opinions may not be valued as much as a man’s opinions would be, she makes her writing more acceptable to her readership.

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<sup>11</sup> A simple country girl (Lenta and le Cordeur, *Cape Diaries I* 126).

This is never more apparent than in her letters to Henry Dundas. Although they deal with more or less the same subject-matter as the *Cape Journals*, in her letters to Dundas Lady Anne pays more attention to governmental affairs. This proved to be very difficult, as Lady Anne was always aware that, despite her knowledge of such matters, it was still a subject reserved for men. Lenta holds that the letters to Dundas

reveal her engaged in a difficult balancing act, between her wish to inform the Minister as fully as possible and her fear of a trespass that will be resented. It is clear that Dundas valued her communications: the letters survive because he preserved them, tied up together at his home, Melville Castle. Nevertheless, they also show Lady Anne's consciousness that she is a woman, barred from power of any kind, though not from influence. The boundaries between these two – the legitimate exercise of influence and the presumptuous reaching for power, are sometimes blurred in Lady Anne's letters, but she is always anxious not to be found trespassing on male preserves. ("All the Lighter Parts" 58)

Examples of her ambiguous position when communicating with Dundas are apparent when she writes to him about the way in which Rear-Admiral Thomas Pringle handled a naval mutiny at Simon's Bay, and in her reports on Major General Francis Dundas who was Acting Governor following Lord Macartney's departure. About the first she writes:

women may say anything without presumption, how well I remember saying to the admiral that if I were him I should be greatly tempted to tell the Navy that tho I had received no official intelligence from England yet I was apt to believe that there were certain benefits to be bestowed on the seamen & that whatever they were I believed I might confidently assure them that they would share in all such – a few exhilarating words such as these I foolishly thought might have been said without taking too much responsibility on himself. (*Letters of Lady Anne Barnard* 68)

Lady Anne carefully establishes that hers is only a woman's opinion "without presumption" which she "foolishly" ventures, yet the fact that she feels confident enough to include it in her letter suggests that she believes her opinions to be both valid and valuable. Lenta argues that this strategy of belittling her own advice allows her opinions to be ignored as being 'female' and indicates "avoidance of the appearance of assertiveness" ("All the Lighter Parts" 63).

While Henry Dundas and Lord Macartney did not recognise Lady Anne's writing as official reports, they did not disregard it completely. However, this changed once Francis Dundas assumed Lord Macartney's responsibilities. On one specific occasion when Lady Anne suggested that the sailors who were imprisoned following the mutiny should be treated more humanely and tried "to obtain for them the liberty of working at half price for the Army and Navy or for the Shops" so they could have some money with which to buy necessities, her suggestion was approved of by all except Francis Dundas. She writes that "his reply to my suit was hard and haughty ... he was 'a good deal surprised how I could urge such a request on him' " (*Cape Journals* 270). Unlike Henry Dundas, Francis Dundas is not willing to let a woman interfere in public matters in such a blatant way, even on humanitarian grounds.

Despite her constant apologies, Lady Anne comes across as a very self-confident writer in both her *Cape Journals* and letters to Dundas. Concerning Lady Anne's efforts to revise her writing before distributing it, Lenta says that "[h]er self-confidence never blinded her to the fact that women were extremely ill-advised to break conventional rules, at least in public" ("Degrees of Freedom" 59). Lady Anne's writing is informed throughout by what Dorothy Driver terms her "awareness of her gendered position" ("Lady Anne Barnard's *Cape Journals* and the concept of self-othering" 47), and in order to navigate this position, according to Lenta, "in her letters to Dundas especially and even in the Journal she has worked out a technique of overt deference to the views of the men of her time and circle which seems to have gone far to make her views acceptable" ("Degrees of Freedom" 60). In support of this statement Lenta quotes from a diary entry referring to a letter Lady Anne wrote to Dundas about the frontier wars of 1799:

Finding it necessary to transcribe over and over to get my letter to Mr D, and at last I could not answer for its being ill received by him. It takes a liberty to be sure by talking in a womanish way of those sacred matters call'd politics and it rambles out some foolish daring Ideas which perhaps have no sense in them, but I must write as I think and feel at the time. (Barnard quoted in Lenta, "Degrees of Freedom" 60)

Lady Anne's continual self-editing is symptomatic of her awareness of the context in which she is writing. On the one hand she is limited by her gender, but on the other hand she feels the responsibility of being the first woman to relate her experience of life at the Cape.

For Driver, the importance of Lady Anne's writing is located in the way in which she negotiates writing from this precarious position. Driver contends that Lady Anne's *Cape Journals* "modify current readings of Cape colonial discourse: rather than simply reproducing established categories of gender, race and class, the journals show ideology *in construction* in eighteenth century South Africa as Barnard self-consciously deals with the discourses at her disposal" ("Lady Anne Barnard's *Cape Journals* and the concept of self-othering" 46). Driver introduces the term "self-othering" to colonial discourse by looking at the different discursive positions Lady Anne adopts in her writing. Driver argues:

her writing presents different facets of the self, as if the different speaking positions that constitute her subjectivity are engaged in negotiation (or contestation) with one another, the self engaged in dialogue with an 'otherness' within. I call the process 'self othering'. Moreover gender, race and class reveal themselves at their points of intersection (rather than as discreet categories), thus disturbing the binary oppositions of 'self' and 'other' which have formed the basis of much colonial discourse theory. (46)

Moreover, Driver finds Lady Anne's writing to be of importance since it contradicts official reports by commissioned travel writers, such as John Barrow. She argues that Lady Anne's "awareness of her gendered position makes all the difference" (47), and that at times Lady Anne is aware that, while the peoples of the Cape are *other* to her, she is just as *other* to them. Driver sets out to "offer a reading which looks beyond stereotypes of 'self' and 'other' in order to disclose their moments of simultaneous unsettlement" (47), and identifies three characteristics of Lady Anne's writing which inform the concept of "self-othering".

The first of these is the "different discursive positions" Lady Anne assumes (47). She refers to a telling incident which takes place shortly after the Barnards' arrival at the Cape where Lady Anne clearly shows that she is aware that

different circumstances require different behaviour from a woman in her position. In her journal Lady Anne recounts a conversation she had with Rear-Admiral Thomas Pringle, who had been in command of the Cape Station since October of 1796 (*Cape Journals* 259). Shortly after their arrival at the Cape, Lady Anne meets Pringle and asks him "How am I to like this Place Admiral?" (*Cape Journals* 164). Pringle's impression of the Cape is that it is inferior to life 'back home' in every way and that Lady Anne, as a woman who has known "the best Society" could not possibly find anything there to her liking (*Cape Journals* 164). Lady Anne, however, is not intimidated by this discouraging prediction, and reveals her self-confidence as both a woman and a writer in her answer to him when she writes:

[H]e was mistaken if he supposed I was one woman, that I was one, two, three different ones, and capable of being more, exactly as the Circumstances I was placed in required, for that if I had a merit in the World it was the facility with which I could fit myself to my Lot, supposing it to be a fixed one, and pick up good amongst the pebbles of Africa, tho' conscious that there was more to be found amongst the granites of the London pavement. (*Cape Journals* 164)

Despite Pringle's subsequent response, when he says that "you may perhaps like the Cape I see, that is to say you are resolved to do so, and will say you do out of Obstinacy, but you will be the *only* English human being who does", Lady Anne is determined not to be influenced by his negativity and assures him that she "hoped to find that he had seen things thro' some prejudicial Medium, that the cause of his disgust would vanish, and a cause for hers never appear" (164).

Aside from Driver's reading, another important point of interest arises from this diary entry: Lady Anne's determination not to be prejudiced about the Cape. Despite the fact that Pringle is a man, there in an official governmental capacity of some consequence, who speaks with the authority afforded to him not only by his position but also by the knowledge of someone who has lived at the Cape for almost a year, she does not feel obliged to accept his views as accurate without further investigation. In the preface to her *Cape Journals*, Lady Anne promises her readers that she will only describe things that she has seen with her "own eyes" and that she will attempt to verify the truth about "things [she] must take

on the authority of others" (21 - 22), and here it is evident that she is determined to keep this promise.

An additional characteristic of Lady Anne's writing which contributes to Driver's concept of "self-othering" pertains to instances where Lady Anne "suddenly recognises herself as looked upon as if she were the 'other' or not even looked upon at all" ("Lady Anne Barnard's *Cape Journals* and the concept of self-othering" 48). When Lady Anne realises that she is just as 'other' to the inhabitants of the country as they are to her, she also realises, if only for a moment, that her "status as superior in this unknown land" (48) is subjective. This induces her to look at herself from the vantage point of her 'others'. This "occasional propensity not just to recognise but also inhabit the position of the 'other'" is another aspect of Lady Anne's writing which informs Driver's theory of "self-othering" (48).

Driver's reading of Lady Anne's work is useful to this study, as it exposes the unstable position the woman travel writer occupies in colonial discourse. Driver summarises Lady Anne's position as follows:

Barnard, as writing subject, fluctuates between the so-called 'masculine' and 'feminine' positions, and between other positions designated in terms of 'centre' and 'margin', 'culture' and 'nature', 'self' and 'other'. [...] She may position herself as foreign, as uneducated, and as a woman – triply unauthorised to write about 'Africa' – but then she may assume an especial authority by virtue of her feminine position. Whereas the official accounts written by men deploy a self-assured tone and a relatively stable perspective, Barnard's account is more hesitant, her quest for truth deeply entwined with her self-definition in terms of gender. ("Lady Anne Barnard's *Cape Journals* and the concept of self-othering" 60)

As a British woman in the Colony, Lady Anne is afforded the authority of the colonising power, but at the same time her authority is limited by her gendered position. When writing she has to adapt her discursive position to suit both the situation she describes and her defining context. Andrew Barnard is at the Cape in an official capacity. Lady Anne is there as his wife, who 'just happens' to be a capable and curious writer. She is constantly aware that she must always be first a woman, a wife and a hostess, and then a writer, an observer, and

commentator on the subject of the Colony. With this in mind, I should like now to look at how Lady Anne negotiates this difficult task in her writing.

In the preface to the first volume of her *Cape Journals*, entitled *The Journal of Anne Barnard on her Voyage to the Cape of Good Hope On board the Sir Edward Hughes*, Lady Anne writes that while "there is much exaggeration" and "in some accounts of the Cape [...] that others have been given by Men of Science [...] their observations have been too much confined to the Natural History", no one knows, consequently, "how little or how much [of it] to believe" (*Cape Journals* 21). Lady Anne professes that, in her own account, she will at all times be truthful, and that she will "draw & describe every thing [she] see[s] with [her] own eyes, in the best manner [she] can" (21). Although she cannot promise "not to repeat a few Lies" of things she "must take on the authority of others", she herself "shall make none, nor even repeat without endeavouring to be sure of [her] Ground" (21 - 22). In the preface to the second volume of her *Cape Journals*, she reiterates her desire to be truthful and writes that she wishes, through her journals, "that Africa may speak for itself, by a narrative fairly given and by Sketches faithfully taken" (145). Similarly, she prefaces the last volume of her *Cape Journals* with the claim that, prior to her travels, she had "never read a line on the subject of Africa" since she wanted her observations of the continent to be "genuinely [her] own" (293).

Lady Anne is clearly anxious to convince her readers of her credibility as a travel writer. However, she undermines her attempts to establish credibility by the constant belittling of her own work. In the preface to the *Cape Journals*, she writes that she intends to fill her journal with "as many small instructions as [she] can" so it would be "of use to Friends who may in future accompany their Husbands" and to entertain "[her]self & those [she] love[s]" (22). She then describes her journals as "unweeded from any nonsense" and proceeds to write that "[i]f [she] can have as much credit for [her] Journal as a Workman would, who had made tolerable bricks with hardly any straw, & in so doing had been useful, it is the utmost height of [her] Ambition" (22). The comparison of her writing to the labours of a "workman" and her express desire that it should be "useful" makes apparent the fact that Lady Anne thinks of her writing as work. Throughout her *Cape Journals*, she portrays herself as being industrious,

whether through her efforts as the "official hostess of the British administration" (Lenta, "All the Lighter Parts" 62) at the Cape who has to act as a "binding Cement" (Barnard, *Cape Journals* 177) to "bring the Nations together" (178), in her domestic capacity as a "famous good Housekeeper" (185) and "careful house vrow" (297), or her continuous occupation sketching the Cape and its peoples. Yet, her apologetic references to her writing as "unweeded from nonsense", providing readers with "some little entertainment but very little useful information (145) and "silly" (294), along with her repeated prohibition of "the publication now or ever of any work of [hers]" (22), and the claim that she knows her "own deficiencies" (22), indicate that she is aware that as a woman, she cannot presume her 'work' to have more than novelty value for its reader.

This self-abasement is also evident at times when she is clearly addressing Dundas in her *Cape Journals*. Lady Anne makes explicit that she does not claim to know anything of importance herself, and that she can only comment on what she sees, leaving the decision making up to him. One such example can be found in the second volume of the *Cape Journals* when, after accompanying Andrew Barnard on an official visit to Stellenbosch, and careful first to establish a desire to fulfil his wishes as motive for the correspondence, she writes:

You bid me throw out opinions as they occur, and let you find out whether there is any thing in them or not, was it not for this encouragement to chattering would I venture to send you the details of every thing so unreservedly as I do, without trying first to discover whether the place is to be kept on or not in order to give you the opinions that *you would like to receive*, but this would not be honest dealing between you and me, I shall therefore conclude this long letter by saying that when I have seen a little more of the interior of the Country I shall be able to say more, but as far as I have already seen on this little trip, barren and uncultivated as it now is, it strikes me as having powers in itself to become one of the finest countries in the World! How far it will be the wisdom of England to encourage it to be so, is for Englands Sovereign and Ministers to determine, or whether it will be judged most for the advantage of our possessions in India to keep it subordinate so that it may never interfere, while it aids, and assists the other, is a question too great for me to venture a thought on. (256)

Despite the traditionally male nature of the information Lady Anne conveys to Dundas, she retains a feminine perspective by referring to her writing as "chattering" and through ending her report by deferring any judgement to him.

Nevertheless, Lenta comments that the 1790s, when Lady Anne was writing her *Cape Journals*, mark a time when "roles related to class and gender" were changing ("The Shape of a Woman's Life" 106). Driver contends that, in opposition to the reigning ideology of femininity, the emergence of feminism and "radical texts" such as Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* "offered another way of being a woman in the late eighteenth century, which meant that women had access to different perspectives, albeit contradictory, on themselves and the world" ("Lady Anne Barnard's *Cape Journals* and the concept of self-othering" 52). This could explain Lady Anne's apparent rejection of the "more crippling feminine norms of the time" (Driver, "Lady Anne Barnard's *Cape Journals* and the concept of self-othering" 52) by way of her representation of her travelling companion, Anne Elizabeth Barnard, Andrew Barnard's cousin, who accompanied them to the Cape. One cannot fail to notice that, throughout her *Cape Journals*, Lady Anne is ideologically positioned in opposition to Anne Elizabeth. Shortly after their arrival at the Cape, Lady Anne comments on "poor" Anne Elizabeth's "disappointment" and the "lowness of her Spirits" (*Cape Journals* 168). Lady Anne's only recorded complaint concerns their Dutch hosts when she comments that she "could not always withstand the effects of their constant and potent dullness" (169), but this she attributes to "the awkwardness of receiving a *Ladyship*" and "a sort of anxious carefulness of having every thing *proper*" (159). Other than this, she claims to be "Full of contentment", "in good health, flattered by every thing [she] met with, pleased with the exotic novelty of the place, with the hilarity in the air which [she] sensibly found acting on [her] own mind and constitution" (168).

Once they move into the Castle, Lady Anne sees that a significant amount of work would have to be done "to render this dreary Mansion Habitable" (175). She writes:

I of course called forth all the little invention I was Mistress of to cost Government as little as I could, being strictly *honest* I believe when I say, that when I find myself entrusted with the expenditure of money not my own, be it the money of the Lady Britannia or private property, I am absolutely more disposed to be careful than if it were *my own*. (176)

Lady Anne clearly intends to be perceived as an industrious and judicious subject of the British Empire. She writes to Dundas that, owing to the many guests they have to accommodate, and the domestic exertions their comfort requires, she is "obliged to be more of an *usefull* than an *accomplished* female" (*Letters of Lady Anne Barnard* 50). In contrast, Anne Elizabeth "conceived that all would sprout up of *itself*" (*Cape Journals* 228) and is described as sulking about the conditions and invariably finding "some [or] other lawful impediment" (175) with each of the rooms available for her in the Castle.

When Lady Anne wants to ascend Table Mountain "where no white Woman had ever been but Lady Anne Monson who had a little of [Lady Anne's] turn for *seeing*, what is *seldom seen*" (*Cape Journals* 217 - 218), Lady Anne wears a pair of her husband's trousers under her dress so she can climb without exposing herself immodestly. Wearing Andrew Barnard's pants has a dual purpose, simultaneously preserving her femininity by covering any part of her which might be inappropriately exposed while she is climbing, and enabling her to participate in the traditionally male activity of exploration. Lady Anne is enthusiastic to explore the new country and "bounded up the rock", earning the smiling admiration of their guide, Mentor, who called her a "Braave Vrouw" (220). By contrast, the "fair" Anne Elizabeth is reported to have "declined being of the party", as "there was no Ball to be found on the top of the Mountain" (218). The depiction of Anne Elizabeth – passive, unproductive and in constant need of help and guidance – is overtly feminine throughout Lady Anne's writing, especially in the third volume of her *Cape Journals*, which concerns their tour of the interior. Johnnie Dalrymple, Lady Anne's cousin, has to accompany them as Anne Elizabeth's Aid-de-Camp, and while Lady Anne, "the careful house vrow" (297), anticipates their every need while packing supplies for the journey, Anne Elizabeth brings only a "knitting case containing some pins, pen and Ink and a half finished purse" (299). With reference to sanitation facilities, Anne Elizabeth is the one who "entered a most terrible complaint here of a want which she finds in every Dutch House" (309), while Lady Anne makes no complaint, but philosophically "recommended 'the World was wide enough'" (309).

When their wagon overturns on a particularly rough stretch of road, Lady Anne manages to crawl out unassisted, but Anne Elizabeth needs to be rescued by Andrew Barnard. While the men work to get the wagon on its wheels again, Lady Anne makes herself useful by "walking about to discover if [she] could see what sort of road was before [them]" (314). Anne Elizabeth makes no effort to help but "sat on a stone, the Statue of patience, condoling with herself over the bruises of her white marble arm" (314). Lady Anne completes the image of Anne Elizabeth as a helpless, passive female when she describes her as "a complete confection" in consequence of a jar of ginger which had spilled over her during the accident (314). On another occasion Anne Elizabeth "retired to be in silent despair" (385) when their dinner at a Dutch farm house was not to her liking, and Lady Anne comments that she "was sometimes vexed however to see how much out of sorts poor Anne Elizabeth was with the Journey" (386). Lady Anne experiences "all those little sort of ridiculous inconveniences" as "*Jests*", whereas Anne Elizabeth experiences them as "*Injuries*" (386). Lady Anne's strategy of favourable comparison of her active interest and good humour to Anne Elizabeth's statue-like passivity is effective in this context, but when she writes on a subject where men are considered to be authoritative, her opinions are rendered of secondary importance.

This is evident in Lady Anne's portrayal of herself in relation to John Barrow, who was commissioned by the government to travel to the interior of the Colony and report on its potential. Barrow happened to be at the Cape at the time of the Barnards' arrival, and accompanied them on their mission to explore the mountain. In her quest to gather information, Lady Anne asks him to "explain to [her] all that [she] see[s] before [her], and what [she does] *not* see" (221). She claims to have forgotten the particulars of his explanation, but writes that "he explained every thing so intelligibly to [her] abominable capacity (for such matters) as to prevent [her] from appearing very ignorant afterwards, when the subjects were discussed" (222), clearly positioning herself as naturally ignorant with regard to anything approaching 'serious' knowledge. In the last volume of the *Cape Journals* she provides various descriptions of the landscape and comments on its potential, but in the presence of this "Man of infinite Charts and Maps" she defers responsibility and refers her readers to Barrow's "scientific accounts" (222). While Barrow "darted at plants & fossils in hopes of finding

something to report favourably of to the Governor" (220), she is suitably occupied with drawing and overseeing the preparation of food for the climbers. Later, while the men rob the landscape of its natural beauty when they "shoot birds" (221), her feminine pursuit of digging up bulbs is intended to preserve beauty by sending the bulbs back to England for her sister, and by attempting to plant some in her own garden.

After Barrow delivers the verdict that the mountain "ha[s] nothing in it of sufficient promise to repay the trouble of further search" (222-223), Lady Anne "request[s] that all might unite in the full chorus of *God Save the King*" (223). Here Lady Anne becomes an active accomplice to the colonising effort. In her account of the event in a letter to Dundas, the mountain echoes their song, and the echo seems to become the voice of the country *agreeing* to be colonised and joining them in a celebration of British Imperialism. The country is seen as a natural 'possession' of Britain; there is no conception of it being *taken* from its native inhabitants. This stereotypical representation of the country is informed by the colonial discourse of the time, and although Lady Anne has no official claim to authority, such as Andrew Barnard and John Barrow have, she nevertheless appropriates the country through the conventionally feminine act of singing.

Lady Anne is conscious that she has to concede to Barrow's authority, and when he returns from his tour of the interior and offers to "shew [her] that Tour in its rough State, before he went on it" (257), she is eager to read it, but comments that she "longed to make him spare the pruning knife with which Men of Letters are apt to lop away all the tendrils, the interesting domestic particulars which create interest while giving information" (257). In her own writing Lady Anne omits no detail, however small or insignificant, ostensibly because she wants to present her readers with a complete and accurate an account of life at the Cape to enable them to make their own judgements of the country. This could indicate a conscious strategy of commenting on areas contemporary male travellers would not comment on, in order not to appear to be overstepping the boundaries of conventional femininity. Moreover, as Dundas' unofficial correspondent, Lady Anne is at liberty to comment on every aspect of life at the Cape through conveniently attributing its inclusion to her desire to provide

Dundas with "every thing [he could] wish to know" (*Letters of Lady Anne Barnard* 31). She does this with confidence, but by constantly alluding to her limited education and lack of knowledge as a *woman* writing to a *man* on traditionally *male* subject matter, she pre-empts possible objections to the content of her writing, thus allowing for her opinions to be disregarded if considered inappropriate.

As is to be expected, Lady Anne is frequently faced with subject-matter not appropriate to feminine concerns, and must find an acceptable way of negotiating it. This is often accomplished by presenting her writing in the context of humanitarianism, which was considered part of the feminine domain (*Letters of Lady Anne Barnard* 31). She negotiates the subject of slavery in this way. Lady Anne meets with the "first indications of Slavery" (*Cape Journals* 157) immediately after setting foot on land at the Cape when a number of slaves carrying wood "trotted past" the Barnards on the way to their accommodation (157). Her abhorrence at slavery in general, and her liberal regret that the terms under which the Cape was ceded to the British in 1795 prohibited changes in the Dutch slavery laws, is typical of the "enlightened British subject of the period" (Lenta, "All the Lighter Parts" 60). Lady Anne writes that she looks at the slaves with "free born eyes", thus signalling that she is aware of their loss of freedom because she has always been free, or, as Driver puts it, there is a realisation that "a privileged perspective might properly contain within it a sense of what loss of privilege entails" ("Lady Anne Barnard's *Cape Journals* and the concept of self-othering" 48). When their host states his intention to go to the market to buy a coachman, Lady Anne is shocked by the idea of trading in human life, and writes: "There is something very revolting at first to human nature in ones *presuming* to *bid* for a fellow creature. I have not got over this feeling yet, never having been obliged to buy" (*Cape Journals* 188).

Upon hearing the story of Gasper, a slave who was banished to tend goats for twenty years far from the farm where he worked for having an affair with his owner's daughter, her concern seems more that of a romantic idealist than of a humanitarian. Gasper eventually died five years before his banishment was set to expire. Lady Anne sees in this a potential love story and consequently writes a poem titled *The Slave of Africa*, sets it to music, and gives it "to a Child of

Africa to sing Commemorating thus his love and misfortune" (*Cape Journals* 188). She relates the conversation she had with her husband about Gasper: "'O if we had known of him and asked for his release could we have effected it,' said I to Barnard. 'No' said he, 'we dared not to have asked for it without expecting the Colony in flames about our ears – A young Woman who errs with a Slave disgraces her family for ever!'" (214). Andrew Barnard's answer makes it clear that their concern for the slaves has to be ideological, that they cannot attempt to change their situation. Lenta attributes this reluctance to intervene on behalf of the slaves - not only in the Barnards, but in the British government in general - to the fact that "Abolitionist sentiments in the British at the Cape in this period were repressed by a fear that any measure which interfered with established institutions was potentially revolutionary and might lead to a transfer of loyalty to the French" ("Degrees of Freedom" 64). Whatever sympathy Lady Anne seems to have for the slaves is almost immediately upended when, after considering their situation, she concludes:

It is right however to be just, ... partial as I felt myself to the poor things who do not belong to themselves. I must own that Slaves are but rarely ill used at the Cape – their being the property of the persons who superintended them is one reason why they are more cherished than in the West Indies where the task Master has no interest in their comfort, & as to their being unhappy, when one sees that lightness of heart in them which can sing and dance all day long & be ready to sleep sweetly and soundly at every spare moment one cannot think that their sense of hardship is deep. If this disposition attends to complexion, who would wish to be white? (Barnard, *Cape Journals* 215 - 216)

These statements concerning slaves demonstrate the extent to which Lady Anne's writing is influenced by the colonial discourse of the time. The slaves are seen as homogenous, with no apparent consideration for individual intelligence or desires. The description of their "lightness of heart" and of their sleeping "sweetly and soundly" makes them seem childlike and complacent. In the final question she poses to her reader, she makes this state seem preferable to the 'more complicated' state of being white and free. However, in general, the Barnards were more liberal than the Cape Dutch in their attitudes toward the slaves, and in her *Cape Journals* Lady Anne compares their own treatment of slaves during their tour of the interior to that of the Dutch as follows: "A Dutch party would have eat away and left the Slaves to throw up their hoofs and

refresh themselves with the Horses, or have given them scraps afterwards but we divided with our crew, and with a very small sopie of gin to each, made them as happy as ourselves" (*Cape Journals* 345).

Lady Anne expresses shock at the morals of the slaves and Cape Dutch alike. She finds that "[v]irtue in a female Slave was considered to be a most unproductive quality as such it was discouraged by the Mistress" (*Cape Journals* 189), and that some of the government officials at the Cape exploited slaves sexually. While the above statement makes it seem as if wives generally accepted this state of affairs and even preferred it, the same standards did not apply to the Dutch women at the Cape. The difference, according to Lady Anne, is that while a Dutch woman "boasts of the number of Children her Slaves have and encourages the addresses of those by whom they may be half cast" (189), society is not as permissive when it comes to women having sexual relationships with slaves. However, Lady Anne also writes that "in this country faibleses amongst the Frows with slaves cannot be very uncommon when one considers the different countenances which are to be seen in one family" (*Cape Diaries II* 285). In her *Cape Diaries* of October of 1799, Lady Anne comments that "if a Dutch woman has demeaned herself & the credit of her family so much as to have had a child by a slave there is not a Dutchman in the Colony who would have condemned the husband for murdering the offspring" (285).

Here, Lady Anne relates a story told by Doctor Pattison, the Chief Surgeon at the Naval Hospital in Simonstown, who went to see a patient who was lodging with a Dutch family shortly after the woman of the house had given birth. There he heard "a very extraordinary account of the child being black – its Hair that of a negro, that the bones of its arms & legs & also its back was broken, that it could not live but was then Languishing out the last breath" (287). Upon investigation the next day the doctor found that although the child's colour was "very swarthy", "it was not a Negro" (286) and that only the child's back was broken and that this could have happened during birth. Yet, he still remarks that "the day before there had been a strong presumption it had been done purposely & the sudden death of the mother afterwards rather lookd as if she had been poisoned" (286).

It is significant that Lady Anne does not comment on the flagrant double standards in respect of the two genders when applied to sexual relationships. Dutch women prefer and even encourage the men to turn to female slaves for sexual gratification, while a "woman who errs with a Slave disgraces her family for ever!" (*Cape Diaries II* 214). The same ideological constraints that prevent Lady Anne from commenting on gender-based social expectations of men and women in Europe are at work in the colonial context, where women are still expected to be 'virtuous', while men can do as they please.

Lady Anne disapproves of the Dutch with regard both to their treatment of slaves and their treatment of the 'Hottentots',<sup>12</sup> as well as with regard to their moral behaviour, but does not apply the same standards to herself and Andrew Barnard. Referring to a letter written to her by John Barrow during his travels, she comments:

[He] offers to bring me a Boshie Girl or Boy from a far distant Country ...<sup>13</sup>  
Clever ... low in stature ... odd in appearance but wonderfully intelligent ...  
I have no objections to the Boy, but much to the Girl ... I should fear to be  
a Boshie Grandmother ... (The Boy was afterwards sent to the Cape, but  
passed into other hands than mine ... here is his picture however, the  
picture of one Characterises the whole of that Nation) (*Cape Diaries II*  
242).

Lady Anne does not object to having a child removed from its family and brought to the Cape for its novelty value; her only concern is that she may become a "Boshie Grandmother", thus implying that Andrew Barnard, like the Cape Dutch men, might stray sexually<sup>14</sup>. The very act of bracketing the sentence concerning the "Boshie Boy's" fate is indicative of her lack of concern for this child who was taken from his family. When she writes that "the picture of one Characterises the whole of that Nation" it is clear that her attitude is not unlike that of the

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<sup>12</sup> Lady Anne refers to the Khoikhoi as 'Hottentots', the San as 'Boshemen' or Boshie men and -women, and any black people as 'caffres'. While these terms are no longer used today, they were the norm in Lady Anne's time and the editors of Lady Anne's *Cape Journals*, *Cape Diaries* as well as her letters to Dundas retained them in the published texts. To avoid confusion, I have also used these terms.

<sup>13</sup> Lady Anne's ellipses.

<sup>14</sup> Lady Anne's fears were not unfounded. After the Peace of Amiens was signed Lady Anne returned to London to try and secure a suitable position for Andrew Barnard in England, since the Cape was to be returned to Holland (Lenta and Le Cordeur, "Introduction" 298), and during this time Andrew Barnard fathered a child of mixed race. When Lady Anne heard of the child after Andrew Barnard's death, she sent for her and provided for her education. The girl later became Lady Anne's secretary and companion (298).

Cape Dutch, disavowing any individual traits in someone not of European descent.

On the subject of Dutch women at the Cape, Lady Anne writes in her *Cape Journals* that "what they want most is shoulders and – and softness of manners" (197) and that she "had expected to find them handsomer but here was no real beauty to be seen ... no countenance ... no manner ... no graces ... no charms tho' plenty of good looks & the freshness of health with a vulgar smartness" (197). About Maria van Reenen,<sup>15</sup> the wife of a farmer at whose house they spent a night during their tour, she writes the following:

The Vrow was of the same size and age with *all the rest* of the married women in the Colony ... the moment half a dozen Children are born, five and thirty, and some 15 Stone seem to be acquired of course.... They have no idea I see of continuing to look handsome to please their Husbands, I believe the Husbands would even think it *odd* if their wives were to dress neat and *smart* like the girls. .... The Vrow here had one perfection which to me is a great one, an open and sweet countenance, no solicitude about any thing and tolerable good teeth, a very rare thing to be seen as the women here as I have mentioned lose the front ones entirely when they pass 30. (346)

The reference to Maria van Reenen's "tolerable good teeth" involuntarily invokes the practice of examining a horse's teeth before buying it. It is clear that the Cape Dutch women are almost as *other* to Lady Anne as the slaves and other indigenous peoples. Her judgement is very superficial, and despite having professed to have experienced at first hand the difficulty of obtaining material at the Cape, she does not seem to take into account that these women live far away from the Cape and do not have access to the resources required to make fine clothing, nor that they spend their days working and that durability would be a greater consideration than appearance. She also fails to consider - or even realise - that their frame of reference and concept of aesthetics is not informed by the same context as her own. Just as the slaves have never know freedom and thus perhaps cannot appreciate the lack thereof to the same extent that she can, the women at the Cape have never lived in London society and cannot be aware of how different their lives are to Lady Anne's. The only difference in her

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<sup>15</sup> According to the Van Riebeeck Society's edition of her *Cape Journals*, Lady Anne's "Van Rhenin" should be "Van Reenen". Her spelling can probably be attributed to the way the surname is pronounced.

judgement of the two groups is that when the slaves behave in (to her) an immoral way, it is because they are 'uncivilised' and know no better; the Cape Dutch, on the other hand, are white and European and thus their behaviour cannot be excused.

By never referring to Maria van Reenen or the other women she encounters by name, Lady Anne reinforces the idea that they are all the same, lacking any individual characteristics and identity apart from being homogenously 'Cape Dutch'. Even the little education these women have seems to work against them rather than in their favour, when Lady Anne writes that "when they are (what is esteemed) well Educated – have got great ideas of keeping up their *dignity*, and not being *put upon* which standing on a perpetual defence, or attack becomes a ridiculous haughtiness, or flippant gaiety" (*Cape Journals* 254). Despite her professed intentions to "bring the nations together" (178), she is clearly not without prejudice in her descriptions of the Cape Dutch.

This also becomes apparent in her descriptions of the Dutch farmers they encounter on their tour of the interior. Lady Anne has less sympathy for the Cape Dutch farmers than for the slaves and 'Hottentots', and writes that "I have invariably found here as far as my acquaintance amongst the Dutch goes, that if ever I have seen a trifle of pre-eminence in Man, woman or child, that they were not natives of this place" (*Cape Journals* 303). The underlying assumption that the Cape Dutch, despite their European roots, are inferior to the British community at the Cape, is clear in all her comments on them. Her impression of the men is one of laziness, and she writes that they "do hardly any thing beside eating and smoking, scarcely superintending the work of the farm which is carried on by the Slaves, but certainly never digging, threshing, or holding the plough" (375). Lady Anne considers the Cape Dutch to be without ambition, and writes that even if they have the means to become prosperous they either lack the foresight to improve their property for future generations, or are too lazy to do so. She observes the following upon seeing the farm Teslaarsdal:

A good farm [...] and for a wonder a little clump of Trees, [...] there seems to be a *spell* thrown over the people on the subject of Trees, which blinds them to their own interest, on the other hand no Dutch Man here thinks of any period future to the Twelvemonth, and if by planting 20,000 acorns he

was sure of giving his Son as many thousands a year ten year hence, I doubt much if he would do it if it took *five guineas* at present out of his *pocket*. I do not even know if he would *choose* him to be richer than his father had been. (321)

Despite her earlier admission that she knows very little about agricultural matters, Lady Anne does not hesitate to comment on Cape Dutch farming practices. While she is a woman and thus cannot claim authority on this topic under normal circumstances, in the Colony she has authority by virtue of being British. All the shortcomings she sees in the Cape Dutch are attributed to their being Dutch rather than British. This perception of the colonised population as inherently inferior to the colonising nation is characteristic of colonial discourse in general, and again serves to show how Lady Anne's writing is informed by contemporary attitudes of her time.

Apart from the apparent inactivity of the Cape Dutch, Lady Anne also frequently comments on how fat they are, and arrives at the following conclusion: "Sloth & constant eating being certainly the cause of the unwieldy fat, which they have no idea of *preventing* or *regretting*, looking upon it entirely as a matter of course, nor am I sure that they are not a little vain of it, as it testifies *good fare* and enough of it" (*Cape Journals* 377). Another Dutch point of vanity she comments on, is "the size and *number of their Children*", (302) and she remarks that "the few people who inhabit the Country people it to be sure with astounding Industry" (382). The Barnards never had children of their own - probably because Lady Anne was already 43 years old when they were married. Her regret at not having children is apparent every time she refers to the Dutch with their big families. She writes:

Since I came to the Cape I have discovered that it is a bit of a *reflection* on those who happen to be without a family here, - one of the civilest of the Dutchmen on hearing me say we had no Children exclaimed ... 'Oh miserable miserable!' in such a doleful tone that I believe I must give myself credit for half a dozen boys left at School for the future. (248)

Even in her role as mother to imaginary children Lady Anne conforms to social expectations when she later adds that "they must all be in England, and all boys. I will not enact the careless Mother and leave my girls behind" (302). When the

Barnards arrive at a farm only to find that the family had gone away on a visit, she writes the following about the Dutch and their attitude toward children and slaves:

Of course all the Children and most of the Slaves were of the party the Dutch never leaving any of them behind which I do not think proceeds so much from affection (of which they have not any in the anxious tender degree of European parents) as from its being their *Custom*. (302)

The fact that Lady Anne judges the Cape Dutch as not having affection for their children is especially ironic if one considers that most families of Lady Anne's class employed governesses to see to their children, and had very little involvement with their children's upbringing before they reached their teens. Lady Anne even considers the children to be inferior to European children, and after hearing the one Van Reenen girl taunt Johnnie Dalrymple about his dirty face by calling out "Johnnie van de Caap ... So Swaart as an Aap" (Johnnie of the Cape ... As black as an Ape) (367), she writes: "*Your* Children my dearest Elizabeth would have made this, or a better rhyme, but to hear a Child rhyme *at all here*, is a wonder. I taught her to sing 'God save the King' with me as a duet this morning, and wonderfully well she did it" (367). Lady Anne does not expect the children to show any signs of intelligence, and when one does, she 'claims' it in the same way she did Table Mountain and the Colony – by teaching the child to sing *God Save the King*.

An inextricable part of the colonising ideology lies in the self-imposed European responsibility of converting Africans to Christianity. When the Barnards arrive at Genadendal - a Moravian Mission station in the Baviaanskloof - Lady Anne's first comments concern the "worthy undertaking" (*Cape Journals* 327) of the missionaries, whose "object was to Convert the Hottentots, to render them industrious, religious and happy" (330). She repeatedly expresses a desire to "see a little of the *Real Natives* ... Hottentots, caffres, Boshemen" (320), and to see the 'Hottentots' "in their natural attitudes" (325), yet she approves of the missionaries' work in the Colony: "all barbarous customs having been civilized away by the Fathers" (339). Lady Anne does not seem to realise that the religious conversion she approves of precludes the continued existence of the '*Real Natives*' she desires to see.

Missionary involvement with the 'Hottentot' population is sanctioned by referring to how the Dutch treat the 'Hottentots' in their employ. They are 'saved', not only in the religious sense, but also from oppression by the Cape Dutch. Lady Anne's description of the Hottentot congregation listening to a sermon is very similar to her description of the slaves at the Cape: "Mild and tender by nature, oppressed by the Dutch and often sinking under it, the poor creatures blessed God as they listened, while the artless tears of gratitude and Hope fell down on their Sheeps Skins" (*Cape Journals* 331). Like the slaves, the 'Hottentots' are described as child-like, innocent and, in this case, grateful to the European God for interfering in their primitive state. From her description it becomes clear that she considers the 'Hottentots' to be improved by Christianity, and adds that "[n]ot a Hottentot did I see in this congregation that had a bad passion in the Countenance, I watched them closely, all was sweetness and attention. I was even surprised to observe so few vacant eyes, and so little curiosity directed to ourselves" (331). Lady Anne is even willing to attribute intelligence to the 'civilised Hottentots' by virtue of their status as Christians. Not only do they not have the "vacant eyes" she associates with all native inhabitants of the country, but, unlike their 'uncivilised' counterparts, they don't stare at the Barnards in the way they have come to expect from all Africans.

Lady Anne's usual practice during her travels in the interior was to give the slaves and 'Hottentots' gifts of small, inexpensive items which the Barnards assumed would have novelty value, but she writes that at Genadendal the missionaries asked her not to do so:

[T]hey [said they] would be glad if I kept back the beads & all other Ornaments, they wished their minds to be turned to industry & not to ostentation which is (according to Hottentot fashion) ... their natural turn, but if I had any garden seeds, common knives ... coarse Scissors or threads they would be grateful for them. (*Cape Journals* 333)

Lady Anne does not question the veracity of their statements, nor does she demonstrate any realisation that the missionaries' treatment of the 'Hottentots' may be more humane than that of the Dutch, but that their ideological stances are very similar. Both the Dutch and the missionaries assume authority over the

'Hottentots' because they see them as intrinsically inferior, prone to 'ostentation', and incapable of acting in their own interest without guidance.

Throughout the tour of the interior, Andrew Barnard is responsible for negotiating with guides and farmers and paying for their accommodation and supplies. Lady Anne's role is that of gift-giver and companion. As such she does not feel she has a right to demand time for her drawings and is careful always to follow, or at least appear to follow, Andrew Barnard's instructions on the few occasions when he gives them, thus ostensibly conforming to the social ideal of femininity. She is nevertheless not prepared to be *only a passive companion* like Anne Elizabeth Barnard. She shows a lively interest in every aspect of their surroundings and its people and is constantly occupied with drawing anything she thinks would be new and interesting to her readers at home. The only thing she insists on is that they take along an interpreter "who would be patient in replying to all [her] questions, and intelligent in answering them". When she records this request, she writes that "The first comfort I wished Mr. Barnard to procure (I introduce him here as if he were stock) was an Interpreter" (*Cape Journals* 296). This is one of the instances of self-othering on which Driver comments, stating that "Barnard sometimes interrogates, self-consciously, the discourse at her disposal, using a word, or a stereotype, that draws her to question it as it is used" ("Lady Anne Barnard's *Cape Journals* and the concept of self-othering" 58). In this case Lady Anne questions her own use of the word 'procure' with reference to the interpreter. She realises that she is describing the interpreter in the same manner as she would their provisions for the journey and that this is inappropriate. Driver notes that "[t]he discourse itself seems to produce in her an interrogative stance, so that her self-consciousness follows, rather than precedes, the discourse. This does not necessarily mean that she can take up a position outside the discourse but remains, as speaking subject, implicated within it" ("Lady Anne Barnard's *Cape Journals* and the concept of self-othering" 58). Although this self-aware writing position is not by any means characteristic of Lady Anne's writing in general, it is worth noting specifically because it is very unusual in colonial discourse.

Lady Anne's request to have an interpreter accompany them on their tour stems from her constant desire to discover and report the truth about the Colony.

Throughout her writing she is charmed by the idea of being the first European woman to see or experience some aspect of life in the Colony, such as when she climbs Table Mountain. In another such instance the Barnards visit 'Die Kelders' near Hermanus and Lady Anne writes:

Having heard of a curious Cave for petrifications called the Drup Kelder, at five or six hours distance, altho' we had little expectations of finding it equal in Beauty to some of our own in Derbyshire and elsewhere, yet as it is always well to see every thing in a Country where nothing has been looked at, we determined to go. (*Cape Journals* 316)

Incongruous with Lady Anne's quest for the objective truth, the Barnards have already decided that it will be inferior to comparable British caves. The fact that the country is considered to be unseen implies that everything has to be seen by European eyes in order to be seen at all.

While the Barnards are trying to find a path to the caves, they encounter a dead end on a rather high ledge, and Andrew Barnard advises Lady Anne not to look down "in a calm indifferent tone of voice which I perfectly understood" (318). Andrew Barnard has the masculine occupation of exploring, while Lady Anne follows his lead. He decides what she should and should not see. Despite writing that she "vigilantly followed his advice" (318), Lady Anne still wants to form her own opinion of the situation and says that "a glance of my eye shewed me I was passing along a two feet broad path, which stood hundreds of feet high above the sea" (318). 'Glancing' rather than 'looking' makes her action seem involuntary rather than an overt act of defiance. When writing about another instance earlier in their tour when Andrew Barnard attempts censorship of a situation where he judges a woman should be protected from seeing or knowing the truth, Lady Anne treats his advice in much the same manner. When the drivers cruelly beat the team of oxen pulling the wagon, Andrew Barnard calls out to Lady Anne not to look, and she writes that "at the sound of his voice I naturally and involuntarily turned my head and saw what made my heart sore" (306). Driver comments on both these incidents and writes that "[d]eftly combining obedience with disobedience, her text suggests that if her role as a woman is to hide her eyes, her role as a writer is to use them and note what she sees" ("Lady Anne Barnard's Cape Journals and the concept of self-othering"

53). Thus, Lady Anne's position as a writer pushes her to transcend the social constraints of femininity.

During their residence at the Cape Lady Anne records two instances where Andrew Barnard invents reasons for herself and Anne Elizabeth to leave the Castle. On the first occasion, when a soldier is to be shot for deserting, they are told that Mrs. Strombom "had expressed a longing desire to see [them]" (*Cape Journals* 194). On the second occasion the women are told that they should accompany Andrew Barnard to Stellenbosch when he is sent there by Lord Macartney to enforce the oath of allegiance. This time the reason was the possibility of an execution following a mutiny on board a ship in the Cape Town Harbour. She writes to Dundas that "this situation had been concealed from the *ladies* till we were a couple of miles out of town" (*Letters of Lady Anne Barnard* 75).

While Lady Anne's natural curiosity prevents her from letting Andrew Barnard's attempts at censorship interfere with her writing, another type of male-imposed censorship is a continual source of frustration to her. Lady Anne makes several references to her frustration at her lack of formal education and regrets that her "[i]gnorance" keeps her from knowing as much as she would have liked to know (*Cape Journals* 317). She longs for the arrival of their interpreter, Prince, who could only join them for the last half of their tour, and hopes that he would be able to give her more information on some of the things they encounter, and remarks:

I felt myself such a *poor contemptible* "Simple Traveller" marking down things not worth repeating and leaving things unnoted which I could by no means get at the knowledge of many things too arise out of subjects being talked over; so new and unthought of that no questions can be put about them, till we know they *exist*. (366)

On one occasion during their tour Lady Anne is delighted at having her wish granted to see "Hottentot Ladies in their *natural* but also ornamented State" granted when they come across a Khoikhoi woman washing her clothing in a stream (*Cape Journals* 380). As is sometimes the case when she writes about slaves or the indigenous population of the Colony, Lady Anne departs from her usual factual description. Her writing takes on a novelistic tone, and she

describes the woman as "Pharoah's daughter" busy "washing her Royal robes", and again as "my copper coloured Princess" (380). Experience has taught her that the men in the party are unlikely to halt their progress, even for a few minutes, solely for the feminine pursuit of drawing, so she tries to convince Gasper, the guide, that he should let the horses rest and drink some water to give her time to draw, but when this fails, she is "obliged to tell the truth" (380). Her request is granted grudgingly by Andrew Barnard. Nevertheless, he says that "he would not witness such doings, & scampered off" while Lady Anne draws hurriedly, determined thus to record what she can about the indigenous peoples since she cannot do it in a "scientific" way.

Once they are joined by their interpreter, Lady Anne is disappointed in her hopes of finding in him a source of information to compensate for her own lack of knowledge. While he knows the country well, and as such is of use to Andrew Barnard as a guide, Prince turns out not to be much of an interpreter and Lady Anne writes:

[H]e was not intelligent [...] [and] if he had possessed language enough [...] he wanted the sense and observation to render it useful, for I saw he was one of those people who *observe* nothing, and knew nothing respecting the matters they *daily* see, because from seeing them *daily* they are too *familiar* to be considered. I asked him some questions of various sorts, he "did not know *Sir*" ... "he could not tell *Sir*" and I begun to fear that except by what my *eyes* could draw in [...] that I should go back as wise as I went and by no means the illuminated Traveller I had hoped and *promised* you all to be. (*Cape Journals* 388)

As someone who prides herself on observing everything, Lady Anne is understandably frustrated at Prince's shortcomings. She can see all of the things that interest her about the country and its people, but because of her lack of education and his perceived lack of interest in his own surroundings, she must be content with forming opinions based on what she can see and gather from "accidental" encounters with French-speaking Dutch farmers (388). Lady Anne is debilitated by her gendered position. Without a formal education or the benefit of an intelligent, informed guide, she cannot provide her readers with as true an account of the Colony as she would have wished. As someone who desperately wants to know as much as possible about the world around her, but

by accident of having been born the 'wrong' gender was denied the option of a formal education, she sees Prince's ignorance of his surroundings as a serious indictment against his person. Various references to well-known literary works throughout her *Cape Journals* and letters to Dundas testify to Lady Anne's efforts to educate herself through literature, and she often quotes from memory when a specific situation reminds her of something she has read. Still, she cannot be the informed correspondent she wants to be when it comes to the relatively new subject of the Colony and its people. Although she is erudite and an accomplished, articulate writer at times, she nevertheless occupies a very unstable writing position. She is aware that - as a *self-educated woman* rather than a *formally educated man*, writing in a patriarchal society - her opinions will always remain marginal.

As a British woman in the Colony a position she can occupy with ease is that of gift-giver. Yet, gift-giving proves not to be without its complications. During their stay with the Van Reenen family Lady Anne gives the daughters of the house some of her stock of white bead necklaces, and finds herself in an uncomfortable position when a slave owned by the Van Reenens asks her for some of the same beads. She writes in her *Journal*:

[S]he left me mortified [...] so I bid Mr. Barnard tell the Story to Van Rhenin before his Wife, and at the same time mention my objections to her request, that I had given of them before to the young ladies. They both laughed and cried out aloud 'not to think any thing of that, that she had been born in the House, and was a sort of Child of the family', and that if I had the beads to give her them, which I did, making her happier than a young beauty would be with diamond necklace. (357)

Lady Anne does not want to risk offending the Van Reenens by giving the slave girl the same gift she gave to their daughters. Consequently, she denies Denaira's request, claiming that she had none of the beads left but decides that if she "could manage the matter that it was worth the trying" (357). Although it would not have occurred to her, it would have been more accurate to write "manage the men", because this is exactly what she does in this case. She wants to give Denaira the beads and has worked out a strategy to enable her to do this. The success of her plan depends on her instructions to Andrew Barnard when she "bid" him "tell the Story to Van Rhenin before his Wife, and at the

same time mention my objections to her request” as much as it does on his execution of them. She must not offend the Van Reenens by carelessly appearing to disregard the difference in social standing between their daughters and their slave, and as a woman she cannot approach Jacob van Reenen herself and risk seeming presumptuous; thus, the topic needs to be raised by Andrew Barnard. Her plan has the desired effect, and the Van Reenens offer no objections to her giving the slave the beads since, as Driver puts it, “the men are at least officially in charge of decisions which it seems the women are making” (57). However, while Lady Anne notes that the Van Reenens thought of Denaira as “a sort of Child of the family”, despite her efforts to obtain approval for giving the slave beads, still *she* differentiates between them when she says that by giving her the beads, she made Denaira “happier than a young beauty would be with diamond necklace”. While Lady Anne’s desire to give Denaira the beads she wants, despite foreseeing objections from the Van Reenens, at first seems completely *innocent* of racism, the narrative is set up simultaneously to seem sympathetic and to systematically ‘expose’ Denaira’s inherent inferiority.

On the day prior to their departure, Lady Anne presents small gifts to the Van Reenens as well as to all of their slaves. In an interesting reversal of roles, Lady Anne now finds herself in the position of receiving a gift and writes: “Denaira now stole into my room and in her bashful way said ‘you ... you ...’ slipping into my hand a pair of *Cliches* or Grey Sea Beans, which I send to the Queen of Denaira Lady Susan,<sup>16</sup> for a pair of earrings” (358). Both the beads and the act of giving them are *white*, and as a British woman in the colonial context Lady Anne is accustomed to giving gifts, not receiving them. While Lady Anne gives Denaira beads to which she herself attaches very little value, in return Denaira gives her the Sea Beans, which Lady Anne describes in an earlier journal entry as “highly esteemed by the Dutch” (351), and thus would probably have been a valuable gift from Denaira’s point of view. Driver notes the progression in Denaira’s communication skills from her first appearance in the narrative to her second:

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<sup>16</sup> According to the Van Riebeeck Society edition of the *Cape Journals*, Dunira was Henry Dundas’ estate in Perthshire (Barnard, *Cape Journals* 357 n59). The name Denaira might have reminded Lady Anne of this, thus the reference to Henry Dundas’ daughter, Lady Susan as the “Queen of Denaira” (Barnard, *Cape Journals* 358).

Whereas she originally communicated to Barnard through gesture – signalling first her desire for the beads and then her mortification – Denaira now says ‘you’: These are for you, I give these to you; thank you. The word ‘I’ remains unspoken, yet it is strongly present: when Denaira hands Barnard a gift in return for the white beads she subverts the race-class hierarchy this British woman has so carefully set up. (“Lady Anne Barnard’s *Cape Journals* and the concept of self-othering” 57)

Driver’s assessment that Lady Anne immediately transfers ownership of Denaira’s gift to Lady Susan Dundas in an effort to “ward off this performance of equality” (57) rings true. An ideological crisis is averted by shattering with finality any assumption Denaira or Lady Anne’s readers may infer of an equality effected between the two women by way of an *exchange* of gifts when Lady Anne “reasserts British culture and its class and race superiorities” (57) through word play when she makes Lady Susan the “Queen of Denaira”. This invokes, ironically, the regret Lady Anne expresses when she is addressing Dundas in her *Cape Journals* about the fact that, should the British keep the Cape, they “may be forced to adhere to the selfish policy of the Dutch who repressed every exertion ... suppressed every sparkle of genius or ambition” (*Cape Journals* 257) in the indigenous peoples of the Colony.

While her position as a British woman in the Colony sanctions Lady Anne’s confidence when she writes about the beneficial value of the British government for the Cape Colony and its people, she becomes hesitant when she is given the opportunity to employ her knowledge to improve the quality of life of one colonial subject. She records the following incident earlier in her *Cape Journals*:

One of the Slaves here seeing me take notice of one of her<sup>17</sup> Children, pleased and flattered brought me seven more, one of the little ones she made me understand was dumb, I looked into its mouth and saw evidently that the tongue was tacked down by a Ligament I have often seen cut. How I wished that I durst have set it a going with my Scissors but while I looked the Child began to roar, and as it was a Girl I thought it was possible I might do more harm than good by giving liberty to such an unruly member. Jestng apart, I feared the locked Jaw which I have

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<sup>17</sup> In the endnotes to “Lady Anne Barnard’s *Cape Journals* and the Concept of Self-Othering” Driver notes that the Van Riebeeck Society edition of the *Cape Journal* reads “one of his Children” (Barnard, *Cape Journals* 320), but that the original transcription commissioned by Lady Anne reads “one of her Children”. I have thus used “her” instead of “his” where I quoted from that edition. In Driver’s footnote she accidentally quotes the wording of the original transcripts instead of the erroneous version which she meant to point out. The intended becomes clear once the extract from the original transcription which appears in her article, is compared to the Van Riebeeck Society edition of the *Cape Journals*.

sometimes heard was the consequence of any injudicious step of this kind and like a Coward I did nothing from the Terror of doing ill. I made them all happy with presents and departed. (320 – 321)

For a change Lady Anne finds herself in a situation where she does not have to feel “hoodwinked to the things around” (380), where by her own admission she possesses the knowledge to solve the problem she is faced with, and where one of the “roles conventional to colonial women”, that of “compassionate healer” authorises her to intervene (Driver, “Lady Anne Barnard’s *Cape Journals* and the concept of self-othering” 54). Instead of performing the simple task of cutting the membrane in the manner she has seen done, she eventually does nothing. In her discussion of this passage, Driver argues that Lady Anne moves from a position of confidence inspired by the female slave’s trust in her to being “unsure, incompetent and guilty” (55) because she does not feel that she can “comfortably inhabit” the responsible position of healer. The child’s animal-like “roar” reminds Lady Anne of its “otherness”, and seems to be the deciding factor in Lady Anne’s ultimate refusal to take action to cut the ligament tacking the tongue down and “set it a going”. As a woman who is frustrated with her position in a patriarchal society where the authoritative voice is reserved for men, and women are kept “dumb” by denying them an formal education, one would expect Lady Anne to use her knowledge to give this girl a voice. Instead, she perpetuates the patriarchal tradition “by assuming a mock-masculine perspective on the feminine” (55), when she decides not to take action “*as it was a Girl*” (my italics). Driver comments:

[i]f there follows the briefest recognition of a shared moment of humanity and specifically a shared, female power, when Barnard’s own tongue joins the “unruly” in her ironic reminder of male attitudes to women, that tongue is quickly defined as not serious but as “jesting” before it is urged into its final resting place – unsure, incompetent, and guilty. (55)

Finally Lady Anne retreats to a feminine position she feels more comfortable with, that of gift-giving, and writes that she “made them all happy with presents and departed”. One cannot help but feel that both parties would have been happier had she acted on her first instinct, or, as Driver puts it, that “two tongues might have been freed, and two women might have – at least to some extent – changed their historical positions” (55). However, given Lady Anne’s

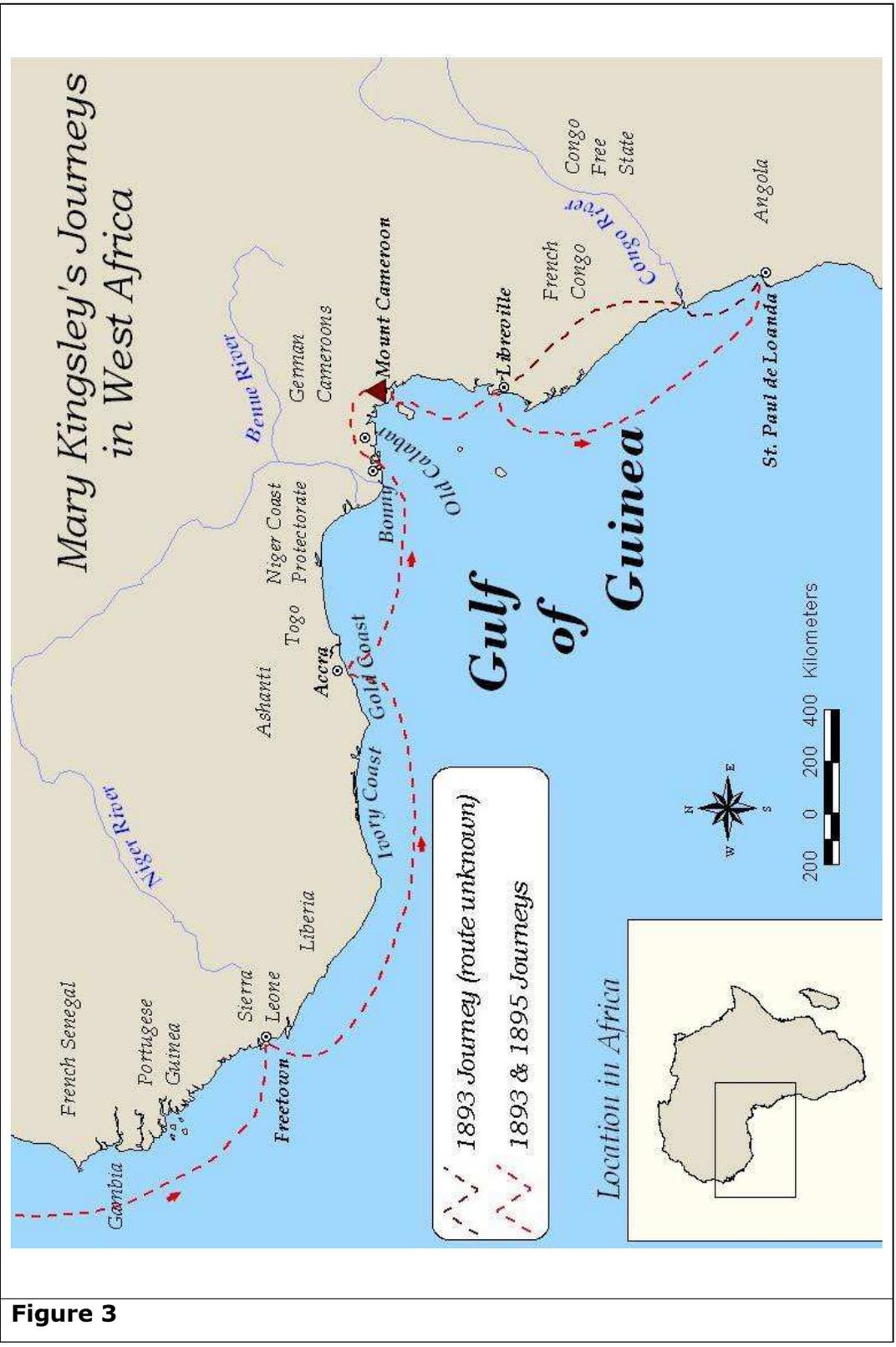
social and historical position, it is understandable – if not *forgivable* – that she feels that it is better not to have the power of speech than to have it, but not be allowed to speak your mind. When faced with the situation above, Lady Anne decides against active interference – albeit in the feminine role as healer – and in favour of the more passive and comfortable position of gift-giver.

Lady Anne's *Diaries* end in December 1800, more than a year before she left the Cape in January 1802 (Lenta, "Conclusion" 299). No records exist that she continued writing after this point of her life. The British returned the Cape to the Dutch under terms of the Peace of Amiens, which was signed in October 1801 (Lewin Robinson, "Lady Anne Barnard" 299). Lady Anne returned to Britain early in 1802 to find her husband a new position, while he stayed behind in the Cape to help with the transition between the British and Dutch governments (Lewin Robinson, "Lady Anne Barnard" 58; Lenta, "Conclusion" 300). Because of his previous experience at the Cape, Andrew Barnard was appointed as advisor to the new Governor, Lord Caledon, when it came under British command again in 1806 (Lewin Robinson, "Lady Anne Barnard" 58; Lenta, "Conclusion" 300). Since the appointment was only for six months, Lady Anne Barnard did not accompany him. He contracted a fever during a tour of an interior of the Colony and died on 27 October 1807 (Lewin Robinson, "Lady Anne Barnard" 58; Lenta, "Conclusion" 301). Following the death of her husband, Lady Anne Barnard took up residence with her sister, Margaret, in London (Lewin Robinson, "Lady Anne Barnard" 58; Lenta, "Conclusion" 301). She eventually resumed her social life to an extent, and was even offered a position in the Princess of Wales's household, which she declined (Lenta, "Conclusion" 301).

In 1818, Lady Anne withdrew from society and spent her time editing her writing to be bound and distributed among her friends and family (Lenta, "Conclusion" 301). She died in London on 6 May 1825. Her writing was published for the first time in 1901, when her letters to Henry Dundas, edited by W.H. Wilkins, appeared as *South Africa a Century Ago*. In 1948 these letters were bought by the South African National Library in Cape Town, where they are now kept (Lenta, "Introduction" 11). Lady Anne left all of her writing to her eldest brother's son, the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres. It is still in the possession of his descendants (Lenta, "Introduction" 14 and "Conclusion" 302).

While Lady Anne's writing was first published more than 76 years after her death it has not been without influence. Most scholars familiar with her work agree that her letters to Dundas detailing the unsatisfactory performance of Sir George Yonge, who became the Cape Governor in December 1799, led to his recall. Today, her work offers readers a unique, detailed, and entertaining perspective on life at the Cape at the turn of the nineteenth century. Lady Anne's dichotomous position is clear throughout her writing. On the one hand, she is a woman in a society where women are expected to concern themselves almost exclusively with domestic matters. On the other hand, she is a writer who feels a responsibility towards her readers to report truthfully and accurately. It is this dichotomy which forces her to engage in a subversive colonial discourse in her *Journals*. Throughout her writing it is clear that she is aware of her reading audience. When she writes to Dundas on official matters at the Cape, her reporting is detailed but apologetic, and she leaves it up to him to decide which of her observations are valuable. Her descriptions of the South African landscape and people are limited to appropriately feminine matters, and when she strays from traditionally feminine concerns, she always reminds her reader that she is a woman and that her opinions are not educated, and thus should not be taken seriously, or she defers to the opinion of her husband or other men. So, while Lady Anne's apologetic tone and frequent apologies for her lack of knowledge may seem to undermine her authority as a credible witness and reporter of life at the Cape, it is a strategy she employs to ensure that she does not appear to overstep the boundaries set by the discourse of femininity.

By the time Mary Kingsley travelled to Africa, almost a hundred years after Lady Anne, neither travel nor publication was completely out of the ordinary for women. Yet, like Lady Anne, Mary Kingsley could not engage in the discourse of colonialism in the same way as male travel writers of her time. While she was free to travel and publish, her work was received with reluctance, scepticism, contempt, and even ridicule by the vast majority of scholars and readers of the early twentieth century.



**Figure 3**



**Figure 4** The studio portrait of Mary Kingsley taken shortly after the deaths of her parents.



**Figure 5** The publicity photograph Mary Kingsley had taken in 1898.



**Figure 6 "Expectation"** A caricature of Mary Kingsley drawn by a student in the audience at a debate she lead at Trinity College's Magpie and Stump Debating Society. Reproduced here with permission of the Trinity College Library, Cambridge.



**Figure 7 "Realisation"** A caricature of Mary Kingsley drawn by a student in the audience at a debate she lead at Trinity College's Magpie and Stump Debating Society. Reproduced here with permission of the Trinity College Library, Cambridge.

## Chapter 2

### Mary Kingsley's Umbrella and Other Plausible Props of Propriety in *Travels in West Africa*

*I will impart to you, in strict confidence, for if it were known it would damage me badly, my opinion on the African. He is not 'half devil and half child', anymore than he is 'our benighted brother' and all that sort of thing. He is a woman ... I know those nigs because I am a woman, a woman of a masculine race but a woman still. ~ Mary Kingsley*



**Figure 8**  
**Mary Kingsley**

Today, more than a century after her work was first published, it is hardly possible to pick up an anthology of women's travel writing that does not mention Mary Kingsley. She is one of very few women, such as Marianne North, Isabella Bird, and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, whose travel writing has been widely read since its first publication, and whose work consistently inspires critical response. Kingsley is best known for her first book, *Travels in West Africa*, which was originally published by Macmillan in January of 1897, and most recently reprinted by the National Geographic Society in 2002. *Travels in West Africa* was published exactly one hundred years after Lady Anne Barnard travelled to the Cape. By this time the "increased democratization of travel and, perhaps more important[ly], the gradual democratization of a woman's role in society during the nineteenth century" (Blanton 45) had made it possible for women such as Kingsley to travel alone.

However, as this discussion will show, while women now had the freedom to travel, their writing was still restricted by the conservatism of society. This is reflected in both the content and style of Kingsley's writing. Throughout her writing Kingsley simultaneously engages in, and distances herself from, the discourse of both colonialism and femininity. The dichotomy between these two narrative positions, coupled with her continuous subversion of both these discourses, destabilises the text, resulting in a dual narrative voice symptomatic of Victorian conservatism, and typical of women travel writers of Kingsley's time.

Kingsley's failure to move significantly beyond the ideological strictures of her time diminishes the authority of her more enlightened observations. In her book, *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism*, Sara Mills addresses this concern in a case study devoted to Mary Kingsley's *Travels in West Africa*. Mills's argument informs part of the discussion of Kingsley's work in this chapter. Kingsley's desire to achieve an authentic, authoritative narrative voice is undermined by her awareness of the need to conform to the discourse of femininity. This characteristic of Kingsley's writing is reflected in specific aspects of *Travels in West Africa*, such as the reasons she provides for travelling to Africa and writing; the opinions she expresses regarding men, science, British colonial administration, Africans, and women's role in society; as well as her choice of certain narrative strategies. As is the case with Lady Anne Barnard's writing, Mary Kingsley's awareness of her reading audience extends to her personal correspondence. Accordingly, Kingsley's correspondence is occasionally drawn upon in this chapter to emphasize recurrent narrative strategies.

Before attempting to understand and interpret Mary Kingsley's work, it is imperative that the social context which informs and sanctions her particular mode of writing is considered. Mary Kingsley spent the first thirty years of her life almost exclusively at home. She was born in Islington, England, on 13 October 1862, only four days after her parents, Dr George Kingsley and Mary Bailey, were married (Birkett, *Imperial Adventuress* 8; Frank 18). At the time of their marriage Mary Bailey was employed as George Kingsley's cook and housekeeper (Birkett, *Imperial Adventuress* 16; Frank 18). The Kingsley family had an association with the aristocracy dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century when one of their forefathers gained the favour of the Earl of Chester and the family was granted hereditary forestry rights (Frank 6). George Kingsley was a medical doctor, but for him his profession was merely a means to an end. In a history of the Kingsley family, which Mary Kingsley wrote as part of a memoir of her father, she says the following:

The old English family of Kingsley has not been given to exhausting itself with rapidly successive outbreaks of intellectual brilliancy. It has gone on frequently for century after century hunting, fishing, fighting in an English

gentlemanly kind of way; then it has turned out someone who was generally valuable, and settled down again. (Kingsley quoted in Frank 5)

George Kingsley's brothers, Charles and Henry, were both celebrated writers. George Kingsley, however, was not content to stay at home and write. He was an enthusiastic amateur anthropologist and loved to travel. So he continued the Kingsley tradition of associating with the aristocracy and travelled the world "as private physician to titled families" (Birkett, *Imperial Adventuress* 8). Within two weeks of Mary Kingsley's birth he left his new wife and daughter behind to sail to the Mediterranean (Birkett, *Imperial Adventuress* 8; Frank 21). During thirty years of married life, George Kingsley was never at home for more than three months at a time. He once left his family behind to travel to the South Sea islands with a 'patient', Robert Charles Herbert, the Earl of Pembroke, and did not return home for almost four years. An account of this trip, titled *South Sea Bubbles*, was co-authored by George Kingsley and the Earl of Pembroke (Frank 4). George Kingsley constantly intended to publish more of his travel accounts and anthropological observations, but was never at home long enough to produce such a volume. During his travels, he occasionally wrote to his wife and children relating his experiences of cultures on other continents (Birkett, *Imperial Adventuress* 8; Frank 25). When he was at home, George Kingsley was frequently invited to address academic societies about his travels. After her father's death, Mary Kingsley compiled and edited some of his lectures and essays, wrote a two hundred page biography of George Kingsley as a preface, and sent it to Macmillan to be published as *Notes on Sports and Travel* under George Kingsley's name (Birkett, *Imperial Adventuress* 146; Frank 272).

Mary Kingsley's mother, Mary Bailey Kingsley, was the daughter of an innkeeper and, because of her working class background, was not accepted by the bourgeois Kingsley family (Frank 18). After her marriage to George Kingsley she rarely left home, except for the purpose of tending to sick relatives and neighbours. She suffered from an unspecified nervous condition which started shortly after her marriage. When George Kingsley left for his extended travels of the South Seas in 1867, she started isolating herself increasingly, staying in bed for days at a time (Frank 19-20). Consequently, most of the household chores became Mary Kingsley's responsibility from a very young age (Frank 25).

It is unclear who taught Mary Kingsley to read and write, since it is unlikely that her mother was "sufficiently literate herself to teach her daughter to read" (Frank 24). Unlike most upper-middle-class girls of the time, Mary Kingsley had no governess and never attended school (Frank 24). She once wrote to her publisher, George Macmillan, that "being allowed to learn German was *all* the paid for education"<sup>18</sup> she ever had (Kingsley quoted in Birkett, *Imperial Adventuress* 12). Her lack of education was the cause of frustration and insecurity throughout Mary Kingsley's life. She was especially bitter about the £2,000 that had been spent on her brother Charles's education, despite the fact that he never displayed any interest in serious academic pursuits (Frank 23; Gwynn 16 -17). During her childhood and teenage years, Mary Kingsley spent hours reading books from her father's library. In an autobiographical sketch published in the paper *Mostly About People* in May 1899, Kingsley writes:

The whole of my childhood and youth was spent at home, in the house and garden. The living outside world I saw little of, and cared less for, for I felt myself out of place at the few parties I ever had the chance of going to, and I deservedly was unpopular with my generation, for I knew nothing of play and such things. But this was not superiority of mind in me, at all; the truth was I had a great amusing world of my own other people did not know, or care about – that was in the books in my father's library. (Kingsley quoted in Gwynn 16)

Using the books she found in this library as well as her brother's school books, she taught herself Latin, physics and chemistry. She also read many old travel books – mostly about Africa (Birkett, *Imperial Adventuress* 10-12, 18; Frank 24, 35). When the information in some of the dated scientific books proved to be obsolete, Mary Kingsley "cried bitterly at not being taught things" (Kingsley quoted in Gwynn 16). But, she was told by her "home authorities" that she "had no business to want to be taught such things" (Kingsley quoted in Gwynn 16) and was given a copy of George Craig's book *Pursuit of Knowledge Under Difficulties* to satisfy her curiosity (Gwynn 16; Frank 35).

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<sup>18</sup> In *Three Guineas* Virginia Woolf estimates that Mary Kingsley's education cost between £20 and £30. Woolf places the average expenditure by educated men on the education of their daughters in the nineteenth century at around £100 (368). George Kingsley, who had "a perfect horror of highly educated women" (Kingsley quoted in Frank 219), hired a German tutor to teach Mary enough of the language to be his research assistant when he was home (Frank 36; Gwynn 19).

In 1879 the Kingsleys moved to Cambridge, where Mary Kingsley's brother would study law at Christ's College. Here Mary Kingsley met and befriended a number of educated women for the first time in her life. However, she rarely had the chance to enjoy their company as she had to take care of her mother, whose mental and physical health was by now rapidly deteriorating (Birkett, *Imperial Adventuress* 12-13). In 1890 a stroke left Mary Bailey Kingsley paralysed. This forced Mary Kingsley to spend most of her time at home nursing her mother (Frank 45). Her father returned home permanently in early January 1892, after an attack of rheumatic fever affected his heart, and he too needed Mary Kingsley's constant care and attention (Birkett, *Imperial Adventuress* 14; Frank 45). In her autobiographical sketch, Mary Kingsley describes the years between 1888 and 1892 as

years of work and watching and anxiety, a narrower life in home interests than ever, and a more hopelessly depressing one, for it was a losing fight with death all the time. (Kingsley quoted in Gwynn 18)

Mary Kingsley was almost thirty when first her father and then her mother died within 10 weeks of one another in 1892 (Birkett, *Imperial Adventuress* 14). Both of Mary Kingsley's most recent biographers,<sup>19</sup> Deborah Birkett and Katherine Frank, speculate that Mary Kingsley must have discovered the facts concerning her parents' shotgun wedding at this time while she was sorting through documents to find the necessary papers to register their deaths (Birkett, *Imperial Adventuress* 16; Frank 50). Their marriage certificate would have shown that they were married in 1862, four days before her birth, not in 1860 as she had always been told. For Mary Kingsley this discovery must have shed light on the unlikely and unhappy union between Dr George Kingsley and his former housekeeper. Whatever the circumstances surrounding her discovery of the truth, until her death Mary Kingsley lied about either her own date of birth or the

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<sup>19</sup> More than twenty books about Mary Kingsley's life and work have been published since her death. The two most recent biographies by Birkett (1992) and Frank (1987) are by far the most comprehensive, and are thus used in this dissertation. Birkett's biography deals extensively with Kingsley's political writing and involvement, while Frank's is more concerned with Kingsley's private life. Since Birkett's biography is the most recent, and considering that she has published numerous articles on Kingsley's work in addition to writing her PhD dissertation on Kingsley's life and work, her information is used where there are factual discrepancies between the two biographies. Kingsley's first biography, by Stephen Gwynn (1932), is used occasionally since it includes more substantial quotes from Kingsley's writing and interviews in the popular press.

year in which her parents were married<sup>20</sup>. The care she took in concealing the truth from the general public demonstrates both Mary Kingsley's concern with propriety and the reigning conservatism of the time.

No doubt inspired by all the travel books she had read as a child, as well as her father's stories about his adventures abroad, Mary Kingsley decided to travel to the "closest, least civilised part of the globe" (Birkett, *Imperial Adventuress* 16) shortly after her mother's death in April 1892. A friend recommended the Canary Islands, so this is where Mary Kingsley went (Birkett, *Imperial Adventuress* 16). Her departure was delayed until June, since her brother Charles had finished his studies and returned to live at home. Mary Kingsley's Victorian sense of duty compelled her to stay and run the household until he left to travel to the Far East (Frank 51). Kingsley later claimed that the timing and duration of all her future travels would eventually be determined by whether or not Charles needed her housekeeping services (Frank 55). Her visit to the Canary Islands lasted several weeks, but she spent very little time on land. Instead, most of her time was devoted to travelling between the islands and the nearby West African coast on trade boats (Birkett, *Imperial Adventuress* 16; Frank 52). These trips to the coast, along with the stories about Africa told to her by the traders she met aboard the trading vessels, rekindled her interest in the continent she had read so much about as a child. Upon her arrival back in England towards the end of August, she immediately began arrangements to travel to West Africa. Mary Kingsley's two subsequent journeys to West Africa, the first in 1893 and second in 1895, would eventually provide the material for her two major works, *Travels in West Africa* and *West African Studies*.

Significantly, Mary Kingsley's first aspiration to publication was in the shape of the conventionally acceptable 'feminine' travel journal. The year Mary Kingsley spent at home between December 1893 and December 1894, she devoted most of her time to writing an account of her first West African travels (Frank 90-91). During her 1893 travels Mary Kingsley had kept a detailed diary, and wrote

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<sup>20</sup> As a result, all of her biographers prior to Birkett and Frank, including her first biographer and close personal friend Stephen Gwynn, cite 1860 as the year in which her parents were married. Also, at the time of her death in 1900, many obituaries gave her date of birth incorrectly, and even the plaque on the coffin in which she was buried gave her age as thirty-five, rather than thirty-seven (Birkett, *Mary Kingsley* 21).

frequent letters describing her experiences to a friend, Violet Roy. After her return to London, she borrowed these letters back from her friend, and combined them with her diary entries to construct a travelogue of both her voyage to and from West Africa, and her experiences while travelling the continent (Frank 90-91). Once she had almost completed the manuscript, she wrote to the family publisher, George Macmillan, asking if he "would be likely to publish a book on the Bights of Biafra and Benin" (Kingsley quoted in Frank 91). She told Macmillan that Dr. Henry Guillemard, a physician, geographer, and old friend of her father, suggested that she write a book based on "journals or rather notes written for the benefit of [her] Cambridge friends" (Kingsley quoted in Frank 91). Kingsley goes on to say that "personally, [she] misdoubt[s] that they are merely a mass of very curious information, as the old voyagers would say, never before published" (Kingsley quoted in Frank 91). By emphasizing that the original text was intended to be read only by her friends, and that it is Dr. Guillemard, rather than she, who thinks that her work should be published, Kingsley displays the reticence expected of a woman in the nineteenth century. Despite Macmillan's eagerness to publish her travel journal, Mary Kingsley never completed "The Bights of Benin".

Kingsley brought back a large collection of fish, insects, plants, and geological samples from her first travels, and presented these to the British Museum of Natural History (Birkett, *Imperial Adventuress* 25; Frank 96). The museum provided Kingsley with a collector's outfit for her second journey, and requested that she bring back freshwater fish from specific regions for their collection, as well as anything else which might be of interest. In preparation for the task of collecting these samples, Mary Kingsley engaged in studying major works on ichthyology, anthropology, geology, and botany during the months leading up to her second trip to West Africa (Birkett, *Imperial Adventuress* 24-27; Frank 92-97). Throughout *Travels in West Africa* she refers her readers to some of the books she studied. Kingsley's reading made her aware of the superficial nature<sup>21</sup> of her observations in "The Bights of Benin", and prompted her to pull out of the contract she had already signed to complete the manuscript. This decision is

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<sup>21</sup> In her correspondence with Macmillan Kingsley later refers to 'The Bights of Benin' as the "log of a light-hearted lunatic" (Frank 92).

indicative of Kingsley's reluctance to publish an overtly 'feminine' text despite the fact that a female-authored text of this nature would have been acceptable to the reading public. Her desire to produce a text with an authoritative voice, coupled with her awareness of the constraints of the discourse of femininity on her writing, results in a distinct tension throughout *Travels in West Africa*.

Mary Kingsley's social context made it impossible for her to reject the constraints of the discourse of femininity wholeheartedly. Throughout her writing there is an unsettling shift in writing stance. This chapter will show that, while she is at pains to present an overly subdued textual self, who is aware of her lack of education, the potentially 'unfeminine' light in which her travels may be seen, and the scepticism with which her readers are bound to receive her writing, there is a definite shift from passivity to assertiveness in her authorial stance. This can be seen when she alternates between aligning herself firmly with British colonial discourse and distancing herself from the colonial effort. There is an obvious discrepancy between Kingsley's professed desire to be 'feminine' and 'proper', and the progression from passivity to assertiveness which is visible in her writing. This undermines the stability of her text and exposes the subversive nature of her text.

In her essay *Three Guineas*,<sup>22</sup> Virginia Woolf offers Mary Kingsley as an icon representing the struggles of all the un(der)educated daughters of educated men in British society in the nineteenth century (155). In a related essay, *Professions for Women*,<sup>23</sup> Woolf argues that, in the twentieth century, the daughters of educated men could be writers because it was "a reputable and harmless occupation", and because "[n]o demand was made upon the family purse" by this choice of occupation (149). However, Woolf maintains that while writing was a professional option for women of her generation, the nineteenth century ideology of femininity still constrained women's writing. The nineteenth

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<sup>22</sup> *Three Guineas* was originally intended as the sequel to Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, however its "density, its range of references and, the extremity of the political positions it advocates have pushed it to the margins of Woolf's texts, with even feminist critics expressing unease about its apparent 'empty sloganeering and cliché' and its 'stridency'" (Shiach xii).

<sup>23</sup> Woolf read *Professions for Women* when she was invited to speak at a meeting of the London/National Society for Women's Service in 1931. In this essay she explores the ideas which would eventually lead her to write *Three Guineas* (Shiach xviii).

century ideal of femininity is personified by Coventry Patmore's narrative poem, 'Angel in the House',<sup>24</sup> quoted and commented upon by Woolf as follows:

She was intensely sympathetic. She was immensely charming. She was utterly unselfish. She excelled in the difficult arts of family life. She sacrificed herself daily. If there was chicken, she took the leg; if there was a draught she sat in it -- in short she was so constituted that she never had a mind or a wish of her own, but preferred to sympathize always with the minds and wishes of others. Above all -- I need not say it -- she was pure. Her purity was supposed to be her chief beauty -- her blushes, her great grace. In those days -- the last of Queen Victoria -- every house had its Angel. (150)

It is difficult to reconcile the poem's idea of what a woman is with Mary Kingsley's longing to produce a text with an authoritative voice. Knowing, of course, that Patmore's 'Angel' who "never ha[s] a mind or a wish of her own" is a mythical being, but recognising the continuing prevalence of that ideal of femininity in society, Woolf invokes a more realistic incarnation of the 'Angel' to expound the constraints social expectations place on women writers. When Woolf first started writing, she explains, the 'Angel in the House' "made as if to guide [her] pen" and advised her to "be sympathetic; be tender; flatter; deceive; use all the arts and wiles of our sex. Never let anybody guess that you have a mind of your own. Above all, be pure" (150). According to Woolf, women writers are faced with two choices when they write. A woman can bow to the Angel and write "without expressing what [she] think[s] to be the truth about human relations, morality, [and] sex", since "these questions, according to the Angel of the House, cannot be dealt with freely and openly by women; they must charm, they must conciliate, they must -- to put it bluntly -- tell lies if they are to succeed" (151). The other option, according to Woolf, is to kill the Angel and write the truth as you see it. Mary Kingsley was a generation older<sup>25</sup> than Woolf, and these options were not as clear-cut to her. Instead of risking public

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<sup>24</sup> Virginia Woolf appropriates the term 'Angel in the House' from the title of Coventry Patmore's poem "The Angel in the House". The poem became popular in the mid-nineteenth century and offered a "codified portrait of the ideal domestic woman" against which society measured women, and which was "embedded into the domestic discourses of the mid- to late-nineteenth century and beyond" (Hartnell 472).

<sup>25</sup> Virginia Woolf's first article was published in 1905, when she was 23 (Shiach viii). Had she lived, Mary Kingsley would have been 43 that year. Unlike Woolf, as part of an older generation, Mary Kingsley was publicly opposed to women's suffrage and objected to references in the media calling her a "New Woman" (Flint, *Mary Kingsley* 208). In private correspondence she also distanced herself from the "shrieking females and androgens" campaigning for suffrage and women's admittance to learned societies (Frank 256 -7; 281).

criticism by flinging her inkpot<sup>26</sup> at the Angel as Woolf does, Mary Kingsley chose to “charm”, “conciliate”, and “tell lies” to succeed. This is evident in almost every aspect of her private and published writing, from the various reasons she provides for travelling to West Africa, to her choice of narrative devices in *Travels in West Africa*, the opinions she expresses regarding British colonial involvement in Africa, and her approach to scientific knowledge.

When Mary Kingsley left England in December 1894 to travel to West Africa for the second time she was a typical, unknown and unremarkable spinster. By the time she reached Sierra Leone almost ten months later on her way back to England, Mary Kingsley was surprised to learn that her travels were already enjoying a fair amount of media attention in England. Several letters from the publishers Kegan and Paul, offering her a contract for a book about her journey, awaited her in Sierra Leone. Soon after receiving these letters, Mary Kingsley wrote to George Macmillan, the Kingsley family publisher, using these publication offers as leverage to renegotiate<sup>27</sup> the publication of a book about her travels (Birkett, *Imperial Adventuress* 55; Frank 203-204). Upon their parents’ deaths, the Kingsley children each inherited £4,300 (Frank 57). While this would by no means allow them a lavish lifestyle, it was sufficient to survive<sup>28</sup>. Mary Kingsley saw the interest in her writing as an opportunity to achieve financial security<sup>29</sup> which would enable her to return to West Africa. In the letter to Macmillan concerning the possibility of publishing an account of her travels, she addresses her motivation in no uncertain terms: “I am anxious to

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<sup>26</sup> Woolf writes that “[k]illing the Angel in the House was part of the occupation of a woman writer” and that she “took up the inkpot and flung it” at the Angel in an effort to accomplish this (Woolf, *Professions for Women* 151). This image recalls the theologian Martin Luther’s experience when, while struggling to translate the Bible into German, he claimed to have felt the presence of the Devil so tangibly that he threw his inkpot at him.

<sup>27</sup> The initial contract for “The Bights of Benin” only gave Mary Kingsley half of the profits of her book (Frank 92).

<sup>28</sup> Mary Kingsley’s inheritance would provide her with £260 per year for sixteen years. By comparison, a nursing Sister in London at the time earned about £300 pounds per year, including meals and accommodation (Birkett, *A Bibliographical Bibliography* 7). Kingsley’s income from her inheritance would not have been enough to allow her to undertake the future travels to Africa she intended.

<sup>29</sup> Her lack of education would have disqualified Kingsley from most conventional female employment options; such as becoming a governess, or professional nurse. In the late nineteenth century, a woman in Kingsley’s financial position had limited choices. At the age of thirty three it was unlikely that she would get married. Both the Kingsley and Bailey sides of her family struggled financially, so she could not rely on support from them (Birkett, *Imperial Adventuress* 105; Frank 242-243). During the nineteenth century, Britain was almost continually at war with either one of the British colonies, or one of their European colonial rivals. As a result of the never-ending war casualties, women outnumbered men significantly by the 1890s. Consequently, about a third of adult women were not married at the time. A quarter of all adult women would never marry, whether by choice, like Kingsley, or because of the scarcity of marriageable men (Vicinus 4-5).

make money because I am now more than ever sure my Brother will not and I have myself only £260 a year and that only for fifteen years more." (Kingsley quoted in Birkett, *Imperial Adventuress* 55).

Mary Kingsley could cite financial considerations as motivation to write in private correspondence with her publisher, but these reasons would not have been acceptable to the reading public. She also had to offer an explanation for travelling in the first place. The reasons she offered, both publicly and in private, are varied and clearly demonstrate her awareness of audience. In the introduction to *Travels in West Africa*, Mary Kingsley relates her reasons for going to Africa in a light-hearted, humorous tone. She does not mention the travel accounts she read as a child or her visit to the Canaries in 1882, but rather presents herself as having had nothing else to do. She writes:

It was in 1893 that, for the first time in my life, I found myself in possession of five or six months which were not heavily forestalled, and feeling like a boy with a new half-crown, I lay about in my mind, as Mr. Bunyan would say, as to what to do with them. 'Go and learn your tropics,' said Science. (*Travels* 1)

The scientific purpose of Kingsley's travels is, however, downplayed throughout *Travels in West Africa* by her humorous tone and regular references to her travels as 'skylarking'. This can be attributed to the reigning attitude towards scientific pursuits by women, as well as the social concerns about women who travelled alone. Only once she was no longer needed at home did Kingsley consider travelling, and even then it would not be travel for its own sake. Her "fixed desire", she says, was to "study fetish" and collect fish (*Travels* 4-5). Kingsley's writing suggests that the call of duty is not limited to the domestic sphere. Not only was the naturalist occupation of collecting a suitably spinsterish pastime, it had the added advantage of serving science, and thus society in general (Birkett, *Imperial Adventuress* 36).

In her personal correspondence Mary Kingsley offers a different reason for her travels, foregrounding her sense of aimlessness following the death of her parents. In a letter to a friend, Major Matthew Nathan, Kingsley writes about her travels:

I went to West Africa to die. West Africa amused me and was kind to me and was scientifically interesting and did not want to kill me just then – I am in no hurry. I don't care one way or the other for a year or so. Well then my brother came back and I came home to look after him domestically as long as he wants me to do so. I must do it – it is duty, the religion I was brought up in. When he does not want me I go back to West Africa... . (Kingsley quoted in Frank 269)

This passage again demonstrates Kingsley's concern with trivializing her scientific pursuits and emphasizing her femininity. The significance of this passage lies in the fact that it shows how Kingsley's concern with femininity extends to her personal correspondence. In her personal correspondence, as with her published writing, Kingsley always has her audience in mind. In this case it is in Kingsley's interest to demonstrate her servitude to her brother, since she is writing to a man. In the absence of their parents, and since both Mary and Charles were unmarried, society would have considered it Kingsley's duty to look after Charles. Moreover, Matthew Nathan was the only man towards whom Kingsley ever showed romantic interest. Consequently, Kingsley may have felt obliged to present herself as an 'Angel in the House' by referring to duty as the religion she "was brought up in". In her correspondence with her closest friend, Alice Stopford Green, Kingsley does not appear as patiently dutiful as in her letters to Nathan. Her letters to Stopford Green contain many biting references to 'Master Charles' and his lack of purpose and direction (Frank 51).

While it may be argued that it is natural to adapt the content and style of writing to suit a specific audience, in Kingsley's writing the awareness of her audience is significant since it reveals a specific writing strategy. The norms and values of the late nineteenth century when Kingsley was writing located women firmly in the domestic sphere. Thus, writing produced by women had to conform to the discourse of femininity as discussed in the introductory chapter of this dissertation. While, unlike the women of Lady Anne Barnard's generation, Kingsley and her contemporaries could travel alone, this was still not the norm. Furthermore, the society they lived in was not yet ready to allow them academic freedom. In 1892, less than a year before Kingsley's first trip to West Africa, the

Royal Geographic Society (RGS)<sup>30</sup> decided to admit women as members for the first time (Birkett, *Mary Kingsley's West Africa* 13). This decision gave rise to serious debate in 1893, both within the Society and in the press.

In a letter which appeared in *The Times* on 31 May 1893, renowned traveller and later President of the RGS, George Nathaniel Curzon, opposed the decision to admit women fellows, writing on behalf of some members of the RGS that “[they] contest *in toto* the general capability of women to contribute to scientific knowledge. Their sex and training render them equally unfitted for exploration” (Curzon quoted in Birkett, *Imperial Adventuress* 62-63). The anti-women group within the society won, and at a special meeting in July of the same year the RGS Council announced its decision to rescind women’s admission<sup>31</sup>. The announcement read that the RGS considered it “inexpedient to admit ladies” (quoted in Birkett, *Imperial Adventuress* 63). In 1893 another learned society, the Geologist Association, decided to admit women as members. However, in its annual report, the President of the Geologist Association writes that, although women are welcomed as members, “the time has not yet come, that our civilisation has not yet attained that high standard, when a lady geologist could ... wander at will and unattended over the country, without danger of molestation” (Woodward quoted in Birkett, *Imperial Adventuress* 26).

The aforementioned two instances of gender discrimination make it abundantly clear that women travellers, in particular women travel writers, would have felt compelled to justify their endeavours to society at large. In *Women's Travel and the Rhetoric of Peril*, Kristi Siegel considers two of the earliest versions of the popular fairy tale ‘Little Red Riding Hood’ as cautionary tales concerned with the “safety and morality” of young girls and women (55-57), showing that female travellers at this time faced more than social scepticism about their physical and mental abilities to endure strenuous travel and to engage with scientific knowledge. Siegel concludes that the two versions of the story have a common

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<sup>30</sup> The RGS had its inception as the “Geographic Society of London” in 1830. The aim of this scholarly society was “to promote the advancement of geographical science”. Queen Victoria granted its royal charter in 1859 (*History of the Society* Online). Kingsley’s contemporary and well-known traveller, Isabella Bird Bishop, was one of twenty two women who were initially granted the title of “Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society” in 1892 (Birkett, 1992: 62).

<sup>31</sup> A few women travellers eventually became fellows of the RGS in 1913. Even then, membership was only possible upon invitation (Blanton 44).

message; that “[a] woman travelling alone is vulnerable, disobedient, and quite possibly, immoral” (57). Siegel argues that, according to society, by travelling alone in the eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and early twentieth century a woman risked her sexual safety and thus her purity and respectability (57-61). This commonly held opinion is demonstrated by the President of the Geologist Association’s warning to female members. This attitude towards women travellers is echoed in an article by a journalist from the *Daily Telegraph* who commented on the fact that Kingsley travelled in West Africa with only a few native attendants, while a male traveller of the time, Donaldson Smith, took seventy five attendants. He concluded his article by remarking that “for a white female to go alone among these wild races and hideous solitudes appears a risk to something more than life” (*Daily Telegraph* quoted in Birkett, *Imperial Adventuress* 60). The journalist alludes, of course, to the danger of sexual assault to which a woman exposed herself when travelling without a white male escort.

The social concern with sexual purity sheds light on specific aspects of Kingsley’s public behaviour in England as well as her writing. In the article “Gender and Colonial Space”, Sara Mills discusses Marion Young’s 1989 article “Throwing like a girl” and its concern with the “production of femininity” and “female motility” in the public sphere (“Gender and Colonial Space”). Mills remarks that “[e]arly feminist work on women and space tended to focus on women’s confinement and restrictions in movement”, and that consequently “even simple actions like sitting or walking are ones where the female subject is self-consciously not allowing herself to transcend the limits of the body as an object” in the public sphere (“Gender and Colonial Space”). This physical and ideological sense of restriction and passivity, argues Mills, is not as “clearly experienced [in colonial space] as it is in the British context” (“Gender and Colonial Space”).

There is a definite development from domestic passivity to colonial assertiveness that can be traced in Kingsley’s writing. This development can also be ‘read’ in a gradual but marked change in Kingsley’s public persona. Following the death of her parents in 1892, Kingsley donned mourning weeds and conducted all of her private and formal correspondence on black-bordered paper. She maintained both these conventions of grief until her death (Birkett *Imperial Adventuress* 17;

Frank 49). Prior to 1898, Kingsley provided the press with a formal studio portrait taken shortly after the death of her parents (Birkett, *Imperial Adventuress* 17; Frank 217). In this three-quarter profile she wears a voluminous black mourning dress, her hair is tightly drawn back, and she has on her head a black cap<sup>32</sup>. She is seated, with her hands folded on her lap, and looks to the side, stark-faced. The overwhelming impression the composition of this photograph creates is one of isolation. The fact that Kingsley sits with her hands folded in her lap suggests domestic passivity. This passivity extends to social interaction because she looks away from the camera, thus making it impossible to engage with the photograph. This reflects the physical and ideological restrictions of the first thirty years of her life when she was largely isolated from social and intellectual society by filial duty.

In the new photograph,<sup>33</sup> taken in 1898, her dress is still black and old-fashioned, but she wears a little black bonnet decorated with feathers and artificial flowers. Also, unlike in the first picture, she poses standing next to a low stone wall with a painted landscape of willow trees and lawns in the background. In her right hand is an umbrella, held loosely like a walking stick, and in her left hand a pair of white gloves. She looks directly at the camera and smiles faintly. The artificial environment of this picture contrasts markedly with the ascetic emptiness of the first photograph on the one hand, and the very active, involved nature of her travels in Africa on the other. There is an interesting duality in the inclusion of the umbrella as a prop in the second photograph. It seems innocuous enough as part of the artificial environment of the photograph, yet for readers of *Travels in West Africa* it invokes the active reality of Kingsley's experiences in West Africa. While travelling Kingsley puts her umbrella, which proves useless to protect her from torrential rain while ascending Mount Cameroon (454-455), to more practical, if not feminine, use on three memorable occasions.

First, during a walk, Kingsley literally stumbles upon a coffee plantation while being chased by a turkey. The owner insists on giving her a tour of the plantation and, since he doesn't speak English and she doesn't speak French, a

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<sup>32</sup> See Figure 4 on page 65.

<sup>33</sup> See Figure 5 on page 65

misunderstanding occurs when she expresses curiosity at seeing three tree-ferns indigenous to Australasia in the centre of the plantation. The Frenchman thinks that she wants them dug up to take with her, forcing Kingsley into "a brisk little engagement with the men, driving them from their prey with the point of [her] umbrella" (147-148). Later, while sailing from the Island of Corisco to Gabon, Kingsley's boat is at risk of becoming stranded in shallow water, and one of Kingsley's African guides "handles the sail and [she], when danger becomes imminent, energetically take soundings over the stern with [her] umbrella" (415). Finally, while ascending Mount Cameroon with a group of native guides and carriers, Kingsley "conscientiously attempt[s] to keep dry, by holding up an umbrella, knowing that though hopeless it is the proper thing to do" (554), eventually abandoning her attempts. Later the same day Kingsley puts the umbrella to practical use when they set up camp for the night. Kingsley recounts this incident as follows:

The men stand helpless under the trees, and I hastily take the load of blankets Herr Liebert lent us off a boy's back and undo it, throwing one blanket round each man, and opening my umbrella and spreading it over the other blankets. Then I give them a tot of rum apiece, as they sit huddled in their blankets, and tear up a lot of the brittle, rotten wood from the trees and shrubs, getting horrid thorns into my hands the while, and set to work getting a fire with it and the driest of the moss from beneath the rocks. By the aid of it and Xenia, who soon revived, and a carefully scraped up candle and a box of matches, the fire soon blazes, Xenia holding a blanket to shelter it, while I, with a cutlass, chop stakes to fix the blankets on, so as to make a fire tent. (*Travels in West Africa* 587)

This last passage in particular captures the dichotomy of Kingsley's position. Earlier, Kingsley first acknowledges the "proper", feminine use of the umbrella, and provides a reasonable explanation for not using it to keep herself dry. Here, her Victorian sense of duty as a woman and caretaker finds recourse in the "helpless[ness]" of her African companions when she sees to their comfort before taking charge of the 'masculine' tasks of chopping wood and making fire. Birkett argues that in Africa the option of behaving in an assertive manner and taking action is available to Kingsley because there she is "first of all white, and only secondly a woman" (*West Africa's Mary Kingsley* 11). Similarly, Kingsley's authority over the group of Africans travelling with her derives from her "inherited ... arrogance of assumed racial superiority prevalent in Victorian

Britain”, which makes it possible for her to “rel[y] on her racial status to grant her a freedom utterly inconceivable within her home society” (Birkett, *Networking West Africa* 116-117). However, in the social context in which her writing is read, Kingsley is expected to be passive and feminine. Thus, because Kingsley is aware of the expectations of her reading audience, she continuously foregrounds her femininity in the text. In this instance, she achieves this by performing her feminine duties first, sacrificing her umbrella without complaint, and expressing discomfort at performing masculine tasks by mentioning the “horrid thorns” which hurt her hands.

The umbrella fulfils as much a dual purpose in Kingsley’s writing in *Travels in West Africa* as it does in her publicity photograph. In the text the umbrella simultaneously underlines and undermines Kingsley’s femininity. Her use of the umbrella, first as a sort of weapon and then to measure the depth of the river, emphasizes a movement from passivity to activity. However, because the umbrella is not the ideal tool for these tasks, her activity is presented as futile and feminine. This suggests that the instances where she becomes active in the colonial context are the result of unforeseen situations. The implication that she did not come prepared for adventure and action allows the reader to dismiss her activity as coincidental rather than mannish. Conversely, when she uses the umbrella to perform masculine tasks such as defence and measurement, her active participation in the mechanics of travelling undermines the feminine futility of her efforts. It is also significant that Kingsley poses with a practical and thus ‘masculine’ umbrella rather than a ‘feminine’ parasol<sup>34</sup>. Kingsley’s stance in the second publicity photograph suggests a movement from passive housebound spinster to active participant in society.

However, the artificial elements of the photograph do not convey the complexity of Kingsley’s textual position when writing about her travels. The painted background, with its manicured lawn, shrubs and soft willows, creates a false image of Kingsley in a controlled environment. The only aspect of her African environment which she had control over was the textual representation of her

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<sup>34</sup> A parasol was used to shield Victorian women from the sun in order to maintain the fair complexion characteristic of a true ‘Angel in the House’. Thus, the suggested passivity of a parasol would not have been believable in the context of Kingsley’s publicity photograph.

travels. By creating continuity between her textual self and her public self Kingsley could control the way in which she was perceived by her reading public. Susan Bassnett contends that "many of the works by women travellers are self-conscious fictions, and the persona who emerges from the pages is as much a character as a woman in a novel" ("Travel Writing and Gender" 234). Kingsley's emphasis on her suitably feminine clothing and behaviour whilst in Africa was intended to create a persona her readership would find acceptable. In a speech commemorating the sixty-fourth anniversary of the Royal African Society<sup>35</sup>, John Flint remarks that "the thread of the narrative [in *Travels in West Africa*] centre[s] around the somewhat ridiculous spectacle of [a] black-clad, bonneted, sweating spinster, regarded by the Africans whose territory she was crossing as probably insane, but certainly harmless" ("Mary Kingsley" 154). Although this speech was delivered decades after Kingsley's death, Flint's description demonstrates the success of her efforts to cultivate an acceptable persona for her readership.

Kingsley had to maintain her spinsterish image in England for the textual emphasis on her femininity to be believable. At her public lectures she always appeared in "an old-fashioned black high-necked shirt, long black skirt and small fur bonnet, dressed as a woman way beyond her years", and would often "ask her audience if she didn't remind them of their 'maiden aunt' (Birkett, *Imperial Adventuress* 5). This spinsterish, "maiden aunt" image fulfilled another purpose. Birkett argues that Kingsley made a conscious effort not to be "considered sexually attractive" by Western standards (*Imperial Adventuress* 25, 86, 147). Her exceedingly conservative black mourning wear discouraged accusations of immorality, probably based on the assumption that if she was not attractive by Western standards she would not be at risk of "molestation" in Africa. This would have been important for Kingsley's image as a respectable woman since, as the discussion of Woolf's and Siegel's work has shown, an 'Angel in the House' (or in Africa) had to be pure.

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<sup>35</sup> The Royal African society was founded by Alice Stopford Green in 1901 to commemorate and continue Mary Kingsley's work. It was originally known as the 'Mary Kingsley Society for West Africa' ('History of the Society' Online).

After Kingsley had become famous, she offered the press and her audiences at lectures a new reason for her travels. Travelling to West Africa was no longer the 'lark' she described in the introduction to *Travels in West Africa*, nor did she go there 'to die', as she wrote to Matthew Nathan. Instead, she told an audience at one of her lectures that "[her] motive for going to West Africa was study; this study was that of native ideas and practises in religion and law" (Kingsley quoted in Frank 58). However, it was not her own desire to study that lead her there, Kingsley claimed, it was rather "a desire to complete a great book [her] father George Kingsley left unfinished"<sup>36</sup> (Kingsley quoted in Frank 58). Kingsley contradicts her earlier statement to Nathan when she says that "[i]t was no desire to get killed and eaten that made [her] go and associate with tribes with the reputation for cannibalism and human sacrifice; but just because such tribes were the best for [her] to study" that she chose West Africa as her destination (Kingsley quoted in Frank 58). All these aspects of her public persona nurtured an image of a dutiful Victorian daughter and spinster. This image was essential, because in order for Kingsley's writing to have a chance of being taken seriously, she had to appear respectable. As Birkett remarks, "women who challenged their role within Britain could not be relied upon to convey truthfully their experiences abroad" , and consequently "[t]heir claims would always be met with suspicion." (*Imperial Adventuress* 60).

Throughout *Travels in West Africa*, Kingsley continually draws attention to her feminine dress and activities. When commenting on the leather hats made and worn by locals in Sierra Leone and Lagos, Kingsley writes:

Quite 'rational dress' hats in fact, for their broad brims hang down and shade the neck, and they also shelter the eyes to such an extent that the wearer can't see without bending up the front brim pretty frequently; but then I notice there always is something wrong with a rational article of dress. Then the bulbous dome top keeps off the sun from the head, rain runs off the whole affair easily, and bush does not catch in it. If I had sufficient strength of mind I would wear one myself, but even if I decorated it with cat-tails, or antelope hair, as is usually done, I do not feel I could face Piccadilly in one; and you have no right to go about Africa in things you would be ashamed to be seen in at home. (Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa* 19)

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<sup>36</sup> In her biography of Kingsley, Katherine Frank notes that George Kingsley never began such a book. The closest Mary Kingsley came to "completing" this non-existent book was when she compiled and edited her father's essays and

This passage occurs early in the text and establishes her concern with being dressed appropriately. While on the surface it is meant to allay any suspicions her readership might have regarding the appropriateness of her clothing in West Africa, there is also an ironic undertone when Kingsley writes that "there always is something wrong with a rational article of dress". This remark makes the inclusion of details about her choice of clothing while in Africa seem calculated, since it allows her to voice two contradictory opinions. Depending on the interpretation of the reader, this passage can either be seen as a sincere agreement with Victorian notions of appropriate female dress in Africa, or as lip service intended to forestall criticism. Both Blanton and Mills also comment on Kingsley's use of irony as a narrative strategy, which enables her to occupy two vastly different discursive positions simultaneously (Blanton, *Travel Writing* 53; Mills, *Discourses of Difference* 154-155, 167). In a similar passage later in *Travels in West Africa*, Kingsley emphasizes her choice to wear appropriately feminine clothing despite its impracticality when, after falling into a game pit full of spikes, she writes:

It is at these times you realise the blessing of a good thick skirt. Had I paid heed to the advice of many people in England, who ought to have known better, and did not do it themselves, and adopted masculine garments, I should have been spiked to the bone, and done for. Whereas, save for a good many bruises, here I was with the fulness [sic] of my skirt tucked under me, sitting on nine ebony spikes some twelve inches long, in comparative comfort, howling lustily to be hauled out. (209)

This incident disappoints the popular press's portrayal of Kingsley as an intrepid explorer. Her account of the event suggests that it is her femininity that saves her life in this instance. However, Kingsley's ironic tone makes it hard to see her as entirely helpless and feminine, since it suggests that there is also humour and strength in being a woman. Kingsley's representation of herself in the incidents discussed above and other similar incidents in *Travels in West Africa* seem to invite comments such as those in Flint's speech. Casey Blanton remarks that "formal respect and inclusion in the all-male world of travel was slow to come" for Kingsley and her contemporaries, such as Isabella Bird, and that satiric cartoons appeared in the popular press depicting "Kingsley or Bird perched precariously on camel or canoe, sandwiched in between groups of natives,

looking ridiculously out of place in their dresses and bonnets" (46). Blanton argues that this "trivialized their efforts and was largely responsible for them being seen as freaks", making it even more difficult to appear authoritative in their writing.

Throughout *Travels in West Africa* it becomes clear through her use of reported speech that Kingsley's African companions often refer to her as "Sir". When she writes about this, she takes care to reassure her readers that it is not as a result of her clothing, but rather because of the "foolishness [of Africans] in not having a male and female gender in [their] languages" (502). She continues to defend her femininity and writes:

I am a most lady-like old person and yet get constantly called 'Sir.' I hasten to assure you I never even wear a masculine collar and tie, and as for encasing the more earthward extremities of my anatomy in you know what I mean well, I would rather perish on a public scaffold. (*Travels in West Africa* 502)

Irony is again apparent in Kingsley's exaggerated insistence that she would not wear masculine clothing. More significant, however, is Kingsley's failure to realize that her African companions' habit of calling her "Sir" is most likely due to her race rather than her appearance. This shows that Kingsley is oblivious of the extent to which the colonial power dynamic influences the way in which she is perceived by her African companions.

Despite thus defending her femininity, Kingsley demonstrates her awareness of the limitations of the discourse of femininity throughout the text when she deals with topics that would be considered either too trivial to be interesting or inappropriate for a woman to write about. The following paragraph occurs early in *Travels in West Africa*:

But I must forthwith stop writing about the Gold Coast, or I shall go on telling you stories and wasting your time, not to mention the danger of letting out those which would damage the nerves of the cultured of temperate climes, such as those relating to the youth who taught himself French from a six months' method book; of the man who wore brass buttons; the moving story of three leeches and two gentlemen; the doctor up a creek; and the reason why you should not eat pork along here

because all the natives have either got the guinea-worm, or kraw-kraw or ulcers; and then the pigs go and — dear me! it was a near thing that time. I'll leave off at once. (Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa* 32)

In this paragraph Kingsley's use of irony and humour creates an awkward tension which accentuates her complicated narrative perspective throughout the text. When she undertakes not to tell the type of story which would waste her readers' time or "damage" their "cultured" "nerves" she simultaneously demonstrates her awareness of her reading audience's expectations and subtly mocks their conservatism. The ironic tone allows the text to be read as stereotypically female when she launches straight into telling the type of story she promises not to tell. But it also makes apparent her criticism of, and unwillingness to conform to, the artificial limitations imposed on women's travel writing by the conservatism of society. The self-aware nature of her writing is further emphasised when she interrupts her own narrative at the point of impropriety with the 'feminine' exclamation "dear me!". The variety of voices in this passage, along with various similar passages throughout *Travels in West Africa*, lend credence to the argument that Kingsley consciously nurtured a spinsterish image to manipulate the way in which the public perceived her writing.

Sara Mills offers the opinion that Kingsley's mode of ironic, "self-deprecating humour can be traced in much women's travel writing ... since there is a disparity between the acts that are performed in their texts and what a female heroine is supposed to be able to do within the discourses of femininity" (*Discourses of Difference* 152). In response to Kingsley's use of irony to draw attention to the contradictory expectations and outcomes of the situations she finds herself in both literally and textually, a student in the audience at a debate she led at Trinity College's Magpie and Stump Debating Society drew two cartoons of Kingsley (Birkett, *Imperial Adventuress* 154; Frank 275 - 6). The first, titled "Anticipation"<sup>37</sup>, shows a serious but attractive young woman in a military-style knee-length dress with the bottom of her bloomers just visible at the dress's hem. She appears to be ready for battle, and bears a sword in her right hand, an ammunition belt strapped around her torso, a pistol in her left

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<sup>37</sup> See Figure 6 on page 65.

hand, and a rifle slung over her left shoulder. The second cartoon shows an elderly woman with a bent back wearing a long, dark, shapeless dress, and heavy black boots. Instead of weapons she has a butterfly net over the one shoulder and prods an insect with her walking stick. The woman's face is a clear caricature of Kingsley's features. This cartoon is titled "Realisation"<sup>38</sup>. The significance of these cartoons lies in the fact that they reflect Kingsley's audience's awareness of the dichotomy of her position, and show the extent of the efficacy of her attempts to manipulate public perception.

When Kingsley encounters European men during her travels in Africa, it is especially important that she should appear respectable. Apart from her own records, these men are the only witnesses to her behaviour away from home. This causes her some difficulty more than once when she needs to tidy up before meeting with a European man. Shortly before Kingsley reaches a German colonial station near Buea, she wants to clean her muddy skirt, but she finds black soldiers and women doing their laundry where she wants to wash in the river. She describes this predicament as follows:

I hesitate on the bank. I am in an awful mess mud-caked skirts, and blood-stained hands and face. Shall I make an exhibition of myself and wash here, or make an exhibition of myself by going unwashed to that unknown German officer who is in charge of the station? Naturally I wash here, standing in the river and swishing the mud out of my skirts; and then wading across to the other bank, I wring out my skirts, but what is life without a towel? (*Travels in West Africa* 563)

Kingsley prefers the personal discomfort and embarrassment of cleaning up where the Africans can see her to making "an exhibition" of herself in the company of a European man. The Africans she encounters form part of the colonized landscape rather than the society which determines Kingsley's behaviour and, as Birkett remarks, "[w]hile the single white woman might not have a defined place within colonial society, one white man could nevertheless constitute that same society and the restrictions it implied", and as such his opinion of Kingsley mattered more than that of the Africans (*Spinsters Abroad* 80). Later, Kingsley's efforts to make herself presentable prove to have been in

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<sup>38</sup> See Figure 7 on page 65.

vain, since the German colonial official "views [her] appearance with unmixed horror, and suggests an instant hot bath" (*Travels in West Africa* 563). Kingsley motivates her decision to decline his offer: "Men can be trying! How in the world is any one going to take a bath in a house with no doors, and only very sketchy wooden window-shutters?" (653). Kingsley's concern at the propriety of bathing in a house without doors is clearly caused by the presence of the German officer, since earlier in the text she describes bathing naked in a river near a Fan village where she spent the night (254).

Kingsley's descriptions of her behaviour in West Africa constitute only one of the aspects that contribute to her unstable narrative position. She also has to find an appropriate way of commenting on what she observes in Africa. *Travels in West Africa* is prefaced by an apology to her readers strongly reminiscent of the preface Lady Anne Barnard wrote for her *Cape Journals* a century earlier. Although *Travels in West Africa* was published just more than a decade after Lady Anne wrote her *Cape Journals*, the tone and content of their prefaces are very similar. The difference between the two texts is that, unlike Lady Anne's writing, Kingsley's work was intended for publication almost from the outset of her travels. Lady Anne, at least, had the ambiguous advantage of expecting a small reading audience, the members of which were all known to her. Kingsley's reading audience is more diverse and more likely to be critical of her writing. She writes:

What this book wants is not a simple Preface but an apology, and a very brilliant and convincing one at that. Recognising this fully, and feeling quite incompetent to write such a masterpiece, I have asked several literary friends to write one for me, but they have kindly but firmly declined, stating that it is impossible satisfactorily to apologise for my liberties with Lindley Murray and the Queen's English. I am therefore left to make a feeble apology for this book myself, and all I can personally say is that it would have been much worse than it is had it not been for Dr. Henry Guillemard, who has not edited it, or of course the whole affair would have been better, but who has most kindly gone through the proof sheets, lassoing prepositions which were straying outside their sentence stockade, taking my eye off the water cask and fixing it on the scenery where I meant it to be, saying firmly in pencil on margins "No you don't," when I was committing some more than usually heinous literary crime, and so on. (vii-viii)

It is clear that Kingsley engages in the discourse of femininity from the first page of her book. Her apology for her language and the "literary crime[s]" she commits are intended to draw attention to her femininity and to indicate her willingness to concede to Dr. Guillemard's expertise when necessary. However, when she writes that Dr. Guillemard sometimes had to keep her writing focussed on "the scenery where [she] meant it to be", her ironic tone suggests that she is not as subservient as she would have her readers believe. Elsewhere in the introduction, Kingsley offers her reader yet another motivation for writing *Travels in West Africa* and assures them of the truthfulness of her account:

I cannot forbear from mentioning my gratitude to Mr. George Macmillan for his patience and kindness with me, a mere jungle of information on West Africa. Whether you my reader will share my gratitude is, I fear, doubtful, for if it had not been for him I should never have attempted to write a book at all, and in order to excuse his having induced me to try I beg to state that I have written only on things that I know from personal experience and very careful observation. I have never accepted an explanation of a native custom from one person alone, nor have I set down things as being prevalent customs from having seen a single instance. I have endeavoured [sic] to give you an honest account of the general state and manner of life in Lower Guinea and some description of the various types of country there. (vii-viii)

In this passage Kingsley distances herself from academic discourse when she uses the metaphor of the West African "jungle" to describe her knowledge of the continent. This suggests that there is no order or logic to her knowledge and writing compared to scientific writing by men. Her claim that she would "would never have attempted to write a book at all" if it had not been for Macmillan's encouragement, reinforces the idea that she is passive and feminine and needs male guidance to be productive. Because she does not have an education, she cannot rely on scientific knowledge to lend credibility to her writing. She can only observe and record her experiences on the continent and assure her readers that she verifies her information before she offers it to them as fact. As discussed earlier in this chapter, one of the reasons Kingsley provides for her travels is to study fetish and collect fish. The instances where Kingsley adopts an authoritative voice in *Travels in West Africa* are invariably related to "fetish". Religion is not a 'scientific' topic, thus it is a 'safer', more respectable topic for a woman to write on than "fish".

The care Kingsley takes to present a respectable image and a text which lends itself to 'feminine' reading is destabilised by passages in the text where Kingsley's narrator is presented as masculine. In the passage below Kingsley's narrator is identified as "he" when she writes:

I have omitted all my bush journal. It is a journal of researches in Fetish and of life in the forest and in native villages, and I think I have a better chance of making this information understood by collecting it together; for the African forest is not a place you can, within reasonable limits, give an idea of by chronicling your own experience in it day by day. As a psychological study the carefully kept journal of a white man, from the first day he went away from his fellow whites and lived in the Great Forest Belt of Africa, among natives, who had not been in touch with white culture, would be an exceedingly interesting thing, provided it covered a considerable space of time; but to the general reader it would be hopelessly wearisome, and as for myself, I am not bent on discoursing on my psychological state, but on the state of things in general in West Africa. (*Travels in West Africa* 101)

The meticulous care Kingsley takes to present a feminine public and textual image in passages such as those discussed above stands in stark contrast to this type of passage in *Travels in West Africa*, where the narrator is clearly identified as the "white man" in question. Kingsley uses a male narrator to distance herself from the confessional "bush journal" typically associated with women's travel writing of her time. This narrative strategy indicates a reluctance to produce a simple autobiographical account of her travels. Kingsley voiced her objections to stereotypical women's writing in her private correspondence with her publisher when he indicated that he would publish her first manuscript, "The Bights of Benin", provided that it was edited, since the first draft "read as if it had been written by a man" (Birkett, *Imperial Adventuress* 27). She responded to this criticism in a resolute tone:

I really cannot draw the trail of the petticoats over the Coast of all places, neither can I have a picture of myself in trousers or any other excitement of that sort added. I went out there as a naturalist not as a sort of circus. But if you would like my name will not it be sufficient to put M.H. Kingsley? It does not matter to the general public what I am". (Kingsley quoted in Birkett, *Imperial Adventuress* 27)

It is clear from her writing in *Travels in West Africa* that Kingsley was forced, to a certain extent, to accede to Macmillan's conditions in order to get her work published. Her use of irony can be seen as a compromise enabling her to offer otherwise impossible comments on her travels. In her correspondence with Macmillan she also contradicts her statement in the preface to *Travels in West Africa* that "the whole affair would have been better" if it had been edited by Guillemard (vii). Her letters to Macmillan and Guillemard show her frustration at Guillemard's editorial liberties intended to formalize and feminize her writing. For example, he would replace "house" with "dwelling", "awful" with "appalling", and "end" with "terminus"; as well as adding Latin words and phrases where she used English. Guillemard also inserted "Dear Reader" in the text at regular intervals (Frank 223). After eight months of debate, Kingsley wrote to Macmillan finally rejecting Guillemard's changes:

I am going down to the Coast again and I have no character to lose as a literary person but I have got a very good character to lose as a practical sea man and an honest observer of facts on the West Coast and I cannot put my name to this sort of [...] panorama affair, and if my log is published as I have written it I feel I can face any man. (Kingsley quoted in Frank 223)

This extract from Kingsley's letter to Macmillan shows that she had a very different primary audience in mind when writing. She wanted her writing to be taken seriously by those with a first hand knowledge of Africa; namely the traders she met in Africa. In the opening pages of *Travels in West Africa*, Kingsley acknowledges them when she writes that "[a]ll [she] know[s] that is true regarding West African facts, [she] owe[s] to the traders; [and that only] the errors are [her] own" (7). Despite her claims to the contrary, Kingsley also wanted her book to appeal to an academic audience.

Only when Kingsley accepted the need to conform to the discourse of femininity did she adapt her writing to make it accessible to a larger readership. Within two months of her arrival in London, Mary Kingsley started receiving invitations to present lectures on her travels (Birkett, *Imperial Adventuress* 87; Frank 214). Her first lecture was to the Scottish Geographical Society in Edinburgh and Glasgow in February 1896. However, she was not allowed to present the lecture

herself. One of the male fellows read it, while she sat behind him on stage. She could only answer questions from the audience after her paper was read (Birkett, *Imperial Adventuress* 66; Frank 214). Other learned societies also invited Mary Kingsley, but always on condition that her paper was read by a man. Following the success of *Travels in West Africa*, Mary Kingsley was allowed to present her own lecture when the Liverpool Geographic Society invited her for the second time in November 1897 (Frank 246). After the publication of *Travels in West Africa*, she also presented many public lectures, and on one occasion drew a crowd of almost two thousand (Frank 214-5). These public lectures were important, because they gave Kingsley the opportunity to see which parts of her travel tales interested her audience and which parts bored them. She used this information to produce an abridged version of her first book and also to decide what to include in her second book, *West African Studies*, which was published in 1899 (Frank 246 -7).

As a Victorian woman writing within the colonial context, Kingsley struggles to find a discursive position which satisfies her desire to present an authentic, authoritative account of her travels while conforming to the restrictive social expectations of women's writing. Neither colonial discourse nor the discourse of femininity offered Kingsley a satisfactory framework for her writing. She was excluded from the former by her gender and stripped of an authoritative voice by the latter. The variety of voices found within Kingsley's writing is the result of her attempt to find a balance between the difficult social and textual position these two fundamentally contradictory discourses represent. Because of the impossibility of maintaining such a balance, Kingsley switches between different narrative strategies to achieve specific ideological goals throughout the text.

The passive nature of the discourse of femininity did not allow Kingsley to adopt the traditional, male adventure hero stance of travel writing. Mills draws on Elizabeth Joyce's comparison of Kingsley's *Travels in West Africa* to Henry Stanley's *Through the Dark Continent* (1879) when she arrives at the conclusion that although Kingsley often has "ample space for the heroic stance, [she] instead uses a self-mocking tone, occasionally resorting to parody; [and that] she even parodies the conventions [...] whereby heroic travel accounts are written" (Mills, *Discourses of Difference* 154). Kingsley uses this approach to her

travels when describing the difficulty of navigating through mangrove swamps in a canoe:

[Y]ou are liable -- until you realise the danger from experience, or have native advice on the point -- to get tide-trapped away in the swamps, the water falling round you when you are away in some deep pool or lagoon, and you find you cannot get back to the main river. Of course if you really want a truly safe investment in Fame, and really care about Posterity, and Posterity's Science, you will jump over into the black batter-like, stinking slime, cheered by the thought of the terrific sensation you will produce 20,000 years hence, and the care you will be taken of then by your fellow-creatures, in a museum. But if you are a mere ordinary person of a retiring nature, like me, you stop in your lagoon until the tide rises again; most of your attention is directed to dealing with an "at home" to crocodiles and mangrove flies, and with the fearful stench of the slime round you. What little time you have over you will employ in wondering why you came to West Africa, and why, after having reached this point of folly, you need have gone and painted the lily and adorned the rose, by being such a colossal ass as to come fooling about in mangrove swamps. (*Travels in West Africa* 89)

Here Kingsley draws attention to the way in which a male adventure hero would have reacted in such a situation to "produce" the kind of "terrific sensation" which the discourse of femininity makes unavailable to her. Kingsley distances herself from active participation in the potentially dangerous situation she describes by referring to herself as a "mere ordinary person of a retiring nature", and through her use of the uninvolved second person narrator. When Kingsley concludes the second person narrative by predicting that such an experience would lead one to contemplate the "folly" of travelling to Africa and being "such a colossal ass as to [go] fooling about in mangrove swamps", her narrative suggests that she is actually predicting her readers' response to her travels. When she continues the story, she switches to a first person narrator to recount the following incident when a crocodile tried to climb into her canoe during low tide:

Twice this chatty little incident, as Lady MacDonald would call it, has happened to me, but never again if I can help it. On one occasion, the last, a mighty Silurian, as The Daily Telegraph would call him, chose to get his front paws over the stern of my canoe, and endeavoured to improve our acquaintance. I had to retire to the bows, to keep the balance right, and fetch him a clip on the snout with a paddle, when he withdrew, and I paddled into the very middle of the lagoon, hoping the

water there was too deep for him or any of his friends to repeat the performance. Presumably it was, for no one did it again. I should think that crocodile was eight feet long ; but don't go and say I measured him, or that this is my outside measurement for crocodiles. I have measured them when they have been killed by other people, fifteen, eighteen, and twenty-one feet odd. This was only a pushing young creature who had not learnt manners. (*Travels in West Africa* 89)

Kingsley's description of her encounter with the crocodile as a "chatty little incident" trivializes the danger of the situation. Her prediction that the *Telegraph* would refer to the crocodile as a "Silurian" mocks the popular press' depiction of her as an intrepid explorer. Casey Blanton remarks that "[t]his kind of witty, ironic prose [...] depends on British allusions to manner and society", and that it allows Kingsley to "emphasize her retiring, ladylike position as a Victorian woman, and at the same time be the voice of adventure, escape, and authority" (53).

When Kingsley comments on African women in *Travels in West Africa*, her perspective becomes that of a male coloniser, yet she maintains an "I" perspective, as in this description she gives of the Igalwa women:

I think, the comeliest ladies I have ever seen on the Coast. Very black they are, blacker than many of their neighbours, always blacker than the Fans, and although their skin lacks that velvety pile of the true negro, it is not too shiny, but it is fine and usually unblemished, and their figures are charmingly rounded, their hands and feet small, almost as small as a high- class Calabar woman's, and their eyes large, lustrous, soft and brown, and their teeth as white as the sea surf and undisfigured by filing (223).

She engages in colonial discourse without irony and sexualizes African women in the stereotypical voice of a European man. In another interesting passage she treats her African companions as if they were European women when she writes:

I chaperoned my men, while among the ladies of Esoon — a forward set of minxes — with the vigilance of a dragon; and decreed, like the Mikado of Japan, "that whosoever leered or winked, unless connubially linked, should forthwith be beheaded," have their pay chopped, I mean ... . (*Travels in West Africa* 296)

These passages stand in marked contrast to the bulk of Kingsley's writing, not only because of the unapologetic male perspective she offers, but also since, as Mills remarks, the last statement is "extremely bizarre ... considering the position of women and chaperoning in Britain at that time" (*Discourses of Difference* 157). Furthermore, these comments are hardly congruous with the sentiments she expresses concerning Africans in other parts of the texts. Early on in the text Kingsley expresses her disapproval of the "secondhand rubbishy white culture — a culture far lower and less dignified than that of either the stately Mandingo or the bush chief", adopted by the "Sierra Leone dandy" as a result of the influence of Europeans on the coast (20). Later she draws on her "personal experiences among an African tribe in its original state, i.e. in a state uninfluenced by European ideas and culture" when she arrives at the conclusion that the European presence in Africa has not been mutually beneficial (286). She writes:

Nothing strikes one so much, in studying the degeneration of these native tribes, as the direct effect that civilisation and reformation have in hastening it. The worst enemy to the existence of the African tribe, is the one who comes to it and says: Now you must civilise, and come to school, and leave off all those awful goings-on of yours, and settle down quietly. (Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa* 403)

Here Kingsley engages in colonial discourse, but does not align herself with the colonial effort. Her pro-African argument and divergence from the discourse of femininity is rooted in her support for the British West African traders. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Kingsley spent most of her time travelling to and from the African coast on trade ships during her visit to the Canary Islands shortly after the death of her parents. In the introduction to *Travels in West Africa*, Kingsley expresses her gratitude to the traders and credits them with enabling her future travels to West Africa (6). Birkett argues that because most of the traders living on the West African coast had been there for a long time and had married African women, they were "[d]ivorced from the moral and social restrictions of middle-class British society" (*Imperial Adventuress* 24). As such, Kingsley found that they were willing to share information with her and provided her with the means to travel as cheaply as a trader. Unlike the government officials she encountered in Africa, these men accepted her

presence without question or criticism. The freedom Kingsley's association with the traders granted her in Africa, along with her friendship with George Goldie, the head of the Royal Niger Company,<sup>39</sup> led her to support the trader in a struggle to maintain control of the liquor traffic in Africa. Since the temperance movement was led by the Missionary Society in Africa, Kingsley could support the trader's cause by opposing the missionary presence in Africa (Flint, "A Reassessment" 98-99).

Kingsley's criticism of the missionaries in Africa is apparent very early in the text. When she started planning her first trip to Africa her friends advised her to read "missionary literature" since it provided the most information on Africa (Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa* 3). However, she found that "these good people wrote their reports not to tell you how the country they resided in was, but how it was getting on towards being what it ought to be" (3). In the first Appendix to *Travels in West Africa*, Kingsley draws on her observations of African culture during her travels when she comes to the conclusion that the missionaries are wrong when they identify "polygamy" and the "liquor traffic" as the two factors preventing their success among the African people (662). Kingsley argues that at the root of the problem is the missionaries' failure to understand the "nature of the West African native" (213, 646). Polygamy, Kingsley argues, "is the institution which above all others governs the daily life of the native", that for the African it "is not an unmixed evil; and that at the present culture-level of the African it is not to be eradicated" (662). She uses the following example to illustrate her point:

An old chief, who had three wives, profoundly and vividly believed that exclusion from the Holy Communion meant an eternal damnation. The missionary had instructed him in the details of this damnation thoroughly, and the chief did not like the prospect at all ; but on the other hand he did not like to turn off the three wives he had lived with for years. He found the matter was not even to be compromised, by turning off two and going to church to be married with accompanying hymns and orange-blossoms with number three, for the ladies held together; not one of them would marry him and let the other two go, so the poor old chief worried himself

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<sup>39</sup> The Royal Niger Company (RNC) was a traders' organization which had control over the Niger territories in the 1890s. The RNC did not have any political control and could only control the trade between Africa and Britain. Until 1879 the Church Mission Society owned shares in the RNC. However, after these shares were sold the Mission Society started to campaign for a return of Colonial rule on the basis that the RNC was importing mostly alcohol which caused drunkenness and immorality in African society (Flint, "A reassessment" 97 -98).

to a shamrock and anybody else he could get to listen to him. (*Travels in West Africa* 213)

The example of the old African chief is intended to show that polygamy is one of the defining characteristics of traditional African society, and that its abolition would leave countless women without a husband and caretaker, and cause a collapse of their family structure and informal social welfare system. Kingsley debunks the second aspect of the missionaries' reasons for failing to convert Africans to Christianity by saying that they "have gravely exaggerated both the evil and the extent of the liquor traffic in West Africa" (213), and that the British public has believed this exaggeration

because the cry against alcohol is at present a popular one in England, and it has also the advantage of making the subscribers at home regard the African as an innocent creature who is led away by bad white men, and therefore still more interesting and more worthy, and in more need of subscriptions than ever. (*Travels in West Africa* 663)

Alcohol abuse was indeed causing extreme poverty in the British working class at the time, so Kingsley's argument that the British public is projecting its own domestic problems onto African society is entirely plausible (Flint, "Introduction" xviii). Furthermore, her objection to the portrayal of Africans as weak and easily corruptible was very progressive for her time. She takes her defence of Africans even further, and writes:

in the whole of West Africa, in one week, there is not one-quarter the amount of drunkenness you can see any Saturday night you choose in a couple of hours in the Vauxhall Road; and you will not find in a whole year's investigation on the Coast, one seventieth part of the evil, degradation, and premature decay you can see any afternoon you choose to take a walk in the more densely-populated parts of any of our own towns. (*Travels in West Africa* 663)

Kingsley's argument is logical and based on an accurate summation of the social situation in both Africa and England. She engages in colonial discourse unapologetically and, as Mills remarks, offers her opinion with confidence usually associated with male writing (*Discourses of Difference* 158). However, Kingsley never mentions her political support of the traders in relation to her attack on the missionaries in the text of *Travels in West Africa*. Instead, she offers her

understanding of the nature of the African as the starting point of her argument. While the conclusion she arrives at concerning polygamy and the liquor traffic seems to align her with Africans, the logic behind her conclusion contradicts this alignment. Kingsley contends that there is a fundamental difference between black and white men. She uses the following analogy to explain her position:

I feel certain that a black man is no more an undeveloped white man than a rabbit is an undeveloped hare; and the mental difference between the two races is very similar to that between men and women among ourselves. A great woman, either mentally or physically, will excel an indifferent man, but no woman ever equals a really great man. The missionary to the African has done what my father found them doing to the Polynesians `regarding the native minds as so many jugs only requiring to be emptied of the stuff which is in them and refilled with the particular form of dogma he is engaged in teaching, in order to make them the equals of the white races.' This form of procedure works in very various ways. It eliminates those parts of the native fetish that were a wholesome restraint on the African. (*Travels in West Africa* 659)

Underlying Kingsley's argument, using these and various other similar analogies and metaphors throughout her book, is the simple racist determinism which characterised the colonial discourse of her time. When Kingsley resorts to this argument she engages in the same brand of logic in terms of which the patriarchal system relegates women to the domestic sphere in British society. She maintains that the "native mind" is not just an "empty jug" waiting to be filled, but has a culture and religion "of his own", and is in fact not suited for Western religion and education at all. She continues this line of argument to explain the position of the "mission made" African in colonial society, where he is

the curse of the Coast, and you find him in European clothes and without, all the way down from Sierra Leone to Loanda. The pagans despise him, the whites hate him, still he thinks enough of himself to keep him comfortable. His conceit is marvelous... . (*Travels in West Africa* 660)

Apart from the fact that the African's mind is not suited to Western education, Kingsley argues, the colonies had no need for educated Africans while there were colonial officials who could perform administrative tasks. The other difference between Africans and Europeans which Kingsley comments on is the "great inferiority of the African ... in the matter of mechanical idea" (*Travels in*

*West Africa* 669). Kingsley echoes colonial sentiments of the time when she instructs her reader to

remember that, unless under white direction, the African has never made an even fourteenth-rate piece of cloth or pottery, or a machine, tool or picture, sculpture, and that he has never even risen to the level of picture-writing. (*Travels in West Africa* 670)

This makes it impossible to read her work as anti-colonial. She admits that she regards "not only the African, but all coloured races, as inferior in kind not in degree to the white races", and this inferiority derives from the African's essentially spiritual intelligence (669). It is for this reason that she includes five substantial chapters in which African "fetish" is discussed in detail in *Travels in West Africa*. Having considered the challenges the missionaries face in converting Africans to Christianity, Kingsley proposes this alternative to the current missionary system:

Almost every mission on the Coast has now a technical school just started or having collections made at home to start one; but in the majority of these crafts such as bookbinding, printing, tailoring, &c., are being taught which are not at present wanted. It is in these places that an industrial mission would be so valuable to the spiritual cause, for by employing and amusing the largely preponderating lower faculties of the African's mind, it would give the higher faculties time to develop. What Africa wants at present and will want for the next 200 years at least, are workers, planters, plantation hands, miners, and seamen; and there are no schools in Africa to teach these things or the doctrine of the ability of labour save the technical mission-schools. (Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa* 671)

Her suggestion completely contradicts her first point, that the African is not an "empty jug" to be filled with Western ideas. Her approach to 'civilizing' the African is more time-consuming, but still functions on the basic assumption that the African's mind needs "time to develop".

The part of *Travels in West Africa* devoted to her discussion of trade, labour, and the problems missionaries face in Africa appear in an appendix. The reasons for separating these arguments from the part of the text concerned with her travel writing may lie in her concern at least to appear to conform to the restrictions of the discourse of femininity. Since these arguments occur after the account of

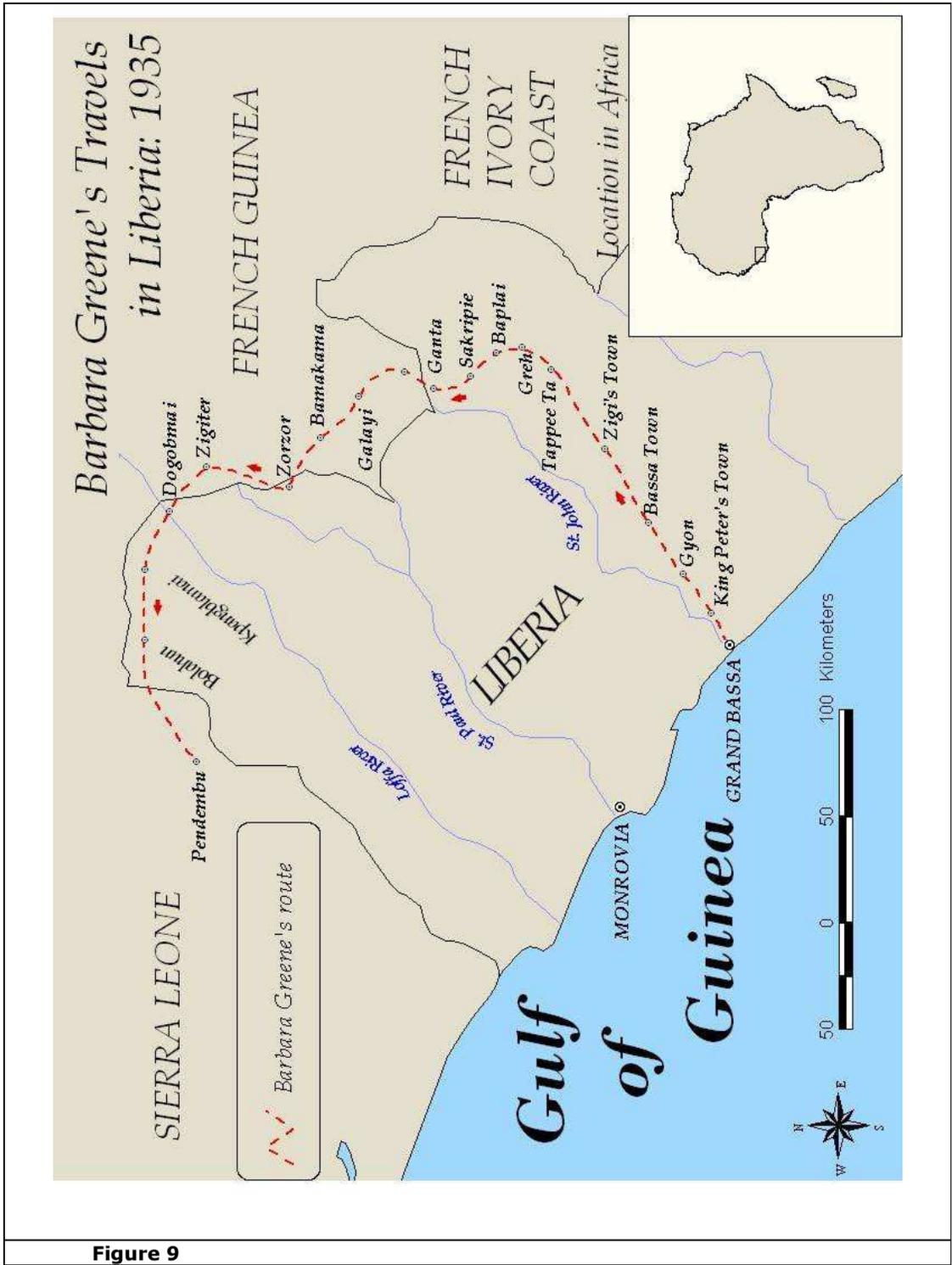
her travels, they could be seen to be of secondary importance to the rest of her writing. While the political importance of Kingsley's work is not under discussion here, it is interesting to consider the effect her writing has had on the ideological changes surrounding European colonial involvement. John E. Flint offers the following summary of the importance of Kingsley's work:

Mary Kingsley's insistence on the importance of traditional values and the need for their preservation was at the time extremely important. She did more than any other writer to produce in Europe a willingness to try to understand African behaviour, and it was from her views that the system of indirect rule, directed towards preventing a wholesale break-up of traditional society, gained strength. The [more progressive] ideas she propounded are also strikingly similar to modern African nationalist doctrines of the 'African' personality. (*Introduction* xvii –xviii)

*Travels in West Africa* was first published by Macmillan in January of 1897 and became an immediate success, requiring a fifth edition to be printed by June of the first year of publication (Frank 230). What set Mary Kingsley's work apart from that of her contemporaries was that it "managed to attract the interest and admiration of both the popular and specialist press" (Birkett, *Imperial Adventuress* 82). The reason for the book's initial success is threefold. Firstly, as the adventure story of a middle class Victorian woman who travelled through virtually unexplored African territory without a white male escort, and in the company of "savages", it had immense novelty value. Secondly, it contained a wealth of new ethnological information on Africa at the height of Europe's colonial expansions on this continent. The final, and perhaps most significant factor contributing to the immediate success of *Travels in West Africa*, was the celebrity status Mary Kingsley enjoyed in England and throughout the world after her return from West Africa.

Kingsley planned to spend the rest of her life travelling and writing, but she died on 3 June 1900 of typhoid fever while nursing Boer prisoners-of-war at Simon's Town in South Africa. Because of Kingsley's awareness of the constraints of the discourse of femininity and her apparent need to produce an authoritative text, her writing is characterised by contradictions. This is evidenced by the constant shifts in narrative perspective in *Travels in West Africa* which, as Mills puts it, has a very "unsettling effect on the reader" (*Discourses of Difference* 156). Kingsley began working on her second book, *West African Studies*, immediately

after the publication of *Travels in West Africa*. It would seem that the response to *Travels in West Africa* gave Kingsley the confidence to venture into decidedly masculine writing territory. While *Travels in West Africa* was aimed mostly at “the general public and those influential in West African affairs” (Birkett, *Mary Kingsley* 17), as the title suggests *West African Studies* is not merely a travel book, but an ethnological study and a “far more political book” than her first (Birkett, *Imperial Adventuress* 131). This increase in confidence is evident in various aspects of Kingsley’s public and textual representations of herself. When she first wanted to publish her writing as *The Bights of Benin*, Kingsley intended a traditionally feminine travelogue. However, as her knowledge of Africa grew, she decided against publishing such a shallow text. As this discussion has shown, there is also a suggested shift from passivity to assertiveness in the composition of publicity photographs. *Travels in West Africa* is presented as a travel book, but actually offers more than just an account of a woman’s travels in West Africa. In *Travels in West Africa* Kingsley subverts the discourse of colonialism through her apparent conformity to the discourse of femininity.



BARBARA GREENE  
**TOO LATE  
TO TURN BACK**

BARBARA AND GRAHAM GREENE IN LIBERIA

'He lives in her book as he does in none other that  
I know' - Paul Theroux



PENGUIN TRAVEL LIBRARY

Figure 10

## Chapter 3

### The Woman who Walked Behind Graham Greene on his *Journey Without Maps: Reassessing Too Late to Turn Back*, Barbara Greene's "Perfect Companion Piece"

'You wrote a good book,' I say. 'I'm not a writer,' she replies without hesitation. 'My cousin Graham, he is...' 'Of course. But it remains a beautiful book. And I read it with more pleasure than your cousin's account of the same journey.' 'Impossible. It's silly. Childish. I wanted to exclude some passages but the publisher would not hear of it. Bah, it's bad, bad. ~ Barbara Greene<sup>40</sup>



**Figure 11**  
**Barbara Greene**

Barbara Greene's *Land Benighted* (republished in 1981 and again in 1990 as *Too Late to Turn Back: Barbara and Graham Greene in Liberia*) was published at the end of 1938, almost one and a half centuries after Lady Anne Barnard's journals and forty one years after Mary Kingsley's *Travels in West Africa*. By comparison, Barbara Green found herself in a brave new world as a woman, a traveller, and a writer. She journeyed to Liberia in 1935 as a companion to her cousin, the author Graham Greene.

At a time when very little of the world remained unexplored, and women's publishing was no longer unusual, Barbara Greene's writing did not have the same novelty value or scientific value as Kingsley's work, nor did it have the historical appeal of Lady Anne Barnard's writing. At the same time, society expected women to return to the domestic sphere both literally and ideologically. In her essay "Travel Writing and Gender", Susan Bassnett reaches the conclusion that travel writing is "always necessarily a product of a particular time and a particular culture" (239). As the discussion of Lady Anne Barnard's and Mary Kingsley's texts has shown, this is clearly true of women's travel writing. In order to contextualize Barbara

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<sup>40</sup> I have translated this quote from Dutch. It is taken from an interview with Barbara Green by Chris van der Heijden, which was originally published in Dutch. All other quotes used from this article are my own translations. I have made use of dictionaries and advice from native speakers of Dutch to ensure the accuracy of the translation.

Greene's writing, it is necessary to assess her social and historical positioning as a woman, a traveller, and a writer at the time of her travels and first publication.

Barbara Greene was born in Sao Paulo, Brazil, on 28 September 1907. Her father, Edward Greene, was an Englishman who lived and worked in Brazil for a number of years. Eva Stutzer, her mother, was the daughter of a German immigrant who worked in Brazil as a Lutheran clergyman (Strachwitz). When Barbara Greene was five years old her family returned to England to live at Berkhamsted in Hertfordshire (B. Greene ix). She grew up in a very privileged, yet conservative, environment, a fact she often refers to in *Too Late to Turn Back*. As a girl she attended a Quaker school "of such austerity as would not be tolerated to-day, but where [she] was supremely happy" (B. Greene xi). In an interview shortly before her death, she tells a journalist how, as a young woman, before she went to Liberia, her life consisted of parties, horse riding, tennis, leisurely study, the theatre, and music (van der Heijden 1). In *Too Late to Turn Back* she describes her home life as follows:

My life in England had been laid in pleasant places. All my life I had been used to well-cooked food and beautiful clothes, a lovely house filled with people who smoothed out for me as far as possible the rough patches on my road through life. I was taken care of and spoilt both by my family and my friends, and the little, dull, tiresome everyday household things were automatically done for me. I had liked to find my evening clothes spread out for me ready pressed on my bed, my bath ready for me, and then to come down to a dinner lit by candle-light. Beauty, comfort, and a good deal of luxury had been part of my life. (48-49)

Considering her almost Victorian lifestyle it is not surprising that, like Lady Anne Barnard and Mary Kingsley before her, Barbara Greene engages in the discourse of femininity to a degree. However, this can not be solely attributed to her comfortable home life and social life. In the aftermath of the first World War, the Britain of Barbara Greene's girlhood and young adulthood saw a return to almost nineteenth century conservatism regarding women. Deirdre Beddoe's *Back to Home and Duty: Women Between the wars, 1918 – 1939* offers a study of British women's position in society in the inter-war years. Beddoe identifies "two distinct images of British womanhood" which survived the nineteenth century, "the one approving and the other disapproving, the Perfect Lady and the New Woman" (9). The "Perfect Lady" was a stay-at-home wife and mother, while the term "New Woman" – often applied to Mary Kingsley – "denotes

disapproval and ridicule: it is a hostile and mocking parody" (10). According to Beddoe, the "New Woman" was depicted as "an ugly 'blue stocking', wearing a high collared blouse and tie, smoking and adopting overtly masculine poses", and she was "somehow not a woman at all" (10). It was only what Beddoe dubs the "emergency conditions" resulting from the first World War which forced society to "transform its notions of women's role and consequently drastically remodel its images of women" (10).

During World War I women had entered the British work-force in previously unknown numbers to fulfil the duties of men fighting in the trenches. In 1918, "in what it defined as a gesture of recognition for women's contribution to the war effort," says Kent, "Parliament granted the vote to women over the age of thirty" (232). During and immediately after the war, British women experienced a kind of social and political freedom which their predecessors had never known. However, in reaction to the social disruption caused by the war, British society saw the return of an almost pre-war emphasis on femininity, which persisted up to the outbreak of World War II (Kent 237).

In an essay "The Politics of Sexual Difference: World War I and the Demise of British Feminism", Susan Kent traces the effect of the war on feminism as a political movement. She quotes from Andrew Rosen's book, *Rise Up, Women! The Militant Campaign of the Women's Social and Political Union, 1903 - 1914*, to demonstrate the change that took place in British society during the first World War, when women were doing "work which three years [earlier] would have been regarded as falling exclusively within the province of men" (Rosen quoted in Kent 235). Wartime media reflected the shift in women's roles. Baden Powell's recruitment posters invited women to join the war effort and become "The Girl behind the Man behind the Gun" (Beddoe 11), while after the war commercial advertisements changed "abruptly from depicting war workers to housewives" (13). Kent draws on the work of another theorist, Joan W. Scott, when she argues that, in the years following the first World War, "war [was] represented as a sexual disorder" and that "peace thus implie[d] a return to 'traditional' gender relationships, the familiar and natural order of families, men in public roles, women at home, and so on" (Scott quoted in Kent 237). She finds that the "rise of antifeminism in Britain and ideological and institutional

division within the ranks of organized feminism ... were intricately bound up with one another", and that they "represented attempts on the part of postwar society to recreate order in the aftermath of the greatest upheaval Britain had faced up to that time" (Kent 237). The overall impression created by the media in the 1920s and 1930s was that being a feminist implied being unpatriotic and unfeminine. Beddoe states that the "single most arresting feature of the inter-war years was the strength of the notion that women's place is in the home" (3). She contends that, during this time, "only one desirable image was held up to women by all the mainstream media agencies – that of the housewife and mother", and that "other role models [such as] flappers, career women, spinsters and lesbians were all portrayed as highly undesirable stereotypes, to be avoided at all cost" (8-9). The popular media, this time in the form of women's magazines, supported the return of women to the home, and between 1920 and 1945 upward of sixty new women's magazines appeared, with titles such as *My Little Home, Mother, Woman and Home, Good Housekeeping, ... The Lady and The Queen*" (Beddoe 14). Feminist magazines, some with subversively comical titles such as *Time and Tide* (1920), "which projected an image of the career woman and the adventurous woman as positive and desirable", were virtually drowned in the ocean of mainstream media and never reached the masses (Beddoe 16).

As a member of the privileged upper class, it is not surprising that Barbara Greene's writing demonstrates her awareness of the social expectations of women. An interview following the second reprint of *Too Late to Turn Back* reveals the extent to which Barbara Greene was influenced by these expectations. Greene says that, after attending the Quaker school, she astonished her parents by training as a children's nurse, because "girls of standing did not study" (van der Heijden 1). After completing her nurse's training, and

once the laws of the English upper class (perseverance, pride, and patriotism) had been sufficiently instilled, she started living a life which ever since exists only in books and the imaginations of tabloid journalists: countless parties, a boat trip with her father to her country of birth to conclude some business and visit acquaintances, riding on their estate, leisurely study, theatre, and music. For some, the gay twenties really

existed, and for a select few, among whom Barbara Greene, even the first half of the following decade was exuberant. (van der Heijden 1)

Barbara Greene's understanding of the "laws of the English upper class" are also clearly visible when she speaks about the four books she published: *Land Benighted* (1938), reprinted in 1981 and 1990 as *Too Late to Turn Back: Barbara and Graham Greene in Liberia*, and most recently translated into German and published as *Im Hinterland: Barbara Und Graham Greene In Liberia* in 2008; *Valley of Peace: The Story of Lichtensteing* (1947); *God of a Hundred Names* (1962); and *The Chance of a Lifetime* (1968). In the 1981 introduction to *Too Late to Turn Back*, Barbara Greene writes that the account of her journey through Liberia "was never meant for publication", but that "the manuscript fell into the hands of a publisher, who insisted on bringing it out exactly as [she] had written it" (xv -xvi). The second of her books she wrote to escape boredom while her husband was in an American prison during the Second World War, and because she needed money. Her third book, a collection of prayers from all creeds, was written "out of pure wretchedness" while living in a hut in Mendoza, Argentina, where her husband lectured at a university (van der Heijden 1).

Following the death of her husband, she worked on a final book with her mother. The book is on the art of ageing, and was written "only to keep her mother busy" (van der Heijden 1). Barbara Greene's awareness of what a "Perfect Lady" could and should do is implicit in both the reasons she provides for writing and the subject matter of her books. This is particularly conspicuous considering that the only time she claims to have written for financial gain was while her husband was in prison and the world was at war, circumstances in which it was acceptable for a woman to benefit financially from her writing. In this context it is also worth mentioning that when Barbara Greene was asked to republish *Too Late to Turn Back* to coincide with the publication of the second of Graham Greene's autobiographies, *Ways of Escape*, in which he commented on her book, she agreed on the generous, yet typically ladylike condition that the proceeds would be used to help the handicapped of Gozo, a small island near Malta, where she lived part-time from 1970 until her death in 1991. The extent to which

Barbara Greene's awareness of the constraints of femininity influenced her writing in *Too Late to Turn Back* is discussed in the second half of this chapter.

As this chapter shows, the combined effect on Barbara Greene's writing of her position as a woman, a traveller, and a writer influenced the subject matter, style, and reception of *Too Late to Turn Back*. The subject matter of Greene's writing is relatively unrestrained compared to that of Lady Anne Barnard and Mary Kingsley. She comments on almost every aspect of life in Liberia, from daily life in the villages they visit and taking a bath in front of native women, to the political situation in the country and the prevalence of venereal diseases among the population. Conversely, the style of her writing, with specific reference to how she is represented in relation to Graham Greene, and in respect of her attitude towards her own opinions and education, clearly reflect an awareness of her reading public's expectations with regard to an appropriately feminine writing stance: Barbara Greene constantly reiterates her status as an accidental traveller and useless companion who does what she is told and follows her cousin's lead without question, and she warns her reader that the book "was never intended for publication", that it "would contribute nothing new to the scientific world", and that no one should "hope to gain great knowledge" from it ( xv, 43 – 44). As a result, the text is not subversive, nor did it offer enough 'fresh' material to attract unusual attention initially, and it thus "sank without trace in the run-up to the second world war" (Mann)<sup>41</sup>.

By the time Barbara Greene travelled to Liberia most of the world had been mapped, and as a result her travels differed greatly from those of Lady Anne Barnard and Mary Kingsley. Travel had become more commonplace but at the same time more complicated. In November 1915 the United Kingdom made passports mandatory for all travellers (Fussell 25). This meant an increase in administrative arrangements prior to travelling, which were often horrendously elaborate. Also, unlike Barnard and Kingsley before her, Barbara Greene had no preconceived motive, covert or otherwise, for travelling, other than being her

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<sup>41</sup> Since I could only find three substantial literary criticisms of Barbara Greene's work, I conducted some research on the world wide web and located and contacted her son, Rupert Graf Strachwitz. He was able to provide me with a number of book reviews and articles published in newspapers and magazines between 1938 and 1990. Unfortunately, these did not have page numbers. When I use information from one of these articles, I use either the name of the author or the title of the article for my in-text citations, depending on which was available.

cousin's companion. While she kept a diary, she did not set out with the specific intention of writing a book about her travels. Barbara Greene's travels further differ from those of Barnard and Kingsley in the sense that she did not travel to a colony, so she could not rely on the authority and privileges associated with being British to the same extent that they could. Liberia was never colonised, so very little was known about the interior of the country, and the most recent book on the Republic was thirty years old (Theroux xxii). Only two maps existed, one British and the other American. The British map had been issued by the British General Staff, and on it was "a large white space covering the greater part of the Republic, with a few dotted lines indicating the conjectured course of rivers ... and a fringe of names along the boundary" (G. Greene, *Journey Without Maps* 45). The map issued by the United States War Department had "a dashing quality about it", and where the "English map is content to leave a blank space, the American in large letters fills it with the word 'Cannibals'" (G. Greene, *Journey Without Maps* 46).

While this lack of information about their destination presented the Greenes with nightmarish logistical problems and endless frustration, it was also the basis of its appeal. In *Abroad: British Literary Traveling Between the Wars*, Paul Fussell describes the period between 1918 and 1939, during which Barbara Green undertook her journey to Liberia, as "the final age of travel" (vii). In order to identify trends and themes in travel writing produced during the inter-war years, Fussell distinguishes between exploration, travel, and tourism. He observes that "tourism in its contemporary form was making inroads on travel as early as the mid-nineteenth century", and that, as a result, "one of [the] by-product[s] of real travel" which "has virtually disappeared" is "the travel book as a record of an inquiry and a report of the effect of the inquiry on the mind and imagination of the traveler" (39). The inter-war years "saw a surge in the popularity of travel and travel writing" (Carr 75) and, at the same time, "intellectuals and others discovered special virtue in primitive peoples and places" (Fussell 38). Consequently, travel writers "wanted to write of areas for which guide-books could not be purchased" (Carr 79). So, by virtue of its 'unexplored' nature, Liberia was the perfect destination for any travel writer.

As a writer, Barbara Greene also did not face the same challenges as Barnard and Kingsley. Sara Mills notes that “western women ... published accounts of their travels in great numbers at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century”. Consequently, much like travel itself, women’s travel writing was no longer considered out of the ordinary. Susan Bassnett observes that the twentieth century also saw a “change in the construction of travel narratives ... in stylistic terms” (235). Other theorists and critics, such as Mills, Fussell, and Carr also remark on this development in travel writing trends. Carr summarizes the difference between older travel writing and this new ‘literary’ travel writing as follows:

If in the nineteenth century, travel writing might often be produced by missionaries, explorers, scientists or Orientalists (Livingstone, Darwin, and Burton, for example) in texts in which the purveying of privileged knowledge was a central concern, increasingly in the twentieth century it has become a more subjective form, more memoir than manual, and often an alternative form of writing for novelists. The period from 1880 to 1940 saw this change take place. There was a move – as in imaginative literature – from the detailed, realist text, often with overtly didactic or at any rate moral purpose, to a more impressionistic style with the interest focused as much on the travellers’ responses or consciousness as their travels. In the twentieth century, the scientific or scholarly text is usually written for academic fellow experts and, perhaps particularly in the case of ethnography, has striven to distance itself from what it sees as the ‘amateurism’ of travel writing – even though travel writing can now be a profession in itself. (74 – 75)

In the light of popular criticisms of women’s travel writing discussed earlier in this dissertation – that the authors fictionalized texts too much, texts were not scientific enough, and texts were too subjective and personal – this stylistic change in the construction of travel writing should arguably have made it easier for Barbara Greene than her predecessors to produce a travel book which was acceptable to the reading public. Due to the social norms and expectations of their times, Lady Anne Barnard’s work was first published more than a century after it was written, and Mary Kingsley was labelled a “New Woman”, ridiculed in the popular press, and never allowed to join exclusively male academic societies. Both of these women’s work only enjoyed critical acclaim posthumously. It hardly seems possible that Barbara Greene’s writing could suffer a worse fate, yet it possibly has. In 1981 and again in 1990 *Land Benighted* was republished as *Too Late to Turn Back: Barbara and Graham Greene in Liberia*. When *Land Benighted* appeared under its new title in 1981, Graham Greene was a

celebrated author and *Journey Without Maps* a widely read 'literary travel' book. Consequently, *Too Late to Turn Back* was marketed as a companion piece to *Journey Without Maps*. In this chapter the effect of this marketing strategy on the critical reaction to *Too Late to Turn Back* is discussed and compared to the initial press reaction following the publication of *Land Benighted*.

When *Land Benighted* was first published in 1938 it did not receive much critical attention. Book reviews which appeared in the popular press at the time are characterised by most of the words and phrases today's critics of women's travel writing object against: "charming", "delightful", "quaint", "intrepid", and "delicate English girl". One particularly offensive reviewer writes:

Miss Greene has written a little book of an African journey which has the high spirits and sly fun of the sort of fiction we get from novelists of her own age and kind. And luckily there is no cruelty in her fun; her mind is kindly and takes no large discount from life. (*News Chronicle*)

While these reviewers probably did not write with malicious intent, their comments nevertheless demonstrate a very specific attitude towards women's travel writing: that it cannot be taken seriously or considered to have literary value. Out of ten available reviews of the first publication of Barbara Greene's book, only one reviewer's comments seem to consider Greene's writing from what approaches a literary perspective:

This book is an unconventional travel book, and many will prefer it to some of the ponderous pretentious volumes which other travellers have provided – the author's sense of humour gives a balanced perspective to her authentic record. (*Public Opinion*)

Despite one reviewer's comment in 1981 that *Land Benighted* "was published before the war to great critical interest", Greene's book seems to have disappeared in the run-up to World War II (Chesshyre). This can be attributed to a variety of factors: the political climate in England was too grave for a travel book about an African country, which was not a British colony, to enjoy much attention; women's travel writing was no longer unusual; and the book was not subversive enough to draw attention. In the reviews following the 1938 publication of *Land Benighted*, Graham Greene is mentioned five times, but merely as Barbara Greene's travelling companion, not as an author. As a matter

of fact, although *Journey Without Maps* was published two years earlier, in 1936, it is not mentioned once.

However, by the time *Land Benighted* resurfaced as *Too Late to Turn Back*, Graham Greene was hailed as one of the greatest authors of the twentieth century and his *Journey Without Maps* as "one of the high points of 'literary travelling' " (Boening). Following the 1978 reissuing of *Journey Without Maps* as part of the collected edition of Graham Greene's work, Barbara Greene agreed on the first reprint of her book coinciding with the publication of the second part of his autobiography, *Ways of Escape* (Mann). Graham Greene comments on *Too Late to Turn Back* for the first time in these two books and compares some passages from Barbara Greene's book to passages from his *Journey Without Maps*. Consequently, the second publication of Barbara Greene's book as *Too Late to Turn Back* was marketed as a "mine of information on the great novelist" Graham Greene (*New Publications*) and a "companion volume" to *Journey Without Maps* (Theroux xxxiii).

In *Discourses of Difference*, Sara Mills devotes an entire chapter to the constraints on the reception of women's travel writing. She argues:

the reception of the text determines to a certain extent what that text means. Which books are published sets up a tradition of which books will be written and published in the future; the way that they are classified as autobiography, fiction, etc. also has a determining role in what type of interpretation is given to them and the way that the narrative voice or self is viewed. The way that the texts are marketed also has an effect, for example, the travel writings which have recently been reissued by Virago are marketed and read in quite a different way to the way that they were read at the time of their issue. They are now bought, in the main by feminists, eager to read texts which contain alternative visions of women in the Victorian period. (Mills 118 - 119)

The effect of both marketing and reception on the meaning of a text is clearly evident in the case of *Too Late to Turn Back*. Once the book was marketed as a companion piece to *Journey Without Maps*, it started to attract attention. However, this did not necessarily work to Barbara Greene's advantage. This marketing strategy linked *Too Late to Turn Back* to Graham Greene inextricably. The result was that (as Paul Theroux does in his introduction to the 1981 and 1990 editions of *Too Late to Turn Back*) the majority of reviewers tended to view

the book “like treasure” because it offered “an intimate portrait of Graham Greene as a young man in a foreign country” (xxiv). The travel text itself was largely ignored, or treated as frivolous by those who read it for the possible insight it could offer them in relation to Graham Greene. This becomes abundantly clear when looking at the 1990 Penguin Travel Library edition of *Too Late to Turn Back*. The front cover<sup>42</sup> features a picture of Graham and Barbara Greene standing on the deck of *The David Livingstone*, the cargo ship which took them from Liverpool to Freetown. Both the textual and photographic elements of the cover invite the reader to read this as a Graham Greene biography of sorts. Everything about the front cover, from the inclusion of his name in the subtitle, to his presence in the picture, and the quote from Theroux’s introduction: “He lives in her book as he does in none other that I know”, claims for Graham Greene, not authorship, but at least partial ownership of Barbara Greene’s book. Similarly, the write-up on the back cover claims his ownership of the journey and establishes him as the more serious and knowledgeable of the two travellers:

It had been Graham Greene’s idea to explore tropical West Africa.

The map of Liberia was virtually blank, the interior marked ‘Cannibals’. It was a far cry from the literary London of 1935, and the marvellous result of the exploration was *Journey Without Maps*. But the gifted young author was not travelling alone. His twenty-three-year-old cousin Barbara had rashly agreed to go with him and, unbeknown to him, was also busy making notes in the jungle.

*Too Late to Turn Back* contains the humorous, footsore and richly evocative African adventure of a young woman who set out from the world of Saki and the Savoy Grill and returned quite profoundly changed.

Graham Greene is mentioned first, and he is clearly positioned as the main subject of the text, whereas Barbara Greene and her travel book almost seem to be mentioned as an aside. Sara Mills observes that the “terms used to describe ... women [travel writers] – [such as] ‘eccentric’, ‘adventuress’ and ‘globe-trotteress’ – already mark the work of these women as slightly ridiculous and strange”, and so negatively affect the reception of their texts (119). This is certainly true of the write-up on the back cover of *Too Late to Turn Back*. There

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<sup>42</sup> See figure 10 on page 107.

is a clear discrepancy between the implicitly gendered connotations of the words chosen to describe the two authors, their travels, and their writing. Graham Greene is aligned with "literary London of 1935". He is thus located within the traditionally male sphere of intellectuality and its accompanying position of authority. This alignment is reiterated by the description of *Journey Without Maps* as the "marvellous result" of his travels, and the reference to Graham Greene as a "gifted young author". Furthermore, his travels are described as "exploration", and the first line of the write-up emphasises that the trip was "Graham Greene's idea", casting him in the conventional male adventure hero role. A fair deal of thought, planning and clear sense of destination is seen to have culminated in Graham Greene's "idea to explore tropical West Africa", specifically "Liberia".

Barbara Greene, on the other hand, is relegated to the childish frivolity and luxury pastimes of the upper class's "world of Saki and the Savoy Grill". She did not demonstrate any consideration, originality of thought, or initiative when she "rashly agreed" to "go with" her cousin. She is neither "gifted", nor an "author". She is a "woman" "making notes". The book she produced is "humorous" and "richly evocative" but not serious, "literary", or anything to marvel at. Finally, she is not a dauntless explorer-hero, but a "foot-sore", "young woman", with a vague fantasy of an "African adventure" for whom it was *Too Late to Turn Back*. This may seem like an overly sensitive reading of how the terminology used to describe women's travel writing, as well as the way in which a text is marketed, can influence its reception, but it is important to realise that readers' opinions of a books can be strongly influenced by whatever is on its cover.

Paul Theroux's introduction to *Too Late to Turn Back* continues on the same path as the write-up on its cover. He opens the introduction with a quotation from Graham Greene's 1978 introduction to *Journey Without Maps*, and it does not come as a surprise that he devotes his introduction chiefly to a discussion of the motifs, objectives, and style of Graham Greene's book. When he refers to Barbara Greene's writing, he uses an entirely different vocabulary. In relation to *Journey Without Maps*, he describes *Too Late to Turn Back* as "quite a different pair of shoes", a phrase one can hardly imagine him using with reference to any male-authored text (xxiii). The rest of his comments on her work are decidedly

patronising. His tone is that of an indulgent father or uncle recounting a young girl's follies, and, much like the majority of reviewers of the first edition of Barbara Greene's book, he chooses to quote and comment on some of her more flippant, if charming, remarks. He seems to delight in pointing out aspects of Barbara Greene's writing and textual persona which imply that her book is less literary than that of her cousin. For example, *Too Late to Turn Back*, he says, is

full of the sort of details which, if concerned with another place or time or companion, might have been regarded as trivial. Unlike Graham's there were no flashbacks to Riga or Nottingham, no quotes from Baudelaire or Eliot. Graham had Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* in his luggage; Barbara had Maugham and the stories of Saki. It is a wonderfully telling fact, and as the trip wore on Graham became more melancholy and Barbara began to sparkle like a lighthearted deb in a Saki story. (Theroux xxiv)

In Theroux's opinion, the only thing which saves Barbara Greene's writing from being "trivial" is the fact that she writes about Graham Greene. Theroux even views Graham Greene's miserable state of mind as a signifier of his more literary persona. When Theroux identifies the "two chief virtues" of *Too Late to Turn Back*, the first is quite predictably that

it is an intimate portrait of Graham Greene as a young man in a foreign country. It is the quintessential Green; the Thirties were a time for him of almost manic energy, when he still believed that 'seediness has a very deep appeal' and wrote the books that made his name a resonant adjective. That Greene mood is the mood of *Journey Without Maps*. (Theroux xxv)

A collection of twenty five reviews published in newspapers and magazines following each of the two reprints of *Too Late to Turn Back* was studied for the purpose of this chapter. The survey reveals that the majority of reviewers are aware that Barbara Greene's book is marketed as a "companion piece" to *Journey Without Maps*, and acknowledge that it is interesting, particularly for those already familiar with *Journey Without Maps*, but they mostly agree that Barbara Greene's book "prevails by its own virtue", as one of them put it (Chesshyre). This attests to the very constricted view of critics such as Theroux and Schweizer, who suggest that *Too Late to Turn Back* owes its publication almost solely to its connection with Graham Greene's writing. The second of the

two "virtues" Theroux identifies as follows, saying, however, that it is "unintentional":

*Too Late to Turn Back* shows that however light-hearted a departure is, if the traveller is generous, observant, and dedicated to the trip, the traveller will be changed. From a rather scatty socialite at the beginning, Barbara Greene becomes hardy and courageous without ever being tempted into the role of *memsahib*<sup>43</sup>. (xxv)

When Theroux comments that the second virtue of Barbara Greene's book is "unintentional" he implies that she is somehow incapable of authorial intent, which is decidedly condescending. Conversely, his other commendation, that she was "hardy and courageous without ever being tempted into the role of *memsahib*", shows a change in the reception of women's writing. When the book was first published this comment would have been an indictment against a woman writer because it suggests that her behaviour was unfeminine. In 1981 it was meant as a compliment. The overall impression created by Theroux's comments on Barbara Greene's book is that he essentially regards her book as frivolous and that he is ignorant of the effect that social expectations had on women's travel writing at the time when the book was first published. He concludes his introduction as follows:

Graham lives in her book as he does in none other that I know. Barbara had no thought of writing about the trip until her father fell ill; she chose the opportunity to amuse him on his sickbed. She is extremely modest, but her dignity, bravery and loyalty can easily be discerned in these pages. We are very lucky to have this companion-volume, and it is appropriate that no one can read it without reaching the conclusion that Barbara was the best of companions. (xxxiii)

The final thought that he leaves the reader with is that the book's chief importance is what it tells us about Graham Greene, not what it says about Africa or travel. When he relegates *Too Late to Turn Back* to the status of "companion-volume" and Barbara Greene to "the best of companions", Paul Theroux effectively denies Barbara Greene the position of a writer in her own right.

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<sup>43</sup> According to the Oxford English Dictionary Online, the word *memsahib* is a noun used "In South Asia (esp. India): [to refer to] a married European or upper-class woman; often used as a respectful form of address (as *the memsahib*, or vocatively) by non-Europeans. Now also in allusive use, chiefly (*hist.*) with reference to expatriate life or manners, as in British India. Abbreviated *mem.*" ("*memsahib*, *n.*" OED Online, March 2008, Oxford University Press, 27 October 2008, <<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/00305568>>).

Now, it is not unreasonable to assume that Barbara Greene had some say concerning how her book was marketed. The question which then arises is why she allowed this marketing and, through it, the ideological high-jacking of her book by Theroux and her cousin. There are various possible reasons why she would allow her work to be reprinted to coincide with Graham Greene's effort to "[tidy] up for posterity" by acknowledging her presence during the journey through Liberia, her pivotal role in nursing him back to health during their travels, and the publication of her book (Mann). Considering the way she presents herself in relation to Graham Greene, as subservient and eager to please, it is unlikely that she would not have felt able to refuse his request. On the one hand it could cause a strain on family relations, and on the other hand her awareness of women's position in society would have made it difficult for her to refuse. Another possible reason for agreeing to republish her book is the old adage that there is no such thing as bad publicity. She must have know that, considering Graham Greene's success as an author, her book would attract much more attention if it were linked to *Journey Without Maps*. Of course, this is difficult, if not impossible, to prove.

In his introduction to *Too Late to Turn Back*, Theroux writes that Barbara Greene is "almost at pains to portray herself as the 'Oh, dear!', 'What a muddle!' and 'Mustn't grumble!' sort of travelling companion", and then states with some disbelief that, "this could hardly have been the case", suggesting that the helpless, sometimes feeble, self Barbara Greene presents in the text is not recognisable as the woman he worked with on the new edition of *Too Late to Turn Back* (xxiii – xxiv). Firstly, this comment reiterates the idea that Theroux is perhaps oblivious of Barbara Greene's awareness of her reading audience, which would have necessitated the creation of an appropriately feminine textual persona. Furthermore, it lends credence to the conjecture that Barbara Greene deliberately presented herself as overly feminine with regard to her behaviour and attitude towards Graham Greene during their travels. It is thus not unimaginable that Barbara Greene used the opportunity to republish her book to give it a second chance at success. Her insistence during interviews that she is not a writer and that the book was only republished at Graham Greene's request, along with the condition that all proceeds of the republication should go

to charity, appear to be part of the feminine persona she created for her book. Among the reviews of her book, the only statement incongruous with her consistently feminine stance appears in a 1981 interview with Robert Chesshyre of *The Observer*. In chapter two of Graham Greene's second autobiography, *Ways of Escape*, which also appeared as the introduction to some later editions of *Journey Without Maps*, he discusses his travels to Liberia and comments on *Too Late to Turn Back* for the first time. He writes:

[Barbara Greene] proved as good a companion as the circumstances allowed, and I shudder to think of the quarrels I would have had with a companion of the same sex after exhaustion had set in, all the arguments, the indecisions...My cousin left all decisions to me and never criticised me when I made the wrong one, and because of the difference of sex we were both forced to control our irritated nerves. Towards the end we would lapse into long silences, but they were infinitely preferable to raised voices. Only in one thing did she disappoint me – she wrote a book. (47 – 48)

According to Chesshyre, Barbara Greene attributed Graham's "disappoint[ment]" at the publication of her book to the possibility that "he felt deflated by her somewhat light-hearted account set against his fundamental exploration of the human spirit". This remark is certainly not as carefully feminine as some of her others, but its safety lies in its ambiguity. Whether it is meant as a defence or criticism of Graham Greene is open to interpretation. The extract from Graham Greene's comments on the time they spent travelling together is significant for this study because it confirms that "the difference of sex" influenced the Greens' behaviour towards one another. It stands to reason that gender would also have influenced Barbara Greene's writing.

In his introduction to *Too Late to Turn Back*, Paul Theroux observes that Barbara Greene is "named once, and mentioned ('my cousin...') only eleven times in [the] 300 pages" of *Journey Without Maps* (xxi). Graham Greene attributes the near omission of his cousin from his account of the journey to "a problem of form" (*Ways of Escape* 47). Upon their return to England he found that he had only "[a] diary written in pencil with increasing fatigue and running to less than eighty quarto pages of a loose-leaf notebook", some financial accounts, a few "illiterate notes" written by Liberian officials they had met, "some political literature from Monrovia, a selection of Liberian newspapers, a few Buzie swords and musical instruments, ... a number of photographs taken with an old vest-

pocket Kodak, and memories, memories chiefly of rats, of frustration, and of deeper boredom on the long forest trek than I had ever experienced before" (*Ways of Escape* 47). Faced with these sparse resources, he "had a moment of despair and wished to abandon the project", but he had already spent the advance which his publishers gave him for the book (*Ways of Escape* 47). To compound his problems, he was also faced with having to decide what form the book should take. He writes:

I was haunted by the awful tedium of A to Z. This book could not be written in the manner of a European tour; there was no architecture to describe, no famous statuary; nor was it a political book in the sense that Gide's *Voyage au Congo* was political, nor a book of adventure like those of Peter Flemming – if this was an adventure it was only a subjective adventure, three months of virtual silence, of 'being out of touch'. This thought gave me a clue to the form I needed. The account of a journey – a slow footsore journey into an interior literally unknown – was only of interest if it paralleled another journey. It would lose the triviality of a personal travel diary only if it became more completely personal. It is a disadvantage to have an 'I' who is not a fictional figure, and the only way to deal with 'I' was to make him an abstraction. To all intents I eliminated my companion of the journey and supported the uneventful record with memories, dreams, word-associations; if the book in one sense became more personal, the journey became more general... (*Ways of Escape* 47 – 48).

Essentially, what Graham Greene says here is that Barbara Greene wrote the book he wanted to avoid writing; a tedious, trivial, ultimately redundant attempt at a combination between a political- and adventure story. Like Theroux, he dismisses the book and excludes it from being considered as a literary work. His comments on his cousin as a travelling companion coupled with the rationale behind the writing style of *Journey Without Maps* serve to contextualize some of the characteristics of Barbara Greene's writing.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the twentieth century saw a change in the style of travel writing. Travel texts adopted "a more subjective form, more memoir than manual, and often an alternative form of writing for novelists", taking on "a more impressionistic style with the interest focused as much on the travellers' responses or consciousness as their travels", known as literary travel writing (Carr 74). This description suggests that traditionally feminine forms of travel writing, such as journals, memoirs, and letters to friends and family, would 'fit' the mould of literary travel writing. However, while the style of travel

writing had changed, the most important 'rule' for women travel writers had not, that their writing should not attempt to be masculine in its content or style. As Mills remarks, women's travel writing is often "considered simply to be a transcription of everything which happened to the narrator during the travels. One of the main current critical assumptions made about women's travel writing by feminists and others is that it is non-literary" (Mills, *Discourses of Difference* 110). This is clearly what Graham Greene implies about *Too Late to Turn Back* when he refers to avoiding "the awful tedium of A to Z". The few critics who mention Barbara Greene's writing always do so in connection with Graham Greene's. Bernard Schweizer, for example, writes that, because her comments in the book play "into the hands of conventional gender roles", there is "very little, if any, sign of subversiveness in Barbara Greene's account of Africa, a circumstance that shows how gender need not be a determining factor in female travel writing" (73). Similarly, Valerie Kennedy comments that Barbara Greene "relates her experiences to forms of popular culture such as contemporary theatre, film, and musical comedy rather than to Freud, Conrad, or previous travelers to Africa" (19), and criticizes the book for being "based on constructed ignorance and naivety" (24). What both these critics disregard is that "strong representations of women do not fit in with the stereotypical codes for representation of women of the time" (Mills, *Discourses of Difference* 110). Had *Too Late to Turn Back* been subversive, it would probably not have been published, considering the return to conservatism regarding the role of women in society in post WWI Britain.

Barbara Greene's writing thus has much in common with that of Lady Anne Barnard and Mary Kingsley. She lies about her age; she claims to be twenty three rather than twenty eight. This is probably because, at twenty three, she could still pass as a "very young girl", as she describes herself, and would be more easily 'forgiven' for perceived unfeminine behaviour and bad judgement, while a twenty eight year old woman would not have been given the same leniency. As Barnard and Kingsley did before her, Barbara Greene claims never to have intended her work for publication, and ends the preface to her book by saying that Graham Greene's account of the same journey is "not a straightforward travel book but became a more abstract journey into the interior of life itself, far deeper and more complicated than anything [she] was capable

of doing" (xv). She does, however, assure her readers that she "had kept a diary in which, however weary [she] felt, [she] recorded the events of the day in detail" and that she kept "strictly to the truth" (xv). She also states that the "it was by chance that the manuscript fell into the hands of a publisher, who insisted on bringing it out exactly as [she] had written it. No facts were ever verified, nor were the local customs that [she] had so blithely and ignorantly recorded" (xvi). Finally, she "beg[s]" any Liberian who might read the book to "be kind and generous and to pass over all the inaccuracies and shortcomings, remembering that it was written by a very young girl" (xvi). These comments set the tone for the rest of the book and testify to her awareness of what an acceptable writing stance for a woman in the mid 1930s was.

Another similarity between her work and that of the other women discussed in this dissertation, is that Barbara Greene uses irony and humour as "a way of managing her ambivalent reaction to a threatening reality", as Kennedy puts it (23). This can be seen when she writes about her own safety while in Africa. Early in the book she assures her readers of her safety:

With very few exceptions did the men of the country ever look upon me with special interest as a woman. To them I was just some white creature, strange and curious perhaps, but not in the least sexually exciting. I could have wandered round by myself with perfect safety. In a way, I suppose, my cousin and I were a kind of circus to the natives, an unexpected amusement brought suddenly into their lives for a day or two. On those occasions when I had a hut to myself at night I had no fear at all that my slumbers might be disturbed by the Don Juan of the village. The first time, I confess, I had wondered whether I should have the revolver within reach, but as I occasionally walk or do odd things in my sleep, I thought on the whole it might be better kept under lock and key in the money-box. But I quickly realised that my appeal was non-existent, and though in any other circumstances my pride might have been hurt, in Liberia I could but feel profoundly thankful! (57 – 58)

It is important to note that she "could have wandered round" by herself with safety, but she did not. This strategy assures her reader that she does not put herself at risk. Her confession that she considers keeping a weapon in reach, but realises that it is unnecessary, seems calculated to create the impression that she gives the situation the thought her reader would think it deserves. Her initial fear also lends her statement credibility, since fear is an expected reaction, but by referring to any possible assailant as "the Don Juan of the

village", she again indicates that this is not a serious threat at all. Despite this claim that the men did not find her sexually attractive, she mentions two instances where this is clearly not true. In a small village, Djiecke, the Greens are invited to visit the Chief, and Barbara Greene writes that the entire visit "turned into a musical comedy" (102). The Greens drink wine and whisky with the chief, and everyone is slightly inebriated. She describes the scene as follows:

The chief gaped at me, watched me with staring eyes. The moment had come, I could not help thinking, when he should burst into romantic song. One could hardly carry on with this scene without music. 'My fadder says you very fine woman', said the girl again and again, in the same voice, like a broken gramophone record. The hut was hot and stuffy, filled with the scent of black bodies, and almost overpowering in its atmosphere of sex and drunkenness. The chief was wearing some magnificent rings and bracelets. Without much hope I rather wished he would give me a few. 'My fadder says you very fine woman.' 'I wish she'd stop saying that', I thought. 'It sounds silly without music.' The whisky was nearly finished. The wives were giggling, shaking like jellies with uncontrollable laughter. ... The scene was getting out of hand, I felt. The producer must have gone out to lunch and forgotten us. ... The chief seemed ready to buy me from Graham, but we did not stay to hear what I was worth. I was tired of it all now, and ready to go. (105 - 106)

It is evident from this extract that Barbara Greene is not as sexually uninteresting as her first comments lead her reader to believe. By using the image of the situation as a "musical comedy", she defuses any perceived threat to her person. She further distracts her reader from the sexual nature of the encounter when, immediately after describing the "almost overpowering atmosphere of sex and drunkenness", she comments on the chief's jewellery, which she admires (105 - 106). She further deflates the mood by indicating that they left as soon as she felt that the "scene was getting out of hand", and that they did not take the chief's interest in her as a serious threat, so they "did not stay to hear how much [she] was worth" (105 -106). Later, in Darno, something similar happens. She again establishes a slightly hilarious atmosphere by saying that the villagers mistake them for members of the British Royal Family:

After a while my newly acquired royal poise was momentarily shattered. The villagers were sitting in an admiring group all round us, most of them could speak English, so for the first time we were able to hold some sort of

conversation with them. "I should like to drag you away to my hut," said the wit of the village, and every one laughed. After looking at him I decided not to emulate Queen Victoria by declining to be amused, and gave him what I hoped was a gracious smile. He was a nice old man and had meant it kindly. (186)

Again, through her use of humour when she calls the old man the "wit of the village" and the comparison of her reaction to that of the Queen, Barbara Greene suggests that the "nice old man" "meant it kindly" and was not a real threat. These passages are doubly significant since neither Barnard nor Kingsley would have included a similar passage. The fact that Barbara Greene felt she could mention these incidents suggest that society was now much more permissive with regard to what women could write about, if not about how they wrote about it. In a 1938 review of *Land Benighted*, the reviewer remarks on the Greenes' living conditions in Liberia. He states that "this delicate English girl, as we used to call them, slept in native huts" and that "Every evil thing happened to her except any interference by the natives" (Midgley). This assurance on the part of the reviewer is significant since it emphasises that, as a "girl", Barbara Greene is seen as "delicate" and that the reader presumably values her sexual purity. It is probably in anticipation of this kind of response involving the perceived threat to her personal safety that Barbara Greene uses humour when she writes about how African men respond to her.

Another point of comparison between the three women's writing is Barbara Greene's observations about the Africans they meet. While she claims that the "dignity [of their African servants] overpowered" them, and that Graham ignored advice to treat them with "a heavy hand", and instead "treated them as if they were white men from our [their] own country", there is also condescension in her attitude towards them (67 - 68). She often describes the Africans as child-like, naïve, and in need of Graham's guidance as a "benevolent father" (68). In keeping with the inclination of her time, Barbara Greene idealizes and romanticizes the idea of the 'noble savage'. She comments:

The needs of the natives are very simple, a handful of rice to eat every day, a hut which they shared with their whole family, and a little strip of cloth to wear. Their only problem is to raise somehow five shillings a year for their hut tax. But they were happy and contented. The women sat in the sun playing with their babies. I never saw a child cry except with fright when it

saw my cousin or myself. Nerves and ill-temper were things that belonged to the rush of Europe. Here the natural sense of courtesy and hospitality were the chief characteristics of all the village people that we met. (24)

She does not seem to realize that her comments are extremely contradictory. It seems that their servants are not judged by the same standard as the 'natural' Africans. As is the case with Mary Kingsley, Barbara Greene does not share Lady Anne Barnard's conviction that civilization benefits the African. Whenever she sees Africans with venereal disease she attributes it to the corrupting effect of civilization. She describes the village of Greh as follows:

The chief's son had been educated on the coast, and had brought back some strange things into this most primitive village. A naked boy was wandering round with an open umbrella, and there were some odd pictures of "civilized life" in our sleeping quarters. Two sexual perverts were wandering naked round the village with their arms round each others necks. For hours they would stand and gaze at Graham, which he found extremely trying. It was the only time that we saw such a thing among the natives, and we could only think that that too had come up from the coast. The whole place was an unpleasant mixture of the extremely primitive and the worst bits of seedy civilization. (151)

In the same vein, she sees a "little prostitute" they encounter at Bassa town as a "sign that they are getting nearer [to] the 'civilization' that [she] was dreading so much" (179). These comments are reminiscent of Mary Kingsley's reaction to the missionaries' effect on the natives of West Africa. However, Barbara Greene does not see the threat civilization holds for the structure, culture, and order of African society; she is afraid that it will eventually "destroy some of the charm and beauty of the village life" and that the Africans' "minds and instincts would be warped first by the shoddiness of second-rate ideas" (179 -180). Another negative indicator that she ascribes to nearing civilization is that the price of the rice they buy for their men rises. She is also reluctant to be reminded of her own life in Europe, and she relishes being able to forget time. When they are in Bolahun they visit a German doctor. She is shocked to see a picture of Hitler in his house, and reacts to it with alarm, imagining that his

stern eyes stared at one accusingly across the room. 'What are you doing wasting time walking across strange countries for no particular reason? Don't you know that life is real, life is earnest?' he seemed to say to me. It quite upset me to see that picture there. It brought Europe too close to one again. All the petty quarrels, and the problems, the rush and the

sense of being overpowered by things one hated. It would be good when we got going on our journey and could leave Europe behind at last. I had not expected to find it in Bolahun. (22)

Barbara Greene clearly associates venereal disease, immorality, materialism, and violence with Europe, and she does not want to be reminded of it in Africa. As Fussel notes, this is an "insistent leitmotif of writing between the wars", as the first World War "was widely blamed for ruining England, [and] for bringing on, as Pound puts it with characteristic vigor, 'the state of utter dithering deliquescence into which England slopped in 1919'" (16). Africa, for Barbara Greene, becomes an escape from the increasingly disturbing political atmosphere in Europe. This can also be seen in her attitude towards her appearance. In London she was a socialite who went from one social event to the other and enjoyed luxuries of every kind. In Africa she is a different woman. She chooses to compare these two lives by writing about a night they spend in Monrovia towards the beginning of their journey:

The rats were fat and well fed, and apart from the noise they made, they left me in peace. For two or three nights they upset me and after that I grew so used to them that I ceased to notice them, and they bothered me no more. It is strange, and perhaps rather horrible, how quickly we adapt ourselves to our surroundings. My life in England had been laid in pleasant places. All my life I had been used to well-cooked food and beautiful clothes, a lovely house filled with people who smoothed out for me as far as possible the rough patches on my road through life. I was taken care of and spoilt both by my family and my friends, and the little, dull, tiresome everyday household things were automatically done for me. I had liked to find my evening clothes spread out for me ready pressed on my bed, my bath ready for me, and then to come down to a dinner lit by candle-light. Beauty, comfort, and a good deal of luxury had been part of my life. I was used to it, and I knew that when I returned to England it would immediately become part of my life again. In Liberia I was surrounded by rats, disease, dirt, and foul smells, and yet in a very few days I had sunk to that level and did not mind at all. We never had enough boiled water to wash really properly. Our clothes were never clean. The bristles of my hair-brush were eaten away entirely by rats in this dirty village. It was my own fault, for I had left the brush out of my suit-case, but it meant that there was nothing I could do except throw it away; and so for the next two months – till I reached England – I did not brush my hair again. It got stiff with dust and stood out around my head like a halo. (48 -49)

The comparison between London and Liberia favours the more 'natural' way of living she experiences in Africa. This surprises the reader, as descriptions of her

life in London suggest that she would not adapt well to a life without luxuries. After a while the rats, usually associated with disease and dirt, "bothers [her] no more", and her unwashed hair becomes "a halo". Her comment that the rats seem "fat and well fed" makes them seem like pets rather than pests. This contrasts starkly with her fear and disgust when she first became aware of their presence the previous evening. She begins the discussion of her increasing resignation to the presence of rats by commenting that "[she] had always been told that the rat population of London was as great as the human population, [but that she] had never before seen on in [her] life" (47). This comment reads almost like an admission that she had been as ignorant of the underside of London life as she was of life in Africa. By juxtaposing these images of her increasingly 'uncivilized' way of life in Africa with her life in London, which was filled with "beauty, comfort and a good deal of luxury", Barbara Greene makes the reader aware that civilization has lost its appeal to her.

Just more than halfway through *Too Late to Turn Back*, she describes a moonlight walk to the rest-house they were occupying while staying with a British doctor in Ganta. She writes that while she walked she "was quite sure that it was all worth while. Without any doubt [she] would rather be out there than knitting a jumper, or going to some party or dinner in London. Never in Europe could [she] have found those moments of pure beauty and peace. Loveliness unspoiled" (114). Such comments, along with her emphasis of the neglect of her appearance, signal disillusionment with civilization. She notes that Graham, too, stopped caring about his physical appearance. Later, at Bamakama, she even gives her mirror to one of the women and so abandons any attempt to look presentable. This contrasts starkly with the accounts of Barnard and Kingsley, who both emphasize the care they took to look presentable, even when there were no Europeans around to judge them. Barbara Greene even finds the Europeans she meets in Liberia intolerable and remarks that "in startling contrast to most of the white guests at these parties all the Ministers we met in Monrovia remained completely sober, very often refusing to drink anything at all" (200). It becomes apparent that Barbara Greene wants no reminder of life at home while she is in Africa. When she tries to describe London to Victor Prosser, a semi-literate, mission-taught

schoolteacher at Paplai, she feels that he does not believe her description of the city and its subways. She writes:

He was right, of course. It was an impossible, crazy world I had described. I laughed at myself to think that I had been such a fool as to imagine that I would find dangers in Liberia. Here it was safe and quiet. I looked round me and found nothing but peace. But the London I had described of crowds, hurrying motor vehicles, noise and underground trains, that was terrifying. It all sounded horrible, and I almost felt that I did not want to go back – till, of course, I remembered Elizabeth Arden, my flat, and the Savoy Grill. (147 148)

In this passage, it is clear that Barbara Greene does not long for home and its comforts. The city and all its noise represents the chaos of civilization, which she enjoys escaping from. The last sentence of the passage seems cursory, as if it were included to avoid taking too unpatriotic and unfeminine a view of life in Britain.

Paul Fussell notes that many travellers in the inter-war years felt disgusted at the state of England and sought to escape from their disillusionment with their government through travel (16). However, very few countries were really unexplored by this time. Thus, as Valerie Kennedy notes in her essay "Graham and Barbara Greene in Liberia: Two Accounts of a Journey without Maps", both Graham and Barbara Greene experience "what Ali Behdad has called the travellers' sense of 'belatedness', the 'anxiety of coming after what had come before' (13)" (19). Despite her enthusiasm about her experiences in Africa, Barbara Greene also seems to feel that she is too late to see the real Africa. She often expresses the opinion that the landscape is uninteresting because it looks just like those she has seen at the movies.

Barbara Greene's London was very different from that of the London known by Lady Anne Barnard and Mary Kingsley before her. They did not live to experience women's enfranchisement, the introduction of passports, or the cinema. Their views of women, travel, and the world must have been vastly different to that of Barbara Greene. Yet, there are many similarities between their writing. Apart from those similarities already discussed earlier in this chapter, Barbara Greene's writing also shares some stylistic and ideological characteristics with that of Lady Anne and Mary Kingsley. As mentioned earlier,

Lady Anne's writing was influenced by the form of the female novel, and Mary Kingsley often made use of irony and humour to avoid the possibility of representing her behaviour in Africa as mannish and improper. Barbara Greene uses literary techniques usually associated with fiction writing, such as foreshadowing and characterization, to keep her travel narrative an accessible, decidedly feminine text. Like Kingsley, she is also critical of the Western influence on African culture and feels that it ruins the indigenous cultures. Throughout *Too Late to Turn Back*, Barbara Greene apologises to her reader for her lack of knowledge, just as Lady Anne and Mary Kingsley did. This, however, is false modesty on her part, which leads her reader to suspect that she is not as innocent and truthful as she claims to be.

Neither Lady Anne nor Mary Kingsley had the benefit of a formal education. Barbara Greene, on the other hand, received a good education and chose to train as a children's nurse following the completion of her schooling (van der Heijden 1). While Lady Anne and Mary Kingsley often bemoan their lack of education in their writing, Barbara Greene denies hers. When Graham falls ill during the latter half of their travels she writes that she "was definitely frightened" at the prospect of leaving Dr. Harley's house because she "understood nothing about nursing" (119). As she remarked in the interview with van der Heijden, girls of class did not study; she may have felt that admitting to having knowledge of nursing would make her seem less ladylike, which would not suit the way in which she presents herself in the text. Unlike her predecessors, Barbara Greene comments freely on sex, venereal diseases and drunkenness when she witnesses these. This demonstrates that, while society still expected women to write and behave in a feminine way, some ideological changes had taken place since Barnard and Kingsley wrote. This can probably be attributed to the influence of the popular press and the increasing popularity of movies. One obstacle Barbara Greene did not have to contend with was accusations of falsehoods and exaggeration. There is very little difference between the factual content reported in *Too Late to Turn Back* and *Journey Without Maps*. In a sense, Graham Greene's presence on the journey and the publication of his book protected her from the usual suspicion with which the truthfulness of women's travel writing was encumbered.

The publication of *Too Late to Turn Back* alongside *Journey Without Maps* held another advantage for Barbara Greene. Because of Graham Greene's growing reputation as an author her book in all likelihood enjoyed more attention than it would otherwise have done. However, this did not always work in Barbara Greene's favour. In her discussion of the disparity between the way in which Africa is represented in Barbara and Graham Greene's books, Kennedy comments on the difference in the way the two authors frame their writing. Kennedy remarks that Graham Greene's account of the journey is very autobiographical. *Journey Without Maps*, she says:

parallels the physical journey through Liberia with a journey in memory back to the narrator's childhood, so that exploration becomes self-exploration. The narrative is highly self-conscious, and the dense pattern of metaphors, structuring themes, and references to texts by Raleigh, Conrad, Rider Haggard, Gide, Baudelaire, Rimbaud, T. S. Eliot, Freud, and Edith Nesbit reveal Greene's sense of belatedness as he discovers that the path into so-called "primitive Africa" is already well-trodden. The text is strongly autobiographical, and Barbara Greene's presence is almost completely occluded. (19)

This, coupled with Graham Greene's emphasis on the hardship of self-discipline and leadership he experienced during their travels, clearly make Kennedy consider his book the more literary and realistic of the two. While she acknowledges that Barbara Greene's use of "ironic and jocular tone could also be considered a way of managing her ambivalent reaction to a threatening reality" she does not adequately consider the effects the constraints of femininity would have had on Barbara Greene's writing (23). She remarks that "[u]nlike Graham, Barbara Greene does not resort to comparisons of Africa and Europe or England; she does not intellectualize or psychologize" and when she does make a comparison she "tends to refer to film, theatre, and the visual arts rather than to written texts" (23). She also states that Barbara Greene's "willed innocence, containing elements of both the *ingénue* and the hack writer, is the opposite of Graham Greene's knowing self-analysis" (25). These types of comments are typical of those scholars who either choose not to recognize the constraints of femininity on the production of women travel writer's texts or do not consider these constraints to be real. They effectively label the author as frivolous and inconsequential, which is arguably worse than accusations of exaggeration and falsification.

Another critic, Bernard Schweizer, also devotes some attention to *Too Late to Turn Back* as part of his analysis of *Journey Without Maps*. He describes Barbara Greene as having "trotted along as an invited but rather redundant companion" who "was, however, useful to Greene as a nurse during his serious illness" (71). His only positive comment on Barbara Greene's writing is that she "gives a less gloomy account of the Liberian trek" (72). While he is correct in observing that Barbara Greene at times makes contradictory statements with reference to Africans – whom she asserts they treat "exactly as if they were white men from our own country" immediately before she refers to them as trusting Graham "with child-like simplicity" (B. Greene quoted in Schweizer 72) - this is only one occasion where his comments seem fair. He also claims that Barbara Greene "borrowed rather liberally from *Journey Without Maps*" and argues that her book's "(implicit) political framework is firmly rooted within imperial fantasies of domination" (72 -73). These statements do not ring true. It is inevitable that there be a degree of similarity between two travel accounts dealing with the same journey. Apart from occasional similarities in how the two authors describe a place or person, the two books are radically different, as Kennedy remarks. Also, if anything, Barbara Greene seems at best sceptical of the effect which imperialism would have on Liberia.

Apart from Theroux's somewhat ambivalent response to Barbara Greene's writing, the only scholarly commentator who seems to consider *Too Late to Turn Back* as a worthwhile read is the author Russell Banks. In a review of her book for "Lost Classics", a special edition of *Brick: A Literary Journal*, he refers to Barbara Greene as "a shrewd, careful, compassionate observer of both her cousin the writer and Liberia" (8). He also comments that she is "a fine writer of English prose" and that hers is a "much better" book than *Journey Without Maps*. While his is obviously a personal opinion rather than an academic analysis, it is worth mentioning precisely because both Kennedy and Schweizer overlook these positive attributes of Barbara Greene's writing in their narrowly focused discussions which compare it to that of her cousin. *Too Late to Turn Back* is not a tragically overlooked masterpiece, but it offers its readers a well written, erudite description of one of the last true journeys of discovery in the 'final age of travel'. At times, readers may feel that Barbara Greene's deference

to Graham Greene's authority is a bit exaggerated, but it is by no means a reason to discount the book. When read with England's social and political situation in mind, the book becomes even more interesting. It draws attention to the extent to which World War I wreaked havoc with the patriarchal system and consequently led to a return of conservatism towards the role of women in the domestic and social spheres. Conversely, the inter-war years were a time of increasing sexual liberty for women, possibly because the disillusionment and destruction caused by the war instilled a *carpe diem* spirit in the once morally conservative British public.

Barbara Greene's writing is clearly a product of her times. The return to conservatism in post-war Britain re-established some of the limitations of women's travel writing which had begun to fade in the years after Mary Kingsley's work was first published. Barbara Greene was clearly aware of these constraints, as evidenced by her overly feminine representation of herself in relation to Graham Green and the constant emphasis she places on her youth and ignorance. However, the fact that she deviates from her feminine writing stance at times and that she employs similar techniques to that of Kingsley in an attempt to downplay the subversive nature of some parts of her text show that she was acutely aware of her reading audience. This makes it possible to argue that Barbara Greene's book is more than the perfect companion piece many critics make it out to be. In fact, one could even go so far as to say that agreeing to republish *Too Late to Turn Back* at Graham Greene's request was a decision calculated to give her book a second chance at success at a time when the world was no longer as conservative as when it was first published. The first publication of her book was almost destined to be overlooked because travel writing by women was no longer particularly remarkable at that time and, coinciding as it did with the run up to the Second World War, the British reading public had more serious matters to consider than a travel book on an African country they had no interest in. Whether intentional on Barbara Greene's part or not, *Too Late to Turn Back* definitely benefited from its association with Graham Greene's novel when it was republished. Had it not been for this connection, the book might have disappeared into obscurity, regardless of its literary merit and historical significance.

## Conclusion

### **Unexplored Territories and Clearly Mapped Routes: the Influence of Context on the Production and Reception of Women's Travel Writing**

*My excuse, if I were to be had up in a court of law, would be that I acted in self-defence. Had I not killed her she would have killed me. She would have plucked the heart out of my writing. .... [Y]ou cannot review even a novel without having a mind of your own, without expressing what you think to be the truth about human relations, morality, sex. And all these questions, according to the Angel of the House, cannot be dealt with freely and openly by women; they must charm, they must conciliate, they must – to put it bluntly, tell lies if they are to succeed. Thus, whenever I felt the shadow of her wing or the radiance of her halo upon my page, I took the inkpot and flung it at her. She died hard. ~ Virginia Woolf<sup>44</sup>*

*[E]ven into the twentieth century, terrific resolution was required of women who wanted to travel – not just the Grand Tour, or the holiday visit to Cannes, but in the more distant, dangerous and mysteriously compelling corners of the world. .... How different it is for women now! I have had the peculiar experience of travelling both as a man and as a woman, and I have reached the conclusion, on the whole, that during my own travelling years the female traveller has had it easier than the male. ~ Jan Morris<sup>45</sup>*

Today, Western society makes very little distinction between men and women. Gender need no longer be a determining factor in the production of a text, and travel is possible for anyone who can afford it. Acclaimed historian-travel writer Jan Morris embodies the change in society's attitude toward gender. She was born in 1926, and lived and wrote as James Morris until 1972, when she underwent gender re-assignment surgery (Birkett, *Off the Beaten Track* 8). At the time of her surgery she was already a well-known author. Since gender re-assignment surgery was by no means commonplace, this made her the centre of media attention. As was the case with Mary Kingsley, the press treated her with a mixture of mockery and amusement (Langley, "After a Life of Travel" par. 2, 23). In an interview last year, she "complain[ed] that she is 'sick to death of the whole business', or, at least, of being asked about it" (Langley, "After a Life of Travel" par. 1). The interview took place shortly after Morris and her former wife, whom she was forced to divorce at the time of her surgery because same-sex marriages were against the law in Britain at the time, were rejoined in a civil union. Last year she was named the fifteenth greatest British writer since Second World War (Tom Peterkin, "Sex-change author Jan Morris remarries wife" Par. 10). When these authors were named no distinction was made between male and female authors. In Morris's case, one could argue, it would not have been possible, since she has written as both a man and a woman. Gender has become inconsequential when it comes to writing and travelling.

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<sup>44</sup> ("Professions for women" 151)

<sup>45</sup> ("Foreword" 9, 11)

However, this was not always the case. As recently as the early twentieth century, women's lives were severely restricted. Patriarchal society dictated in no uncertain terms what women could and could not do. This extended to all aspects of life, whether domestic, public, or academic, as shown by the two quotations at the beginning of this Conclusion. Thus, it comes as no surprise that these women started travelling outside of Europe much later than their male counterparts. When they travelled and wrote about their travel they were always women first, then travellers and writers. Gender was a determining factor in how, where, and why these women travelled, and what they did or did not write. While they could leave England behind temporarily to travel to remote places, the same cannot be said of the values and expectations of the society in which they grew up. The constraints of the discourse of femininity excluded women travel writers from many aspects of colonial discourse and forced them to engage in what can be termed subversive colonial discourse. Consequently, travel texts produced by women differ considerably from those produced by men, as they often offer commentary on Africa and its people from a different perspective.

Lady Anne Barnard travelled to South Africa in 1797; Mary Kingsley travelled through West Africa in 1893 and again in 1895; and Barbara Greene trekked through Liberia in 1934. The texts produced by these three women span almost a hundred and fifty years. Each text clearly reflects the social and historical context which informed its production and reception.

When Lady Anne Barnard accompanied her husband to the Cape in 1797 it was unthinkable for a woman to travel alone in a colony. Officially, she came to act as hostess for the government at the Castle of Good Hope. Unofficially she came as an informer for Henry Dundas, the then British Secretary of State for Wars and the Colonies. As a member of the Scottish aristocracy she socialised with prominent members of society when she lived in London. She led a very active social life and only married at the age of forty two. She was an avid reader, and her social life exposed her to some of important politicians of the time. This made her uniquely suited to be Dundas' correspondent at the Cape, as he did not always trust the male officials there to give him a true and

accurate account of affairs. However, despite the knowledge which made her suitable for this unofficial position, her gender limited the extent to which she could comment on the colony and colonial matters, in both her correspondence with him and the journals she kept for her friends and family to read.

The extent to which she edited her own writing makes it clear that she was aware of the constraints of the discourse of femininity. To avoid these constraints she modelled her writing on the popular female novel of the time. She used pseudonyms for the people she wrote about and in so doing distanced herself from the events she wrote about, allowing them to be read as fiction if the reader so desired. She also used characterisation to compare herself favourably with Anne Elizabeth Barnard, who, while extremely feminine, was not as industrious or inventive as Lady Anne. Another strategy she employed to keep her text at least superficially 'feminine' was to first give her own impressions but finally defer to the opinion of Andrew Barnard or other knowledgeable men when writing about colonial matters. Her writing is littered with apologies for her lack of knowledge, and prefaced with a codicil forbidding its publication. These strategies all signal her awareness of the limitations she must face as a woman writer, and often result in a dichotomous, unsteady authorial voice.

By the time Mary Kingsley travelled and wrote, almost a hundred years later, it was no longer necessary to go to such extremes as adopting assumed names or using the form of the female novel to frame her writing in order to conform to the discourse of femininity. Also, she could travel on her own. However, while it was now more common for women to travel, it was still not acceptable to do it purely for leisure or self-enrichment. Consequently, Mary Kingsley had to find a way of justifying her travels. She professed to go to Africa to finish a book her father had started, but was unable to complete before his death. By framing her travels and writing as a respectful service to the memory of her father and his work, she hoped to avoid seeming unfeminine.

However, *Travels in West Africa* had nothing to do with her father's writing, and is clearly an account of her own travels. Like Lady Anne, her writing is punctuated with apologies for her lack of knowledge, and she constantly refers

her readers to credible sources she consulted to verify her observations. To make her writing suitably 'feminine', she uses a number of strategies, such as humour and irony to distance herself from situations where her behaviour might seem 'improper' or 'unfeminine', or where she was in physical danger. By titling the work *Travels in West Africa* she also makes it seem more feminine because, just like journals, letters and diaries were seen as appropriately 'feminine' texts when Lady Anne was writing, in Mary Kingsley's era travel writing was an acceptable form for women writers, providing that the content of the writing did not encroach on traditionally 'male' subject matter. In the preface to her book she claims to have been reluctantly persuaded to publish her work. However, the fact that she eventually discarded her first attempt at a book, *The Bights of Benin*, and produced a much more extensive work, demonstrates that she wanted to be taken seriously as a writer. Since the discourse of femininity excluded her from serious commentary on colonial affairs, the parts of her work dealing with more political issues were published as an addendum to the main text, as if to signal their inferior importance. This allowed her readers to disregard them.

Her emphasis on her very proper, feminine appearance can also be seen as a strategy to distract her reading public from the sometimes 'masculine' subject matter of her writing. Throughout her text and at the talks she gave after her travels, she insisted that she maintain her wardrobe exactly as if she were in London while she was in Africa, and once she returned to England she always appeared in very conservative mourning clothes at public events. A further indication that she wanted to be taken seriously as a writer and that she became more confident after the publication of her first book is that her second book is much more serious in nature, and is titled *West African Studies*. The change from a straightforward travel text to a more serious study is important, as it signals a change in authorial position, and demands recognition of the value of her work, despite her gender.

Mary Kingsley's work was published at the end of the nineteenth century. Barbara Greene travelled and wrote fewer than forty years later, but the world had changed almost beyond recognition by this time. Women now had the franchise, but the aftermath of World War I saw a return to conservatism with

regard to women's role in society. During the war women became part of the work force to take the places of men who were fighting in the trenches. Once the war was over women were reluctant to return home and resume their 'feminine' duties as wives, mothers, daughters, and sisters. This prompted a renewed emphasis on feminine behaviour and appearance.

In this atmosphere, Barbara Greene accompanied her cousin, the author Graham Greene, on his journey through Liberia. Although the publication of women's work was no longer unusual in any way, Barbara Greene makes it clear to her readers that she was an accidental traveller who never really intended to write or publish a book. This is symptomatic of both the reigning conservative climate and her awareness of her position as a woman of the upper class. Unlike her predecessors, she was an educated woman. Yet, like Lady Anne and Mary Kingsley, she constantly apologises for her lack of knowledge and skill as a writer, and never mentions her education. Instead, she uses references to popular culture to shape her text. This strategy serves to distance her from an authoritative, 'male' perspective. Furthermore, she emphasises her position as an observer, rather than participant, during the trek through Liberia, and refrains from involving herself in the day-to-day management of their servants and any decision making, leaving everything to her cousin. Only when he falls sick does she take control to an extent, but the reader is distracted from this because she foregrounds her concern for his health during this part of *Too Late to Turn Back*.

However, in accordance with the morally more permissive society of the inter-war years, Barbara Greene comments on topics which Lady Anne and Mary Kingsley avoided in their texts. She describes the prevalence of venereal diseases and an incident in a chief's hut where the atmosphere is fraught with sexual tension. Yet, because of the constraints of the discourse of femininity, she insists that the African men she encountered never found her sexually attractive, and that she was never in any danger from them, demonstrating her awareness of the value society still placed on the purity of young women.

Her observations of the land and people are detailed and engaging, but her book enjoyed very little attention for what it said about Africa. Instead, it was

marketed and commented on as a companion piece to her famous cousin's book on the same journey, *Journey Without Maps*. Those critics who compare the two books criticise Barbara Greene's writing, citing stereotypical shortcomings attributed to women's travel writing: her writing lacks depth, her account is too autobiographical, she presents a very light-hearted account of the trip, she must have drawn heavily on the material in Graham Greene's work, and her writing has no literary merit. However, the book is more than a companion piece. It illustrates the extent to which women's writing was still limited by the discourse of femininity as late as the first half of the twentieth century. Furthermore, it is a travel book from what Fussell terms the 'final age of travel'. *Too Late to Turn Back* demonstrates the extent to which Europeans became disillusioned with the effect of civilization after World War I. Throughout the book the author yearns for a more natural, undisturbed, 'uncivilized' Africa. This is indicative of a change in attitude towards colonization. While both Lady Anne and Mary Kingsley expressed the desire to see Africans in their 'natural state', neither of them was fully and outspokenly opposed to the act of colonization. Both seem convinced that it is ultimately in the colonized people's best interest to be 'civilized'. Barbara Greene is free to raise anti-colonial opinions because, even though women were still expected to be feminine in their conduct and appearance, the boundaries between matters of male and female concern had begun to fade.

As many critics have remarked, women's travel writing is often labelled as trivial and frivolous. However, as this dissertation has shown, this can be attributed to the constraints of the discourse of femininity on the production and reception of their texts. In order to produce texts which would be acceptable to the reading public, women such as Lady Anne Barnard, Mary Kingsley, and Barbara Greene were at times forced to engage in a subversive colonial discourse, which by its nature made their work different from – but not necessarily inferior to – that produced by their male counterparts. The value of women's travel writing lies thus not only in the different perspective it offers on the peoples and places it describes, but also in the insight it can offer into the specific set of social and cultural conditions which informed it.

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