

‘ONLY A WOMAN’
WOMEN TRAVEL WRITERS AND IMPERIALISM

by

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ABSTRACT

My study of women travel writers and imperialism is informed by four inseparable concerns, namely the distinctive characteristics of travel writing by women; how these reflected and reproduced spatial differentiation, notably between spheres of patriarchal and imperial power and authority; how the subject positions of women travel writers were constructed in terms of difference, primarily along lines of gender, race and class, and how such constructions varied over space and time; and how women's journeys represented only one moment in their travels and subsequent writings. These concerns are themselves informed by debates about women as a focus of historical research, western women and imperialism, and the place of women in a historiography of geography. Overall, I aim to illustrate the significance of poststructuralist feminist and literary theory in both historical geography and histories of geography.

Before focussing on how women travel writers negotiated 'home' and away, private and public spheres, I outline the material and metaphorical significance of travel and travel writing, the distinctive nature of imperial literary representation, and how both travel writing and imperial representation more broadly were differentiated by constructions of gender. Rather than replicate imperial discourses of difference, I attempt to expose their ambivalence and the instability of 'home' and 'truth' as both material and metaphorical reference points.

Throughout my study, I focus on the travels and writings of Mary Kingsley, who travelled in West Africa in the 1890s, wrote two books about her travels, and became a well-known figure on her return because of her support of trade and her criticisms of the British Crown Colony system.

Rather than celebrate an individual, however, I discern subject-positionality in discursive terms.

Three moments comprise travel and structure my account. I perceive *departure* to relate to constructions of gendered subjectivity both prior to and during a journey. Preparations for departure, motives, expectations, conduct books and general logistics were clearly differentiated by gender. Unstable and ambivalent constructions of gender difference informed and emerged from Mary Kingsley's travels and writings. I discuss her *journey* in terms of how discourses of difference varied over imperial space. Mary Kingsley was primarily constructed in terms of gender subordination while at home, but able to share in racial superiority while travelling in the context of imperialism. Finally, on her *return*, Mary Kingsley was once again primarily identified in terms of gender difference. However, her gendered subjectivity and mediation of public and private spheres were more ambivalent than fixed, as were the differences perceived to exist between 'home' and away. I also outline institutional responses to women travellers, with reference to debates concerning the admission of women Fellows to the Royal Geographical Society and 'new women' of the 1890s.

Imperial women's travels and their writings were clearly distinctive in material ways. These ranged from preparations prior to departure, the nature of the journey, and the reception of both women and their writings on their return. A journey itself thus represents only one moment of travelling, inseparable from departure and return. Because of the gendered significance of material travel, the metaphorical immanence of travel should also be seen as clearly gendered. Implications include the inseparability of discourses of power, 'truth' and knowledge, and, more tangibly, the need to deconstruct theory, 'home' and difference.

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PART I

CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION.

My title 'Only a Woman' comes from a letter written by Mary Kingsley to Chamberlain, the British Colonial Secretary, in April 1898. It raises three themes central to my study of imperial travel writing by women. Firstly, a derogatory tone suggests patriarchal constructions of women as weak and inferior, echoed by Mary Kingsley who wrote that

I am only a woman and we ladies - though great on details and concrete conceptions and never capable of feeling a devotion to things I know well enough are really greater namely abstract things.¹

Secondly, 'Only a Woman' has potential for a more positive tone of admiration for the achievements of women travellers so long neglected. Finally, 'Only a Woman' highlights the social, ideological and logistical significance of women travelling alone.

I hope to reveal that these three themes are inextricably intertwined. In broad terms, I hope to illustrate the significance of poststructuralist feminist and literary theory in both historical geography and histories of geography. Before listing the four specific questions I hope to address and outlining the structure of my thesis, I will introduce three interrelated contexts for my study of imperial women travel writers, namely women as a focus of historical research, the study of western women and imperialism, and the place of women within a historiography of geography.

The earliest stages of 'women's history' were marked by essentialist, often positivist accounts adding 'women's experience' to historical inquiry.² Such accounts have been widely criticised from poststructuralist

¹ Mary Kingsley to Chamberlain 30.4.1898. See Appendix I for a list of archival sources.

² VALVERDE, M. : *Poststructuralist Gender Historians : Are We Those Names?*; Labour/Le Travail 25, Spring 1990; pp.227-236.

perspectives, which question

the unity of the subject, be it individual or collective. Furthermore, the fragmented, unstable subject of poststructuralism is not regarded as a rational autonomous unit producing meanings and values, but rather as being constituted in the ebb and flow of conflicting meanings generated by various discourses.³

Women and gender relations should not only become visible in historical study, but should 'remake the very categories through which the past is discursively constituted.'⁴ Initially,

The earliest women's history...sought to challenge traditional, masculinist, 'objective' 'history' by making women visible, by writing women into 'history'. That 'history', however, was in most other respects informed by traditional, thus masculinist, categories and historical periods and reflected masculinist values.⁵

In this sense it perpetuated rather than challenged structural inequalities. Rather than merely add a gendered subject, the construction of subjectivity itself should become a central point of inquiry. Attempts to reclaim feminist 'heroines' from the past perpetuate rather than challenge traditional, masculinist categories of analysis by isolating individual subjects from their

³ Ibid. p.228. For further discussion, see WEEDON, C. 1987 : *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory*; Basil Blackwell, Oxford and New York.

⁴ HOWARD, J. : *Feminism and the Question of History : Resituating the Debate*; Women's Studies 19, 1991; pp.149-157; p.151. See also HOWELL, M.C. : *A New Feminist Historian Looks at the New Historicism : What's So Historical About it?*; Women's Studies 19, 1991; pp.139-147. She writes that 'Women's history, by definition, is an effort to restore to the historical record material which traditional histories have ignored, effaced, or misrepresented. With such material, we hope to unearth the ideological and social worlds that have constructed separate genders, to explore the distinct interests and agencies at work in these constructions, and finally to transform our understanding of the past.' (p.140)

⁵ NEWTON, J. : *History as Usual? : Feminism and the 'New Historicism'*; Cultural Critique 9, Spring 1988; pp.87-121; p.100.

discursive context.⁶ Feminist theory should inform historical research but should not, however, be unproblematically mapped onto the past.

Recent studies of western women in imperialism reflect many of the themes underlying attempts to move beyond 'women's history'. Different overviews have revealed the many, diverse roles played by women in imperial contexts which have been traditionally ignored or downplayed.⁷ A resurgence of interest in white women in colonial settings has often taken the form of romantic, nostalgic imagery stimulated by 'the popular and art media - literature, television, and film' since the 1980s.⁸ Such interest has been supported by historiographical foundations which represent

the latest reconstruction of imperial history, one which rejects the notion of the empire as male space or of imperial history as what the policy makers in London planned. Thus, the fields of women's history and imperial history have intersected.⁹

These approaches isolate and often celebrate individual 'heroic' women rather than question constructions of gender in both the metaphorically colonial context of patriarchal inequality and the more literal

⁶ This is well illustrated by an account of feminist historical biography writing, when 'unpalatable facts' are often unavoidable. See, for example, BIRKETT, D. and WHEELWRIGHT, J. : *'How Could She?' Unpalatable Facts and Feminists' Heroines*; Gender and History 2 (1), Spring 1990; pp.49-57. They write that 'Rather than explaining [unpalatable facts] away, we began to incorporate them into our subjects' biographies, making them integral rather than peripheral to our understanding of them. Our portraits became not those of simple feminist heroines, but of women rooted in their time, illuminating not only women's lives but the period in which they lived.' (p.50) They also write that 'To rewrite history to conform more exactly with current received notions of feminist thought serves to obscure rather than to clarify the past...Only by allowing these historical figures to live within their context, expressing views with which we might violently disagree, can we [attempt to] understand them.'

⁷ See, for example, the special edition of Women's Studies International Forum 13 (4) 1990. Many of these essays were reprinted, together with others, in CHAUDHURI, N. and STROBEL, M. eds. 1992 : *Western Women and Imperialism : Complicity and Resistance*; Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis. For a concise yet broad overview, see STROBEL, M. 1991 : *European Women and the Second British Empire*; Indiana University Press; Bloomington and Indianapolis.

⁸ CHADHAURI, N. and STROBEL, M. : *Western Women and Imperialism*; Women's Studies International Forum 13 (4), 1990, pp.289-293; p.289.

⁹ Ibid. p.290.

places and spaces of colonization. Similarly, by neglecting the construction of gendered subjectivities, such approaches totalize the experiences of colonized women, thus silencing the differences that post colonial perspectives seek to assert.¹⁰ Rather than perpetuate structural inequalities by merely making individual women visible in an otherwise traditional imperial history, a more theoretically rigorous approach should attempt to deconstruct subjectivity itself. It is important to distinguish between women represented as colonizers and colonized to reveal the complex interplay of patriarchal and imperial discourses of difference legitimated by constructions of gender, race and class.

According to Jane Haggis, the study of colonial women is inherently contradictory. On one level, to isolate gender from its interactions with, for example, race and class seems essentialist. On the other hand, to distinguish between the behaviour of white men and women towards colonized people is also essentialist, but depending on constructions of racial difference.¹¹ This contradiction means that white women become visible at the expense of colonized women, perpetuating an exclusionary, ethnocentric discourse.¹² The dichotomization between colonizing men and women should be deconstructed and constructions of gender difference should not be isolated from, most significantly, constructions of racial difference.

The roles played by western women in imperialism are particularly

¹⁰ SPIVAK, G.C. : *Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism*; Critical Inquiry 12, Autumn 1985, pp.243-261.

¹¹ HAGGIS, J. : *Gendering Colonialism or Colonising Gender? Recent Women's Studies Approaches to White Women and the History of British Colonialism*; Women's Studies International Forum 13 (1/2), 1990, pp.105-115.

¹² Ibid.

pertinent to historiographies of geography.¹³ Mona Domosh has attempted to use women travellers to outline a feminist historiography of geography. This, however, reproduces David Stoddart's celebration of the history of geography, when she states that

geography's roots in the exploratory tradition are...quite inspiring and should act as sources of pride.¹⁴

Domosh tries to add women travellers to this tradition without addressing the imperialist implications of such a project. She reproduces essentialist constructions of gender rather than highlight their complex differentiation over space and time and their interplay with other constructions of difference. In reply, Stoddart suggests that 'the contribution of women to the emergence and development of geography as a formal academic discipline'¹⁵ would be more relevant to a feminist historiography of geography, although he perceives the separate existence of such a historiography as divisive and unjustified. In her response to Stoddart's reply, Domosh defends her study of women travellers and sees her goal as

a history that considers the viewpoint of women's experiences, and gender relations in its understandings of context.¹⁶

As a critique of both Domosh and Stoddart, I believe that it is essential to study the roles played by women in the historiography of geography, but that this should question the very basis of that historiography rather than

¹³ See ROSE, G. and OGBORN, M. : *Feminism and Historical Geography*; the Journal of Historical Geography, 14 (4), 1988, pp.405-409 for an introduction to the concerns of a feminist historical geography.

¹⁴ DOMOSH, M. : *Toward a Feminist Historiography of Geography*; Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers N.S. 16, 1991 (a), pp.95-104; p.95.

¹⁵ STODDART, D.R. : *Do we need a Feminist Historiography of Geography - and if we do, what should it be?*; Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers N.S. 16, 1991, pp.484-487; p.485.

¹⁶ DOMOSH, M. : *Beyond the Frontiers of Geographical Knowledge*; Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers N.S. 16, 1991 (b), pp.488-490; p.489.

reproduce it, albeit in a revised form. Gender should not be seen in essentialist terms but rather as constructed and contested in many different ways over space and time. Ultimately, this should reflect on the imperialist foundations of geography as an academic discipline, raising questions concerning the practice of writing histories, geographies and historiographies.

I hope that these three contexts - women as a focus of historical research, studying western women and imperialism, and the place of women in a historiography of geography - will become implicitly and explicitly evident throughout my thesis. More specifically, I hope to address four inseparable concerns : the distinctive characteristics of travel writing by women; how these reflected and reproduced spatial differentiation, notably between spheres of patriarchal and imperial power and authority; how the subject positions of women travel writers were constructed in terms of difference, primarily along lines of gender, race and class, and how such constructions varied over space and time; and how women's journeys represented only one moment in their travels and subsequent writings. I will focus on the travels and writings of Mary Kingsley, but rather than celebrate her as an individual, I will stress gendered subjectivity and its relations to broader discursive formations.

In Chapter 2, I will discuss the metaphorical and material significance of travel and travel writing; the distinctive nature of imperial literary representation; and how both travel writing and imperial representations more broadly were differentiated by constructions of gender. I hope to demonstrate the immanence of ambivalence in the construction of

subjectivity to avoid reproducing imperial totalizations of 'otherness'. I will introduce the life, travels and writings of Mary Kingsley in the Interlude, before considering three moments of her travels : her departure, journey and return.

In Chapter 3, I will consider departure in the sense of constructions of gendered subjectivity both prior to and during her journeys. Women's travels differed from more masculine explorations, as shown by conduct books, motives, and their scale and expectations. In terms of textual representations of difference, I will focus on Mary Kingsley's accounts of herself and others, notably African women, as gendered subjects. By considering 'Space, Place and Imperial Subjectivity' in Chapter 4, I hope to illustrate the ambivalence of and interplay between constructions of racial and gender difference. I will address the ambiguities of women travellers being constructed as subordinate in terms of gender in the context of patriarchal society but able to share in the authority of colonizers defined primarily in terms of racial difference while travelling. In particular, I will discuss Mary Kingsley's perceptions of colonized places (her landscape descriptions) and people (her perceptions of racial difference).

The final moment shaping and indeed defining Mary Kingsley's travels was her reconstitution of 'home' on her return. I hope to illustrate the ways in which her political position prompted the coexistence of public and private spheres of influence, and how her marginality as a woman again gained preeminence in perceptions of her travels, writings and politics. I will draw upon many published book reviews and obituaries to reflect upon her reception on her return. As a postlude to this, I will discuss two examples of more institutional responses to women travel writers, by outlining the debates surrounding the admission of women as Fellows of the

Royal Geographical Society and the political and literary construction of 'new women' in the 1890s.

Imperial women's travel writing was distinctive in the ways that women travelled, how they wrote about their travels, and how their writings were received. By focussing on Mary Kingsley I hope to avoid perpetuating celebratory stereotypes of an intrepid individual. Rather, I hope to relate my study of imperial women travel writers to broader themes and contexts, including the immanence of poststructuralist feminist and literary theory to both historical geography and histories of geography. I hope to reveal the interplay of the three potential interpretations of 'Only a Woman' so that rather than merely add a gendered subject to geography and historiography, I can attempt to address subjectivity itself in a more profoundly structural way.

CHAPTER 2 : PLANNING A ROUTE

TRAVEL, TRAVEL WRITING AND IMPERIAL REPRESENTATION.

The ability to travel and to write about travel reflect the subjectivity of a traveller perceiving and representing people (self and 'other') and places ('home' and away). I am particularly interested in how women travel writers negotiated 'home' and away, private and public spheres in the context of British imperialism, and how constructions of gender, race and class shaped and constrained subjectivity over space and time. Imperial women's travel writing should be discussed in the broader contexts of travel and travel writing and imperial literary traditions. I will begin by discussing travel and travel writing, considering the metaphorical immanence of travel and reading and writing travel in material terms. I will then address travel writing and imperial representation, outlining colonial discourses of 'othering' and introducing notions of ambivalence; reviewing imperial literary traditions; focussing on imperial representations of gender and sexuality; and, finally, discussing the characteristics of imperial travel writing. In the last part of the chapter, I will introduce imperial travel writing by women. These three parts are informed by two underlying themes, namely the metaphorical as well as material significance of travel writing, and the ambivalence of imperial representations of difference.

TRAVEL AND TRAVEL WRITING.

The Metaphorical Immanence of Travel.

Spatial metaphors include notions of reading cultures and landscapes as texts¹ and the influences of position, notably marginality, on constructions of identity.² By definition, metaphor is inherently spatial in connecting two seemingly disconnected ideas to illuminate meaning.³ On one level, travel can illustrate the movement of ideas and theory away from a point of origin to a new destination, with their content changing over space and time.⁴

In another way, notions of travel can stimulate the self-conscious recognition of position by the researcher. James Clifford views travel as a translation term for comparative cultural studies whereby the blurring between dwelling and travelling is revealed and 'constructed and disputed *historicitities*, sites of displacement, interference, and interaction, come more

¹ See, for example, GEERTZ, C. 1973 : *The Interpretation of Cultures : Selected Essays*; Basic Books, New York, for discussion of reading cultures as texts. Geertz advocates 'thick description' to illuminate the semiotic web of signification that is culture. See the commentaries of SCHNEIDER, N.A. : *Culture-as-Text in the Work of Clifford Geertz*; *Theory and Society* 16, 1987, pp.809-839 and WATSON, G. : *Definitive Geertz*; *Ethnos* 54, 1989, pp.23-30 for further discussion. The work of Geertz has been influential in shaping the 'new cultural geography' which includes the Duncans' work on reading landscapes as texts, as in DUNCAN, J. and DUNCAN, N. : *(Re)reading the Landscape*; *Environment and Planning D : Society and Space* 6, 1988, pp.117-126; and DUNCAN, J. 1990 : *The City as Text - the Politics of Landscape Interpretation in the Kandyan Kingdom*; Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

² See, for example, HOOKS, B. 1990 : *Yearning : Race, Gender and Cultural Politics*; South End Press, Boston. See also PRATT, G. : *Commentary : Spatial Metaphors and Speaking Positions*; *Environment and Planning D : Society and Space* 10, 1992, pp.241-244. She identifies three sets of spatial metaphors in current use : those drawing on the rhetoric of mobility; those emphasizing marginality and exile; and those representing the borderland as a place.

³ The term 'metaphor' originates from the Greek 'metaphorein' meaning to transfer or transport; see VAN DEN ABEELE, G. 1992 : *Travel as Metaphor from Montaigne to Rousseau*; University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis and Oxford.

⁴ SAID, E. 1983 : *The World the Text the Critic*; Harvard University Press, Cambridge.

sharply into view.’⁵ Clifford proposes the use of ‘travel’ in cultural comparison

precisely because of its historical taintedness, its associations with gendered, racial bodies, class privilege, specific means of conveyance, beaten paths, agents, frontiers, documents, and the like. I prefer it to more apparently neutral, and ‘theoretical’, terms, such as ‘displacement,’ which can make the drawing of equivalence across different historical experiences too easy.⁶

It is, however, ironic that such a sense of travel, and its place within broader projects of cross-cultural comparison, reproduce constructions of difference. Travel should be seen as diverse, incorporating voluntary but also forced movement, and experienced differently along lines of race, class and gender.⁷ Cultural critique oriented around ideas of travel should be theoretically informed and substantively grounded to avoid

theoretical tourism on the part of the first world critic, where the margin becomes a linguistic or critical vacation, a new poetics of the exotic.⁸

Metaphor can figuratively overcome difference only by transporting ideas of travel to a text so that

Travel then becomes the metaphor of metaphor while the structure of the metaphor becomes the metaphor for the travel of meaning.⁹

Travel is significant because its critical distance and perspective relate to both seeing and knowing. Critical distance arises from orientation and

⁵ CLIFFORD, J. : *Travelling Cultures*; in GROSSBERG, L., NELSON, C., and TREICHLER, P. eds. 1992 : *Cultural Studies*; Routledge, London and New York; pp.96-116.

⁶ Ibid. p.110.

⁷ See, for example, bell hooks’ critique of Clifford in which she states : ‘From certain standpoints, to travel is to encounter the terrorizing force of white supremacy.’ HOOKS, B. : *Representing Whiteness in the Black Imagination*; in GROSSBERG et.al. op.cit. pp.338-46; p.344.

⁸ KAPLAN, C. : *Deterritorializations : The Rewriting of Home and Exile in Western Feminist Discourse*; Cultural Critique 6, Spring 1987, pp.187-198; p.191.

⁹ VAN DEN ABBEELE 1992 op.cit. p.xxiii.

disorientation in the context of travel 'which has always already begun'. Travel is bounded by points of departure and destination but in an arbitrary, retrospective way underpinned by perceptions of 'home' which themselves only arise with critical distance. For Van Den Abbeele,

The concept of a home is needed (and in fact it can only be thought) only *after* the home has already been left behind. In a strict sense, then, one has always already left home, since home can only exist as such at the price of it being lost.¹⁰

To travel is an attempt to mediate this loss by the 'spatialization of time'. However, to travel also represents the 'temporalization of space' whereby orientation seems paradoxically disorienting because

the point of return as repetition of the point of departure cannot take place without a difference in that repetition : the detour constitutive of the voyage itself. Were the point of departure and the point of return to remain exactly the same, that is, were they the same point, there could be no travel.¹¹

Travel thus involves the familiarization or domestication of the unfamiliar at the same time as the defamiliarization of the familiar or domestic. This is, however, rooted in a distinctly masculine tradition whereby the traveller/theorist is able to move beyond home rather than be constrained within it.¹² In addition, it relates to the Enlightenment project of all-encompassing vision through the eyes of an individual, supposedly rational, viewer, similarly implying a masculine subject.¹³ Van den Abbeele refers to these issues but only *en passant*. He, like his traveller/theorist, seems able

¹⁰ Ibid. pp.xviii-xix.

¹¹ Ibid. p.xix.

¹² MORRIS, M. : *At Henry Parkes Motel*; Cultural Studies 2 (1) 1988 pp.1-16 and 29-47. Morris criticises Van den Abbeele's earlier work in this article, particularly VAN DEN ABBEELE, G. : *Sightseers : the Tourist as Theorist*; Diacritics, 10, 1980.

¹³ VAN DEN ABBEELE 1992 op.cit. Also see LLOYD, G. 1984 : *The Man of Reason : 'Male' and 'Female' in Western Philosophy*; Methuen, London.

to move beyond home but, by recognizing it in a retrospective, arbitrary and ever-changing way, is neither able nor compelled to attempt to change it.

Travel seems potentially liberating - at least for the male traveller/theorist - because of the opportunities for transgression and questioning of ideas formulated at home. However, such transgression is bounded within the definition of travel because 'the very understanding of...error as 'wandering' implies a topography or space of wandering'.¹⁴ The risks of travel are potentially alienating because of the dangers 'of becoming a foreigner in one's own land in the case of literal travel, [and] becoming a stranger in one's own time in the case of scholarly travel.'¹⁵ A feminist critique of the metaphorical significance of travel would highlight gender inequality imposed by patriarchal power and authority. Notions of 'home' should be deconstructed to illustrate the unequal access to travel and, by metaphorical extension, to theory, and different, distinctively gendered, meanings of 'home' should be explored. The political potential of such a deconstruction would stand in stark contrast to Van Den Abbeele's apolitical project. In the context of post colonial critiques of 'knowledge', the privileging of the perspectives of an elite able to travel/theorize should be resisted by giving voice to those defined as marginal, although the possibility of this clearly depends on positionality. Overall, the spatial metaphors of travel should be seen as inseparable from those of position and constructions of marginality which give rise to the time- and place-specific subject position of the traveller.

¹⁴ Ibid. p.47.

¹⁵ Ibid. p.50.

Reading and Writing Travel.

The material nature of travel has been seen by some to lie on a historical continuum from exploration to travel to tourism while others have attempted to deconstruct such a continuum. Although he concedes 'obvious overlaps', Paul Fussell has stated that 'exploration belongs to the Renaissance, travel to the bourgeois age, tourism to our own proletarian moment.'¹⁶ This highly simplistic teleology corresponds to different motivations :

the explorer seeks the undiscovered, the travel[l]er that which has been discovered by the mind working in history, the tourist that which has been discovered by entrepreneurship and prepared for him [sic] by the arts of mass publicity. The genuine travel[l]er is, or used to be, in the middle between the two extremes.¹⁷

From the perspective of contemporary western society, travel is perhaps most commonly defined in term of its difference from tourism. Travel seems independent, individualistic, and active unlike the mass, essentially passive consumption associated with tourism. John Urry has mapped the infrastructure and logistics of tourism as inextricably bound up with broader socio-economic restructuring.¹⁸ The 'tourist gaze' is primarily discussed in terms of the object which differs from everyday life rather than the characteristics enabling or constraining the viewing subject.¹⁹

¹⁶ FUSSELL, P. 1980 : *Abroad : British Literary Travelling Between the Wars*; Oxford University Press, New York; p.38.

¹⁷ Ibid. p.39.

¹⁸ URRY, J. 1990 : *The Tourist Gaze : Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies*; Sage Publications, London, Newbury Park and New Delhi.

¹⁹ Urry's consideration of the gazing subject seems largely limited to constructions of class difference. Gender and race are textually as well as substantively peripheral, receiving inadequate commentary at the end of the book.

However, to distinguish travel from tourism in these or other ways arguably creates a false distinction overlooking the material and metaphorical implications for cross-cultural representation through signification. This, following Homi K. Bhabha,

is not simply a matter of language; it is the question of culture's representation of difference - manners, words, rituals, customs, time - inscribed without a transcendent subject that knows, outside of a mimetic social memory.²⁰

According to Jonathan Culler, tourists are agents of semiotics, reading cities, landscapes and cultures as sign systems. To distinguish between travel and tourism, epitomized by Fussell's 'hysterical smugness' in celebrating British travel writing in the inter-war period, is self-defeating because both relate to broader notions of signification. The construction of this distinction parallels others including 'the authentic and the inauthentic, the natural and the touristy'²¹ which are more tangible semiotic operators helping to structure the tourist gaze. Signification is prompted by markers presenting sites as sights to the viewer.²² However, this form of representation is paradoxical because

to be experienced as authentic it must be marked as authentic, but when it is marked as authentic it is mediated, a sign of itself, and hence lacks the authenticity of what is truly unspoiled, untouched by mediating cultural codes.²³

The nature of travel has been perceived as either changing over time, as argued by Fussell and Urry, or remaining essentially the same in

²⁰ BHABHA, H.K. : *Articulating the Archaic : Notes on Colonial Nonsense*; in COLLIER, P. and GEYER-RYAN, H. eds. 1990 : *Literary Theory Today*; Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York; pp.203-218; p.205.

²¹ CULLER, J. 1988 : *Framing the Sign : Criticism and its Institutions*; University of Oklahoma Press, Norman and London; p.159.

²² Ibid. p.160, following MacCANNELL, D. 1976 : *The Tourist*; Schocken, New York.

²³ Ibid. p.164.

terms of broader processes of signification, as argued by Culler. I think that it is possible to reconcile these two positions through a discursive understanding of travel that reveals discontinuities over space and time whereby exploration, travel and tourism acquire distinct meanings²⁴ while being informed by the underlying significance of perceptions of difference by an individual or group mediating the spheres of 'home' and away. In this way, when I refer to 'travel' I am referring to the specific context whereby women travelling alone in the late nineteenth century were defined primarily as travellers rather than explorers or tourists, but also the more general context of cross-cultural representation through signification.

Travel writing takes many diverse forms including

the decasyllabic couplet, the discontinuous field note, the journal, the diary, the narrative, the report, the letter, the history, the ethnography, the novel, and combinations of them.²⁵

Both travel and travel writing are hermeneutic processes whereby the 'eye/I' of the traveller/travel writer constructs spatial and textual difference.²⁶ Travel writing is distinctive because autobiographical narrative exists alongside, and seems to gain authority from, observational detail. The journey undertaken and represented can be seen as a psychological journey, relating to themes of the journey of life and self-discovery. Such self-referentiality parallels that of diary narratives because

²⁴ According to Michel Foucault, discursive rules and formations change over time so that history represents a range of disconnected discourses as illustrated by the changing discourses of madness and sexuality. See, for example, FOUCAULT, M. 1990 : *The History of Sexuality Vol.1* (translated by R.Hurley); Vintage Books, New York.

²⁵ MacLAREN, I.S. : *Introduction*; Ariel 21 (4), October 1990, p.6.

²⁶ VAN WYK SMITH, M. : *'Arbitrary Rule' and the Eighteenth Century Discourse of Guinea*; Ariel 21 (4), October 1990, pp.119-137.

in much the same way as the diarist uses public or cultural codes to mitigate the split between narrating self and narrated self, he or she can also fall back on an analogy between a geographical journey and a spiritual journey : the traveller can view the journey as destined towards a place in which narrator and actor are reconciled in a visionary self-presence.²⁷

Travel writing seems to mediate 'fact' and fiction, often seeming to transcend conventional distinctions between scientific and literary writing. This is predicated on the authority of the author representing experiences that are not easily verifiable.²⁸ It can also seem that the travel writer enjoys a superior status to the reader because

The speaker in any travel book exhibits himself [sic] as physically more free than the reader, and thus every such book...is an implicit celebration of freedom.²⁹

However, such freedom is illusory because

that incremental difference, which prevents the accomplishment of a fully synoptic closure between a sight and its seeing, is...engendered via the spatial and temporal displacement that is travel, an activity that eludes a proper perspective. The sight of the voyage cannot do without a voyage of the sight, since one can only take a perspective on the voyage by taking a certain distance from it, a distancing that presupposes the continuation of the voyage, the prolongation of its course.³⁰

Travel writing paradoxically fixes movement over space and time. This relates both to the material content of travel writing and the metaphorical relationship between travel and writing more broadly. On one level, the frequency with which literature returns to the trope of travel suggests that this illuminates the status of literature parallel to ways of

²⁷ HASSAM, A. : 'As I Write' : *Narrative Occasions and the Quest for Self-Presence in the Travel Diary*; Ariel 21 (4), October 1990, pp.33-47; p.41.

²⁸ VAN DEN ABEELE 1992 op.cit. See Chapter 3 for further discussion of authorial authority and its implications for notions of gendered subjectivity.

²⁹ FUSSELL op.cit. p.203.

³⁰ VAN DEN ABEELE 1992 op.cit. pp.71-2.

knowing more generally.³¹ Both reading and writing reflect travel,³² and the perceived distance between them can be overcome because

The trail of the travel[l]er obliges us to supersede the opposition between reading and writing and to understand in its stead a complex circulation of signs as much written as read which modifies the travel[l]er as much as he [sic] modifies the terrain in an endless differential positioning, at once the infinite detour of the text and the text of an infinite detour.³³

This reflexive circulation of signs means that it is impossible to move outside travel when writing or reading about it because

To talk about travel is inevitably to engage in it, to mime through the movement of one's words that which one is trying to designate with those words.³⁴

According to Michel de Certeau, 'every story is a travel story - a spatial practice,'³⁵ relating to the dialectical complexities of seeing, reading and writing in everyday life. In this way,

The travel story...does not consist of process contained and directed by origin and destination, nor does it oscillate between 'perspectives' on reality. It is itself a movement organized (like any spatial story) between both prospective and retrospective mappings of place *and* the practices that transform them.³⁶

To view travel and travel writing as essentially reflexive through the hermeneutic processes of reading and writing undermines perceptions of

³¹ Ibid.

³² See, for example, FUSSELL op.cit. who states that, firstly, 'in reading, of all books, a travel book, the reader becomes doubly a travel[l]er, moving from beginning to end of the book while touring along with the literary travel[l]er' (p.211); and, secondly, that 'writing...is like travel[l]ing. Figures of travel occupy any writer's imagination as he [sic] starts out, makes transitions, digresses, returns, goes forward, divagates, pauses, approaches the subject from a slightly different direction, and observes things from a different point of view' (pp.211-212).

³³ Ibid. pp.7-8.

³⁴ VAN DEN ABEELE 1992 op.cit. p.xxx.

³⁵ DE CERTEAU, M. 1984 : *The Practice of Everyday Life*; translated by Steven Randall; University of California Press, Berkeley; p.115.

³⁶ MORRIS op.cit. p.38.

representations of an unproblematic, external 'reality'. To refer to the discourse of travel and its articulation through travel writing rather emphasises the exercise of power and authority in constructions of 'truth' and the associated pursuit of knowledge. I am focussing on travel writing by women in the context of late nineteenth century British imperialism to illustrate how subject positions were constituted differently over space, notably in terms of gender, race and class, and how their travel and travel writing were influenced and received in terms of time- and place-specific discursive formations.

TRAVEL WRITING AND IMPERIAL REPRESENTATION.

Imperial travel writing is inseparable from the underlying context of representation associated with imperial and/or colonial discourses and its place within a distinctive literary tradition. I will illustrate some of the characteristics of this tradition by referring to representations of gender and sexuality before focussing on imperial travel writing. Initially, however, I hope to destabilize imperial constructions and representations of 'otherness' by revealing their ambivalence.

Colonial Discourse : 'Othering' and Representation.

According to Bhabha, the study of colonial discourse³⁷ should address the creation of colonial subjects, and move beyond the identification of images as positive or negative to a more profoundly structural understanding of the processes of subjectification.³⁸ Colonial discourse depends upon fixity in the construction of 'otherness' which, as 'the sign of cultural/historical/racial difference', is a paradoxical form of representation, reproducing 'rigidity and an unchanging order as well as disorder, degeneracy and daemonic repetition'.³⁹ The stereotype is the main discursive codification of fixity, and similarly reflects ambivalence because it

is a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always 'in place', already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated.⁴⁰

Stereotypes do not represent false images which become discriminatory scapegoats; rather they are ambivalent and complex in their

³⁷ Following CHAUDHURI and STROBEL 1992 op.cit., 'Imperialism is a concept that signifies any relationship of dominance and subordination between nations, including the modern form of economic control. Colonialism is the specific historical form of imperialism that involves direct military, economic, and political control.' (p.2). I do not want to privilege either 'imperialism' or 'colonialism' or to perceive them as mutually exclusive. I refer to women travel writers of this period as imperial because the places they travelled through were under imperial but not necessarily colonial control. This also reflects that they themselves were moving rather than fixed in colonial settlements, and also that they often passed through areas under the imperial influence of different imperial, but not necessarily colonial, powers. However, at this stage I am referring to 'colonial discourse' because I am discussing Bhabha's work employing this term.

³⁸ BHABHA, H.K. : *The Other Question...*; Screen 24 (6), 1983, pp.18-36.

³⁹ Ibid. p.18.

⁴⁰ Ibid. p.18.

projection and introjection, metaphoric and metonymic strategies, displacement, overdetermination, guilt, aggressivity; the masking and splitting of 'official' and phantasmatic knowledges to construct the positionalities and oppositionalities of racist discourse.⁴¹

Bhabha views colonial stereotyping in terms of fetish, and can be criticised for employing psychoanalytic categories in a totalizing, ahistorical way which reproduces strategies he himself is anxious to critique.⁴²

Bhabha views ambivalence as productive, giving rise to 'otherness' characterized as 'an object of desire and derision, an articulation of difference contained within the fantasy of origin and identity.'⁴³ To overlook ambivalence is to remain constrained within colonial discourse, perpetuating the hegemonic metanarrative of 'otherness' which legitimates such a discourse.

Rather than make normalizing judgements about colonial representation, it is important to engage with the colonial regime of 'truth' which made stereotypes effective. This in turn depends upon deconstructing colonial discourse as an apparatus of power aiming to legitimate conquest over people constructed as racially inferior. According to Bhabha,

Its predominant strategic function is the creation of a space for a 'subject peoples' through the production of knowledges in terms of which surveillance is exercised and a complex form of pleasure/unpleasure is incited.⁴⁴

To represent colonial subjects in these terms 'requires an end to the collusion of historicism and realism by unseating the Transcendental

⁴¹ Ibid. p.34.

⁴² See, for example, YOUNG, R. 1990 : *White Mythologies : Writing History and the West*, Routledge, London and New York. For further critiques, see PARRY, B. : *Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse*; Oxford Literary Review 9, 1987, pp.27-58; and LOOMBA, A. : *Overworlding the 'Third World'*; Oxford Literary Review 13, 1991, pp.164-191.

⁴³ BHABHA 1983 op.cit. p.19.

⁴⁴ Ibid. p.23

subject.⁴⁵ In this way, representation relates to the discursive formations and ambivalence of power, authority, 'truth' and knowledge, rather than realist claims to neutrality of the subjects representing, being represented, and interpreting those representations.

The colonial dialectics of seeing/knowing are visibly manifest through
Racist stereotypical discourse...[which] inscribes a form of
governmentality that is informed by a productive splitting in
its constitution of knowledge and the exercise of power.⁴⁶

To 'know' the colonized population legitimates discriminatory and authoritarian forms of government whereby

colonization almost invariably implies a relation of structural
domination and a suppression - often violent - of the
heterogeneity of the subject(s) in question.⁴⁷

Visibility is significant on several, interdependent levels. On an ideological level, the necessity - and hence legitimation - of colonial rule is visible through, for example, notions of the 'Civilizing Mission' and the 'White Man's Burden';⁴⁸ and, on a more tangible level, the

visibility of the institutions and apparatuses of power is
possible because the exercise of colonial power makes their
relationship obscure, produces them as fetishes, spectacles of a
'natural'/racial pre-eminence.⁴⁹

In another way, visibility is maintained through surveillance which depends

⁴⁵ BHABHA, H.K. : *Representation and the Colonial Text : A Critical Exploration of Some Forms of Mimeticism*; in GLOVERSMITH, F. ed. 1984 : *The Theory of Reading*; The Harvester Press, Sussex; Barnes and Noble Books, New Jersey; pp.93-123; p.98.

⁴⁶ BHABHA 1983 op.cit. p.35.

⁴⁷ MOHANTY, C.T. : *Under Western Eyes : Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses*; Boundary 2 (3) 1984 pp.333-358; p.333.

⁴⁸ These are referred to as 'moralistic and normative ideologies of amelioration' by BHABHA 1983 op.cit. p.35.

⁴⁹ Ibid. p.35. In addition, see MITCHELL, T. 1988 : *Colonizing Egypt*; Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, for discussion of how the exercise of colonial power and authority were inscribed in space.

on distance for 'its strategies of objectification, normalisation and discipline',⁵⁰ spatially epitomized by seats of government being located at the colonial centre rather than the colonized periphery. However, the visibility of colonial rule is itself ambivalent because

To be authoritative, its rules of recognition must reflect consensual knowledge or opinion; to be powerful, these rules of recognition must be breached in order to represent the exorbitant objects of discrimination that lie beyond its purview.⁵¹

Discrimination refers to the splitting giving rise to a 'colonial hybrid',⁵² whereby constructions of otherness and the visibility of colonial authority are destabilized by the recognition of differentiation :

if the unitary (and essentialist) reference to race, nation, or cultural tradition is essential to preserve the presence of authority as an immediate mimetic effect, such essentialism must be exceeded in the articulation of 'differentiatory,' discriminatory identities.⁵³

Edward Said's discussion of 'Orientalism'⁵⁴ illuminates many of the characteristics of colonial discourse, but, by neglecting ambivalence, seems to reproduce rather than challenge the dichotomization of colonizing self and colonized other. Orientalism relates to the production and reproduction of myths constructing the inferiority of the colonized population and thereby reinforcing and legitimating perceptions of western superiority. The discourse of Orientalism is seen to be comprised of the changing historical

⁵⁰ BHABHA 1983 op.cit. p.35.

⁵¹ BHABHA, H.K. : *Signs taken for Wonders : Questions of Ambivalence and Authority under a Tree Outside Delhi, May 1817*; Critical Inquiry 12, Autumn 1985, pp.144-165; p.154.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid. p.154.

⁵⁴ SAID, E. 1978 : *Orientalism*; Pantheon Books, New York.

and cultural relationship between Europe and Asia, the production of knowledge in the west from the early nineteenth century, and the ideological suppositions and images stimulating popular perceptions of the 'Orient'.⁵⁵ Three underlying themes give coherence to these interconnected elements, namely Said's concern with historical specificity (the alliance of Orientalism and imperialism from the eighteenth century), knowledge and power.⁵⁶

Said's inadequate problematization of representation reflects and exacerbates his neglect of ambivalence. He perceives a binary relationship between knowledge and the subject to be known, so that intentionality becomes crucial. In this way,

Subjects are always disproportionately placed in opposition or domination through the symbolic decentering of multiple power-relations which play the role of support as well as target or adversary. It becomes difficult, then, to conceive of the *historical* enunciations of colonial discourse without them being either functionally overdetermined or strategically elaborated or displaced by the *unconscious* scene of latent Orientalism.⁵⁷

An example of Said's neglect of complexity, difference and ambivalence lies in the way that gender differences are ignored. Feminist and post colonial perspectives, often informed by poststructuralism, have attempted to deconstruct and resist metanarratives of otherness to achieve self-expression through the assertion of subjectivity. Such attempts are reflected in the claim that

⁵⁵ SAID, E. : *Orientalism Reconsidered*; Cultural Critique 1, Fall 1985, pp.89-107.

⁵⁶ MANI, L. and FRANKENBERG, R. : *The Challenge of Orientalism*; Economy and Society 14 (2), May 1985, pp.174-192.

⁵⁷ BHABHA 1983 op.cit. p.25.

all too frequently the binary opposition colonizer/colonized inhibits examination of what Spivak calls 'the heterogeneity of 'Colonial Power' at the same time that it masks the roles women play, whether [and both] as colonizers or as colonized.⁵⁸

Overall, the powerful imperial ideology of otherness should be recognized as historically specific and should be transcended rather than reproduced. Appeals to difference, whether in terms of race, gender or class, should be contextualized and the ambivalence of such constructions revealed to avoid essentialism and the perpetuation of artificial binary oppositions.

Imperial Literary Traditions.

According to Spivak, two considerations generally overlooked in readings of nineteenth-century English literature are, firstly, that imperialism was central in the cultural representation of England to the English, and, secondly, the roles played by literature in stimulating such cultural self-representation.⁵⁹ Overall,

the colonial experience, the colonial theme, altered the sense of time and space in the modern British novel [...], brought a sense of urgency and crisis into European society, shattered the familiar patterns in English fiction,⁶⁰

and promoted perceptions of the need for centralized imperialist order to control a chaotic periphery. Imperial literature can be seen as distinctive in the lack of contact between its object of representation and its readership, so that the 'truth' of its textualization of difference was defined within wider

⁵⁸ HOLMLUND, C.A. : *Displacing Limits of Difference : Gender, Race, and Colonialism in Edward Said and Homi Bhabha's Theoretical Models and Marguerite Duras's Experimental Films*; Quarterly Review of Film and Video 13, 1991, pp.1-22.

⁵⁹ SPIVAK, G.C. op.cit.

⁶⁰ RASKIN, J. 1971 : *The Mythology of Imperialism*; Random House, New York; p.19.

discourses of imperial power and authority.⁶¹ Imperial literature represented the perceived boundaries of 'civilization', but rather than explore difference, it largely affirmed its own ethnocentric perceptions :

While the surface of each colonialist text purports to represent specific encounters with specific varieties of the racial Other, the subtext valorized the superiority of the European cultures, of the collective process that has mediated that representation.⁶²

JanMohamed has contrasted 'imaginary' and 'symbolic' texts as two types of colonial literary representation.⁶³ The former is structured by aggressive objectification through which

the subject is eclipsed by his [sic] fixation on and fetishization of the Other [and] the self becomes a prisoner of the projected image,⁶⁴

while the latter seems more dialectically receptive to the potential mediation between self and other.

Before discussing the underlying characteristics of imperial travel writing and outlining my interest in travel writing by women, I will discuss representations of gender and sexuality in imperial literature generally, and travel writing more specifically, as examples of ambivalence in imperial constructions of otherness.

⁶¹ JANMOHAMED, A.R. : *The Economy of Manichean Allegory : The Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature*; Critical Inquiry 12, Autumn 1985, pp.59-87.

⁶² Ibid. p.65.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid. p.67.

Imperial Representations of Gender and Sexuality.

To discuss textual representations of gender and sexuality as distinctively imperial relates to imperial power and authority, the gaze, and the internal and/or external positioning in the codification of difference. It can be argued that discussing imperial literature primarily in terms of

the black/white divide has led to a disguising of yet another [imperial] fiction inscribed by these texts; that of the 'subject' nature of females in general, white or black.'⁶⁵

As in the case of Said's Orientalism, studies of the construction of otherness can be criticized for ignoring gender differentiation and thus reproducing discursive exclusion and oppression through enforced silencing. Busia goes on to argue that

much has been said concerning the representation of the colonial native as the European 'other', but as those studies done are based on texts in which [for example] African males are very much present, but scant notice is taken of the practical non-existence of African females, I here maintain that this analysis is strictly one of the 'othering' of the African male as the reverse of his European counterpart. Thus, where it could be said that in the colonial novel the colonized male encounters not himself but his antithesis, the colonized woman encounters only erasure [and] sees herself only in silent spaces. The unvoicing of the black woman is literal, and her essence projected only as a void.⁶⁶

It is notable that in this account women are perceived as colonized rather than potential colonizers and, by extension, neglected as readers of imperial literature. By discussing imperial women travel writers, I hope to redress such neglect by highlighting the gendered nature of ambivalent representation on the part of women as colonizers and colonized, and, by

⁶⁵ BUSIA, A.P.A. : *Miscegenation as Metonymy : Sexuality and Power in the Colonial Novel*; Ethnic and Racial Studies 9, 1986, pp.360-372; p.362.

⁶⁶ Ibid. p.369.

considering difference constructed along lines of both gender and race, I hope to reveal the complexities of labelling women as either colonizers or colonized in different contexts. However, at this stage I will discuss the need to deconstruct the 'other' by gender by focussing on the association of indigenous women with colonized land, and resulting perceptions of both feminized land and women as objects of colonization, arising from the textual articulation of sexuality in the creation of erotic as well as 'exotic' spaces.

Nineteenth-century travel writers often used sexual imagery to create and sustain the heroic stature of many male explorers and travellers who wrote of conquering and penetrating dangerous, unknown continents, often characterized by the fertility of both indigenous vegetation and women.⁶⁷ Sexuality was particularly symbolic in imperial confrontation and its textual representation :

the sex element runs as a strong undercurrent throughout [imperial literature], and the tensions induced by the strong social and moral codes are thus expressed in terms of sexual comportment, for it seems that amongst Europeans in the far-flung parts of empire, great social and political pressure manifests itself in the form of all kinds of deviant sexual behaviour. Like the colonized countries they all inhabit woman [sic] also becomes a subject space.⁶⁸

This relates to Orientalist discourses through which

Europe was charmed by an Orient that shimmered with possibilities, that promised a sexual space, a voyage away from the self, an escape from the dictates of the bourgeois morality of the metropolis⁶⁹

and by which the construction of a sexual domain was complimentary to the

⁶⁷ See, for example, SAID 1985 op.cit. and BUSIA op.cit.

⁶⁸ BUSIA op.cit. p.363.

⁶⁹ KABBANI, R. 1986 : *Europe's Myths of Orient : Devise and Rule*; MacMillan, London; p.67.

construction of a domain to be colonized. By extension, issues of control came to be defined in sexual terms as well as in terms that legitimized colonization.⁷⁰

Victorian patriarchy constructed all women as inferior, but

Eastern women [for example] were doubly inferior, being women *and* Easterners. They were an even more conspicuous commodity than their Western sisters. They were part of the goods of empire, the living rewards that white men could, if they wished to, reap.⁷¹

Literary representations of sexuality suggest ambivalence at the centre of imperial conquest, qualifying notions of power, authority, and legitimation. In his relationships with white women, a male colonizer could demonstrate but not fulfill sexual mastery as 'the woman must be ever present to be won again, and the desire for conquest finds its own justification.'⁷² Such conquest could never be seen to be sanctioned, but the very nature of colonization, and the identification of colonized women with the land itself, suggested that conquest did occur, with metaphors of rape emphasizing violence and the achievement of power only through violation. The central paradox thus becomes one of the legitimacy of colonialism as

the strategic formation of power supposedly legitimated by [imperial] texts becomes a self-betraying manoeuvre in which the supreme fiction is that of the deliberate usurping of the voice of the supposedly willing [indigenous] woman, rendering her falsely articulate.⁷³

Nineteenth-century travel writing played an important part in claiming authority in the vivid representation of recurrent motifs

⁷⁰ GILMAN, S.L. : *Black Bodies, White Bodies : Toward an Iconography of Female Sexuality in Late Nineteenth Century Art, Medicine, and Literature*; Critical Inquiry 12, Autumn 1985, pp.204-242.

⁷¹ KABBANI op.cit. p.51.

⁷² BUSIA op.cit. p.370.

⁷³ Ibid. p.371.

constructing the sexuality of the 'other'. For example, the figure of the veiled woman suggested mystery and the need for Western unveiling for comprehension, with

this process of exposing the female Other, of literally denuding her,...[coming] to allegorize the Western masculinist power of possession, that she, as a metaphor for her land, becomes available for Western penetration and knowledge.⁷⁴

A similarly vivid and common motif was that of the harem which came to epitomize perceptions of sexual depravity and inaccessibility to the colonizer and was described 'with fascination and loathing'.⁷⁵

A further example of the interconnections between representations of colonial land, gender and sexuality is the powerful mythology of Africa as the 'Dark Continent'. Essentially,

Africa grew 'dark' as Victorian explorers, missionaries, and scientists flooded it with light, because the light was refracted through an imperialist ideology that urged the abolition of 'savage customs' in the name of civilization.⁷⁶

This mythology incorporated an implicit fear and threat of falling out of the light, with such social and moral regression having powerful sexual connotations. On another level, the most graphic metaphorical expression of this can be seen in Freud's 1926 *Essay on Lay Analysis* in which he described the lack of knowledge concerning adult female sexuality as the 'dark continent' of psychology, thus linking 'the image of female sexuality to the image of the colonial black and to the perceived relationship between

⁷⁴ SHOHAT, E. : *Gender and Culture of Empire : Toward a Feminist Ethnography of the Cinema*; Quarterly Review of Film and Video 13, 1991, pp.45-84; p.57.

⁷⁵ AHMED, L. : *Western Ethnocentrism and Perceptions of the Harem*; Feminist Studies 8 (3) 1982 pp.521-534; p.524. See also MABRO, J. ed. 1991 : *Half-Veiled Truths : Western Travellers' Perceptions of Middle Eastern Women*; I.B.Tauris, London and New York.

⁷⁶ BRANTLINGER, P. : *Victorians and Africans : The Genealogy of the Myth of the Dark Continent*; Critical Inquiry 12, Autumn 1985, pp.166-203; p.166.

the female's ascribed sexuality and the Other's',⁷⁷ illustrating the overlaps between discourses of difference of race and gender in the totalizing conception of otherness.

Imperial Travel Writing.

Travel writing was particularly important in imperial literary traditions because individual Europeans travelled between colonized and colonizing worlds, perpetuating mythological otherness. Individual travellers can be likened to imperial powers because

they undertake to conquer, grasp, or assimilate challenging lands and alien peoples. They exercise the power they have (physical stamina, language ability, ingenuity, flexibility) to gain more power (knowledge of land, people, flora, fauna; knowledge of self; sense of achievement.) They requisition food, shelter, carriers, and guides and return cash, medical attention, and glimpses and tokens of European culture. Like the empire, they both assert authority over and depend upon the people they encounter. Their narrative representations...constitute models for the national relation between Self and Other that is empire.⁷⁸

However, the subject position of the traveller should be seen as more complex, ambiguous and fundamentally ambivalent than implied by this dichotomization to transcend totalizing discourses of self and other and thus to avoid reproducing imperialist strategies. In the case of travellers,

one recurrent feature in the as yet sketchily developed systematic study of Victorian travel narrative is an insistence on the author's multiple persona, which allows him or her to be both accomplice in, and critic of, the business of imperialism.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ GILMAN op.cit. p.238.

⁷⁸ BLAKE, S.L. : *A Woman's Trek : What Difference does Gender Make?* ; Women's Studies International Forum 13 (4), 1990, pp.347-355; p.348.

⁷⁹ KROLLER, E-M. : *First Impressions : Rhetorical Strategies in Travel Writing by Victorian Women*; Ariel 21 (4), October 1990, pp.87-99; p.87.

In this way, the ideal embodiment of notions of empire in the subjectivity of the traveller became, in the day to day practice of travelling, and subsequent writing, a critique of such a conception because of the discursive polyphony reflecting the ambivalence of imperial encounters and authority.

The most tangible relationship between travel and imperialism lay in exploration and discovery, with travel writing playing an important role in the naming, and thus 'owning'⁸⁰ and authoring of colonial territories whereby, 'from the moment of this naming ritual, the observed elements acquire significance and begin to be'.⁸¹ The practice of naming is central to Paul Carter's conception of spatial history as an alternative to the linear self-validation of imperial history.⁸² Carter distinguishes between 'discovery' and 'exploration' because

while discovery rests on the assumption of a world of facts waiting to be found, collected and classified, a world in which the neutral observer is not implicated, exploration lays stress on the observer's active engagement with his [sic] environment : it recognizes phenomena as offspring of his intention to explore.⁸³

In my discussion of women travel writers, I hope to make a further distinction : that between travel and exploration, with the former seeming more likely to reflect self-effacing polyphony, parallel with the gendered implications whereby women were (and continue to be) labelled travellers - at least in a material if not a metaphorical sense - but rarely explorers, suggesting constructions of the latter's overt masculinity and the former's

⁸⁰ BLYTHE, M. : 'What's in a Name?' : *Film Culture and the Self/Other Question*; Quarterly Review of Film and Video 13, 1991, pp.205-215.

⁸¹ KABBANI op.cit. p.86.

⁸² CARTER, P. 1987 : *The Road to Botany Bay : An Essay in Spatial History*; Faber and Faber, London and Boston.

⁸³ Ibid. p.25.

more passive femininity. The open-ended nature of naming seems contrary to imperial aims, but Carter's thesis itself can be criticized for its imperialist reduction of such practices to the structures of language through a focus on exclusionary structures of intentionality. While it is important to recognize the articulation of places and spaces through naming, its textuality and intertextuality should be emphasized so that, for example, minority discourses and the gendering of discursive practices and landscape itself can be addressed.

Mary Louise Pratt has discussed the production of knowledge in imperial 'contact zones' of transculturation from the late eighteenth century in Latin America and Africa.⁸⁴ She traces a 'new planetary consciousness' characterized by interior exploration and the systematization of the natural world through Linnaean naming. Travel writing came to be informed by the distinct imperatives of 'science and sentiment' which underpinned the differences between landscape narration and 'manners-and-customs' ethnography whereby

one produces land as landscape and territory, scanning for prospects; the other produces the indigenous inhabitants as bodyscapes, scanned also for prospects.⁸⁵

The subjectivity of the travel writer paralleled this distinction : the land-scanning, self-effacing producer of information for the state clearly differed from the sentimental experiential subject oriented more towards commerce and enterprise. Pratt argues that the paradoxical nature of observation as apparently benign yet complicit with imperialism establishes such travel

⁸⁴ PRATT, M-L. 1992 : *Imperial Eyes : Travel Writing and Transculturation*; Routledge, London and New York.

⁸⁵ Ibid. p.64.

writers as 'anti-conquest',⁸⁶ corresponding with notions of the ambivalence of imperial domination.

From the mid-nineteenth century, travel writing was characterized by increasingly hegemonic informational discourses aspiring to scientific status and self-legitimation, often closely allied with strategies of imperial control. Travel writing rejoined the expansion of knowledge of the natural world with the expansion of the capitalist world system, previously seen as ideologically split,⁸⁷ which suggests attempts to impose order and the interdependence of power, 'truth' and knowledge within imperial discourse. However, this often remained an implicit subtext in nineteenth century travel writing, as

to the extent that it strives to efface itself, the invisible eye/I strives to make those informational orders [whether aesthetic, botanical, ethnographic, ecological, and so on] natural, to find them there uncommanded, rather than assert them as the products/producers of European knowledges or disciplines. In turn, those knowledges are the producers/products of a project they likewise presuppose and seldom bespeak.⁸⁸

Imperial travel writing varied through time and space. For example, Pratt contrasts Humboldt's prolific writings on Latin America describing nature in terms of the 'poetics of science' with the 'capitalist vanguard' from the 1820s who expressed their concern with conquest rather than discovery in the form of linear travel accounts.⁸⁹ Perhaps the most graphic

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ PRATT, M-L. : *Scratches on the Face of the Country; or, What Mr Barrow saw in the Land of the Bushmen*; Critical Inquiry 12, Autumn 1985, pp.119-43. This essay is reprinted in part in PRATT 1992 op.cit.

⁸⁸ Ibid p.125.

⁸⁹ Ibid. Pratt illustrates the relational nature of transculturation by showing how Humboldt's work and identity influenced Creole self-fashioning by contributing towards an elite and powerful official culture.

characterization of imperial travel writing, however, was the imperial discovery rhetoric of African exploration. This typically incorporated the aestheticization of landscape, the density of meaning within written texts, and clear power relations between seer and seen. According to Pratt, it was epitomized by the 'master-of-all-I-survey' genre which involved 'particularly explicit interaction between esthetics and ideology, in what one might call a rhetoric of presence'.⁹⁰

Much Victorian travelling took place within Britain, and the motif of 'social exploration' articulated class disparities, educational levels and attempts to make sense of rapid urbanization.⁹¹ Most often, a chronicle of a journey by upper and middle class writers described the working classes, mirroring constructions of self and other but highlighting the need to deconstruct and differentiate the geographies of such constructions. This also illustrates the need to be conscious of the ostensible purposes of travelling, whether at home or abroad, as well as the intended and actual readers of travel writing. Imperial travel writers were diverse in their class and occupational orientation, including, among others,

imperial explorers, merchants, professional writers of prose and poetry, anthropologists, immigrants, tourists, academics, refugees, *women and men*.⁹²

⁹⁰ Ibid. p.205.

⁹¹ SHATTOCK, J. : *Travel Writing Victorian and Modern : A Review of Recent Research*; pp.151-164 in DODD, P. ed. 1982 : *The Art of Travel : Essays on Travel Writing*; Frank Cass, London.

⁹² MacLAREN op.cit. p.6. My emphasis.

IMPERIAL TRAVEL WRITING BY WOMEN : AN INTRODUCTION.

Recent interest in women travel writers has included anthologies and bibliographies;⁹³ descriptive, and often primarily anecdotal accounts, celebrating intrepid, eccentric individuals;⁹⁴ attempts to locate women travellers within the history of geography;⁹⁵ and, finally, more critical accounts exploring notions of gendered subjectivity, imperialism and the textualization of difference in travel writing.⁹⁶ Despite this evident interest, women travellers and, more specifically, women travel writers, often continue to be marginalized. For example, throughout Pratt's account of imperial travel writing,⁹⁷ the gendered nature of travel writing is clear but not systematically discussed. Examples of women travel writers throw male travel writers into relief rather than challenge underlying notions of subjectivity. The male, heroic discourse of the capitalist vanguard in Latin America from the 1820s, emphasizing 'the esthetic (or anti-esthetic) and the economic' differs from accounts by 'social exploratresses' concerned with

⁹³ See, for example, HAMALIAN, L. ed. 1981 : *Ladies on the Loose*; Dodd, Mead and Co., New York; ROBINSON, J. 1990 : *Wayward Women : A Guide to Women Travellers*; Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York; and TINLING, M. 1989 : *Women into the Unknown : A Sourcebook of Women Explorers and Travellers*; Greenwood Press, New York.

⁹⁴ Including ALLEN, A. 1980 : *Travelling Ladies*; Jupiter Books, London; MIDDLETON, D. 1965 : *Victorian Lady Travellers*; Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd, London; RUSSELL, M. 1988 : *The Blessings of a Good Thick Skirt : Women Travellers and their World*; Collins, London; and STEVENSON, C. 1982 : *Victorian Women Travel Writers in Africa*; Twayne Publishers, Boston.

⁹⁵ MIDDLETON, D. : *Some Victorian Lady Travellers*; *Geographical Journal* 139 1973 pp.65-75. For more recent interest, see DOMOSH 1991 (a) and (b) op.cit. and STODDART op.cit., as discussed in Chapter 1.

⁹⁶ See, for example, BIRKETT, D. 1989 : *Spinsters Abroad : Victorian Lady Explorers*; Basil Blackwell Ltd., Oxford and New York; BLAKE, op.cit.; KROLLER, E-M. op.cit.; MILLS, S. : *Discourses of Difference*; *Cultural Studies* 4 (2) 1990 pp.128-140; and MILLS, S. 1991 : *Discourses of Difference : An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism*; Routledge, London and New York.

⁹⁷ PRATT op.cit.

'politics and the personal'.⁹⁸ Furthermore, these women travel writers were very different from the caricatured nineteenth-century phenomenon of 'the Spinster Adventuress, her back to Europe, fleeing the confines of her time and returning - sometimes - to write about it.'⁹⁹

It is partly in response to such stereotypical images that Sara Mills has attempted to make women travel writers her subject of enquiry and, in so doing, to challenge and reformulate notions of subjectivity.¹⁰⁰ She undermines individualist characterizations based on the mistaken assumption that texts by women travel writers are directly autobiographical, by illuminating how discourses of imperialism and of femininity articulated many, often contradictory, voices.

To do this, Mills adopts an explicitly Foucauldian perspective, locates women within imperial discourses as producers of signification as well as signifiers, and addresses travel writing as one channel for the production of knowledge which is clearly differentiated by gender. Texts are seen as part of much larger discursive formations which vary over space and time, and the subject positions of the women travellers themselves are seen as inherently unstable and decentred. However, the structure of Mills' theoretical discussion followed by three misleadingly self-contained case studies seems inconsistent with such claims on epistemological and methodological grounds, and there is no indication of whether the case studies are more than arbitrary, and ultimately isolated, illustrations of her

⁹⁸ Ibid. p.168.

⁹⁹ Ibid. p.171.

¹⁰⁰ Although her earlier work reflects these concerns, I am particularly referring to MILLS 1991 op.cit.

theoretical framework.¹⁰¹

To focus on individual travellers seems to replicate the strategies of imperial history in the celebration of 'heroic' figures. However, their individuality should not be subsumed because, in this case in the context of nineteenth-century ideologies of patriarchy, each woman traveller was very much an individual. A focus on gendered subjectivity in travel writing enables the reconciliation of individuality with more general discursive formations, whether enabling or constraining in terms of textual representation.

Imperial expansion led to more opportunities for women to travel, with motives including wifely duty to husbands who were officers or officials, missionary zeal, the desire for adventure, and professional interests such as scientific research.¹⁰² By the late nineteenth-century, many women were well-known for their travels, largely through their popular writings, and I am focussing on women travel writers to discern the gendered significance of their writings as well as their travels. The form of travel writing can be seen as gendered, with goal oriented 'quest romances' and 'tragedies' in which similar goals are set but not fulfilled, constructed as masculine while 'odysseys', referring to travel for its own sake, as feminine.¹⁰³ In addition, the conventions and constraints shaping travel

¹⁰¹ The case studies - all from the 'High Imperialist' period of the mid nineteenth- to the early twentieth-centuries - would be more effective if integrated within Mills' theoretical parameters, and with each other, in a reflexively self-conscious way. Attempts to expose a text written by Alexandra David-Neel as fabrication illustrate how texts written by women travel writers have been judged as a whole; the conflicting coexistence of colonial, feminine and masculine voices within Mary Kingsley's *Travels in West Africa* is facilitated by humour, irony and parody which destabilize preconceptions of a fixed, authoritative narrator; and, finally, the less well-known writings of Nina Mazuchelli seem firmly rooted within feminine discourses but are shown as similarly constrained within colonial discourses of difference.

¹⁰² ROBINSON *op.cit.*

¹⁰³ STEVENSON *op.cit.*

writing are clearly gendered. For example, the role of heroic adventurer was available to a male narrator, but women were constrained by feminine codes of conduct. In terms of sexual imagery, women were more likely to be self-effacing, developing strategies of accommodation rather than confrontation, and emphasizing their femininity. Another general difference relates to claims for scientific accuracy and professionalism, with scientifically oriented male exploration contrasting again with the more self-conscious tone of many women travel writers in the perceived need to vouch for scientific accuracy.¹⁰⁴

Women travel writers wrote about their experiences of moving both within and between patriarchal and imperial discourses which were spatially differentiated in their influences. It was in centres of colonial settlement that the intermingling of patriarchal and imperial discourses stimulated, for example, the greatest questioning of the single status of many women travellers in the nineteenth-century.¹⁰⁵ However, once beyond the confinement of European colonial society, it is possible to argue that imperial discourses of power and structural inequality came to supercede those of patriarchal discourses, and women travellers became increasingly able to share in the authority of male colonizers. Essentially, racial status constructed by colonial discourses of difference overcame the gender inferiority created by patriarchal discourses of difference.¹⁰⁶ I will discuss travel writing by women to illustrate the textualization of such ambiguities and complexities through tone and a plurality of voices and content. I will

¹⁰⁴ BIRKETT 1989 op.cit.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ MILLS 1990 op.cit.

emphasize notions of ambivalence to undermine the dichotomization of a colonial self and colonized other. Overall, the recognition of constructions of subjectivity along lines of gender, race and class is necessary in the deconstruction of totalizing notions of difference because

the intersection of colonial and gender discourses involves a shifting, contradictory subject positioning, whereby Western women can simultaneously constitute 'centre' and 'periphery', identity and alterity. A Western woman, in these narratives, exists in a relation of subordination to Western man and in a relation of domination toward 'non-Western' men and women.¹⁰⁷

Conclusions.

Studying women travel writers in the late nineteenth-century poses both substantive and theoretical challenges. It is important to be aware of three inseparable themes, namely the significance of travel and travel writing, the distinctive nature of imperial representation, and how both travel writing and imperial representation more broadly were differentiated by constructions of gender. Nineteenth-century British travel writing offers the greatest potential for such a study because of the hegemony of imperial power relations, graphically constructing and legitimating a colonized 'other'. However, rather than replicate imperial discourses of difference, it is important to give voice to those marginalized by such totalizations and to expose the ambivalence of colonial discourse. This involves sensitivity to discourses of difference along lines of gender, race and class which are inextricably intertwined in the constitution and contestation of subjectivity. I am focussing on women travel writers to illuminate the spatial

¹⁰⁷ SHOHAT, *op.cit.* p.63.

differentiation of patriarchy and imperialism, and the textual representation of such differentiation. In this way, I hope to expose the relationships between subjectivity, power, authority, constructions of 'truth' and the associated production of knowledge, informed by the claim that

a working alliance may be formed between deconstruction, as a process of displacement which registers an attempted dissociation from a dominant discursive system or systems, and decolonization as a process of cultural transformation which involves the ongoing critique of colonial discourse.¹⁰⁸

The imperatives of deconstruction and decolonization relate to the need to perceive subjectivity as discursively constructed and to expose the instability of constructions of 'home' and 'truth' as material and metaphorical reference points. In the case of women travel writers, I hope to illuminate how the ambivalence of these constructions rather exposed and challenged the ideology of otherness, particularly in perceptions of race and gender over space and time.

¹⁰⁸ HUGGAN, G. 1989 : *Maps and Mapping Strategies in Contemporary Canadian and Australian Fiction*; PhD. Thesis, U.B.C. p.248.

INTERLUDE

(RE)PRESENTING MARY KINGSLEY.

Mary Kingsley played many roles throughout her brief life - dutiful daughter, loyal sister, fearless traveller, well-known author and public speaker, political lobbyist, and war-time nurse. These roles were spatially distinct, with Mary Kingsley moving from the domestic, familial sphere of home to gain individual independence while travelling. 'Home' changed dramatically on Mary Kingsley's return. She mediated private and public spheres of activity by coexisting as housekeeper for her brother and as a prominent, controversial political figure advocating trade in West Africa.

I am focussing on Mary Kingsley because her life vividly illustrated attempts to balance a sense of duty with the desire for independence; she travelled to West Africa, rather than all over the world; she wrote two books about her travels; and she was an outspoken figure in imperial debates of the 1890s. There is also a wealth of archival material; I have read her publications, many articles, letters, reviews and obituaries in national and regional newspapers, and her correspondence with MacMillan. I am very grateful to have had access to transcripts of literally hundreds of letters collected over many years by Beth Urquhart.¹

Mary Henrietta Kingsley was born in 1862 in Islington, North London.² Her family background was a well-known literary one, with her uncle Charles Kingsley the author of *Westward Ho!* and *The Water Babies* and her cousin, also called Mary, but better known as the novelist Lucas

¹ See Appendix I for complete archival references.

² A recent biography of Mary Kingsley is FRANK, K. 1986 : *A Voyager Out : The Life of Mary Kingsley*; Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston.

Malet. Mary Kingsley's father George was a doctor who travelled widely as the personal physician to titled and wealthy men, returning to Britain for a few months every year or so. From 1862 to the early 1890s, he travelled in Spain, Egypt, Syria, North Africa, North America and the South Pacific. Just three weeks before sailing for the Mediterranean, George Kingsley married Mary Bailey whom he employed in a domestic capacity. They married on October 9th and Mary Kingsley was born four days later. Charles Kingsley was born in 1866 and in the following year George Kingsley embarked on his longest and most distant journey, spending three years in the South Pacific with the Earl of Pembroke.

Mary Kingsley's account of her childhood suggests her isolation within the familial sphere, only able to read about an outside world :

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 own generation, for I knew nothing of play and such things. But this was not a 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.³

She cited her favourite books as Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, Johnson's *Robberies and Murders of the Most Notorious Pyrates*, Bayle's *Dictionary* and Lockyer's *Solar Physics*, suggesting a serious, studious, and lonely determination to educate herself.⁴ Her dependence on such books is vividly evident when she states that

³ Mainly About People 20.5.1899 pp.468-9; *In the Days of My Youth* XLIX by Mary Kingsley.

⁴ Ibid.

What the *English Mechanic* was to me for years I cannot explain. What I should have done without its companionship between 16 and 20 I do not care to think.⁵

As well as seeming isolated from 'the living outside world', Mary Kingsley also seems isolated within the domestic sphere of family life :

My home authorities said I had no business to want to be taught such things, but presented me with a copy of Craik's *Pursuit of Knowledge Under Difficulties*.⁶

While George Kingsley travelled, his wife suffered from increasingly bad health at home and was largely cared for by Mary. The family moved to Cambridge in 1884, where Charles attended Christ's College. In a letter to George MacMillan written in 1899, Mary Kingsley compared the amount of money spent on her brother's formal education with hers which was purely oriented to being her father's research assistant:

I do not know if I ever revealed to you that being allowed to learn German was all the paid for education I ever had - two thousand pounds was spent on my brother - I still hope not in vain.⁷

Mary Kingsley's earliest travels were constrained by her domestic role. She first travelled away from home when she was 25, and stayed in Wales. However, she had to return home after two days because of a sudden relapse in her mother's condition. The following year, she spent a week in

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Mary Kingsley to George MacMillan undated January 1899. In other letters to MacMillan, Mary Kingsley's concern and impatience with her brother becomes evident, prompted by his lack of employment, his ill health, and his tardiness and lack of commitment to producing the memoir of their father. For example, in a letter of 14.8.1896, Mary Kingsley wrote that : 'it makes me very unhappy about him because this disinclination of his to grind at anything but abstract metaphysics coupled with house property at Bexley Heath, cannot lead to Fortune - and he is not like me indifferent to creature comforts'. Regarding his ill health, Mary Kingsley wrote to MacMillan on 2.4.1897 that 'Charley does not seem better but says he is. I cannot work when I am as worried as I am just now about him.' Finally, Mary Kingsley referred to his inactivity in compiling their father's memoir from 18.6.1896 when she stated 'I have had no talk with Charley yet about the memoir but I have reason to think I was wrong and he has not burnt it' to her letter of 23.2.1897 in which she wrote that 'Charley is showing signs of life over the memoir.'

Paris, but on her return her mother suffered a further relapse which meant that Mary was unable to leave home for more than several hours at a time. She studied Latin, Arabic, and Syrian and continued her wide reading on travel, anthropology and the physical sciences. Mary Kingsley was more restricted within the domestic sphere than ever before, and described this period 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 long losing fight with death all the time.⁸

Her father returned from his last journey, and died in February 1892, and her mother died in April of the same year. Figure 1 shows Mary Kingsley in mourning after the death of her parents. When Charles left for the Far East in June, Mary travelled to the Canary Islands and came into her first contact with West Coast traders. When she returned to Britain, Mary Kingsley moved to London with her brother where, whenever he was in the country, she kept house for him. As she states in the opening sentence of *Travels in West Africa*,

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.⁹

⁸ Mainly About People 20.5.1899 pp.468-9; *In the Days of My Youth* XLIX by Mary Kingsley.

⁹ KINGSLEY, M.H. 1897 : *Travels in West Africa : Congo Francais, Corisco and Cameroons*; MacMillan, London. This has been most recently reprinted in 1986 by Virago Press, London, and all page references are from this edition; p.1.



Figure 1 : Mary Kingsley in 1892.

Source : FRANK op.cit.

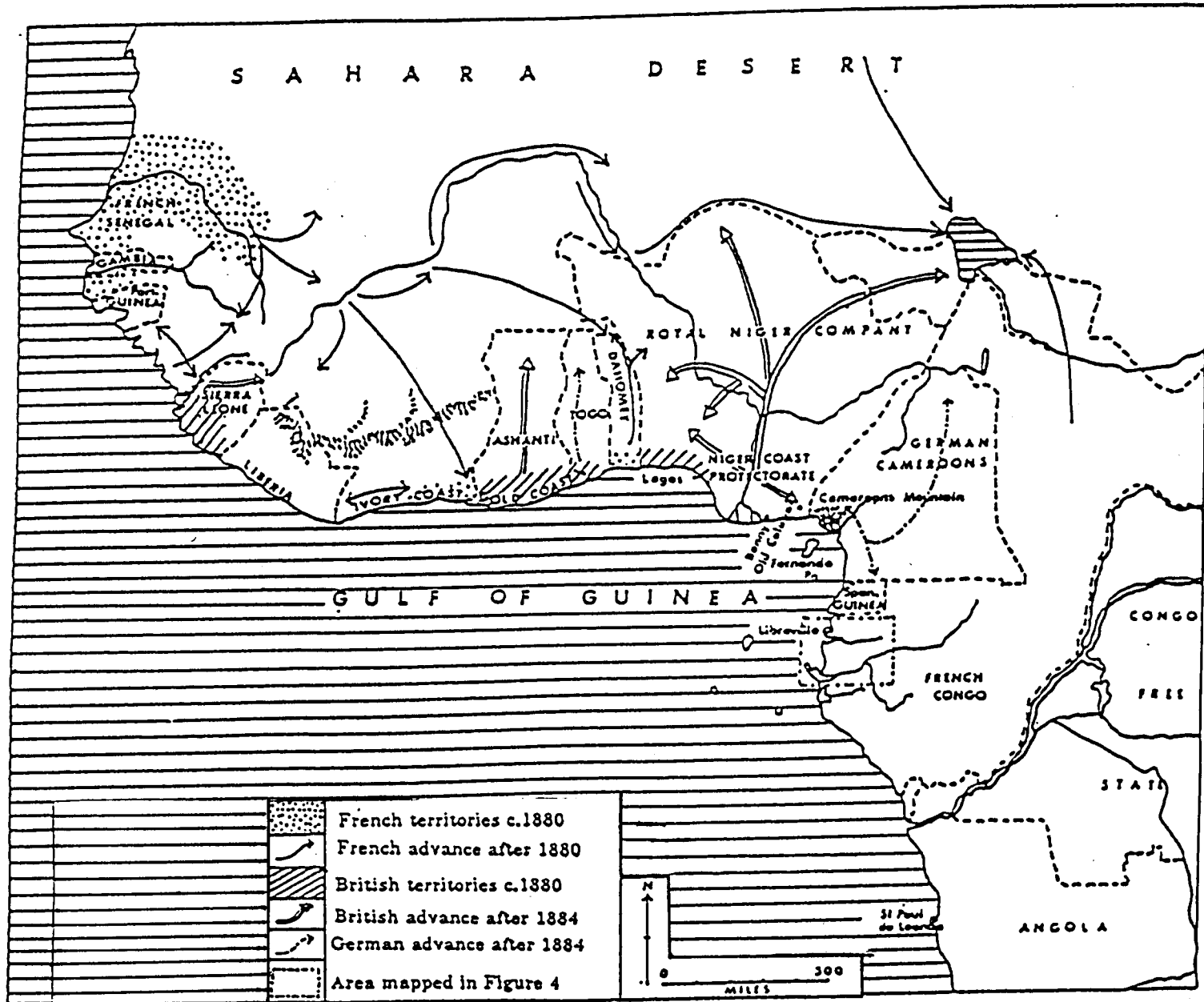


Figure 2 : European Advances in West Africa 1880-1900.

Source : GWYNN, S. 1932 : *The Life of Mary Kingsley*; Penguin Books, Harmondsworth and New York and ROBINSON, R. and GALLAGHER, J. 1961 : *Africa and the Victorians*; St. Martin's Press, New York.

Mary Kingsley made two journeys to West Africa, the first from August 1893 to early January 1894, and the second from December 1894 to November 1895. Figure 2 shows the territories and advances of imperial powers in West Africa by 1898, illustrating the different nationalities with influence in this region. On her travels, Mary Kingsley traded to pay her way, gaining close access both to African people and to British traders. Unlike the large scale of many African explorations, Mary Kingsley travelled alone or with small groups of Africans. On her first journey, she called in at Freetown, Cape Coast, Accra, the Bights of Benin, Bonny and St Paul de Loanda. For the next four months she travelled inland and north through Cabinda, the Congo Free State, French Congo and Cameroon until she reached Calabar, from where she sailed home. This journey seems very much like a reconnaissance journey preparing for future travels. By the time she returned to West Africa, Mary Kingsley was equipped with a collectors outfit from the British Museum and claimed that she was travelling to study 'fish and fetish'. Again she travelled via Sierra Leone, the Cape Coast and the Gold Coast, but this time only as far as Calabar, and in the company of Lady MacDonald, the wife of the Governor of the British Niger Coast Protectorate (see Figure 3 for a photograph of Mary Kingsley with the MacDonalds on her 1895 journey). She travelled to Fernando Po with the MacDonalds, and in May landed at the port of Glass. From here she set off for the Ogowe River where she travelled over the rapids and through the bush in the company of Fans, infamous for cannibalism. Figure 4 maps Mary Kingsley's route. Her final expedition was climbing Mount Cameroon by a route previously untravelled by Europeans.



Figure 3 : Mary Kingsley sitting between Sir Claude and Lady Rose MacDonald in Calabar, 1895.

Source : FRANK op.cit.

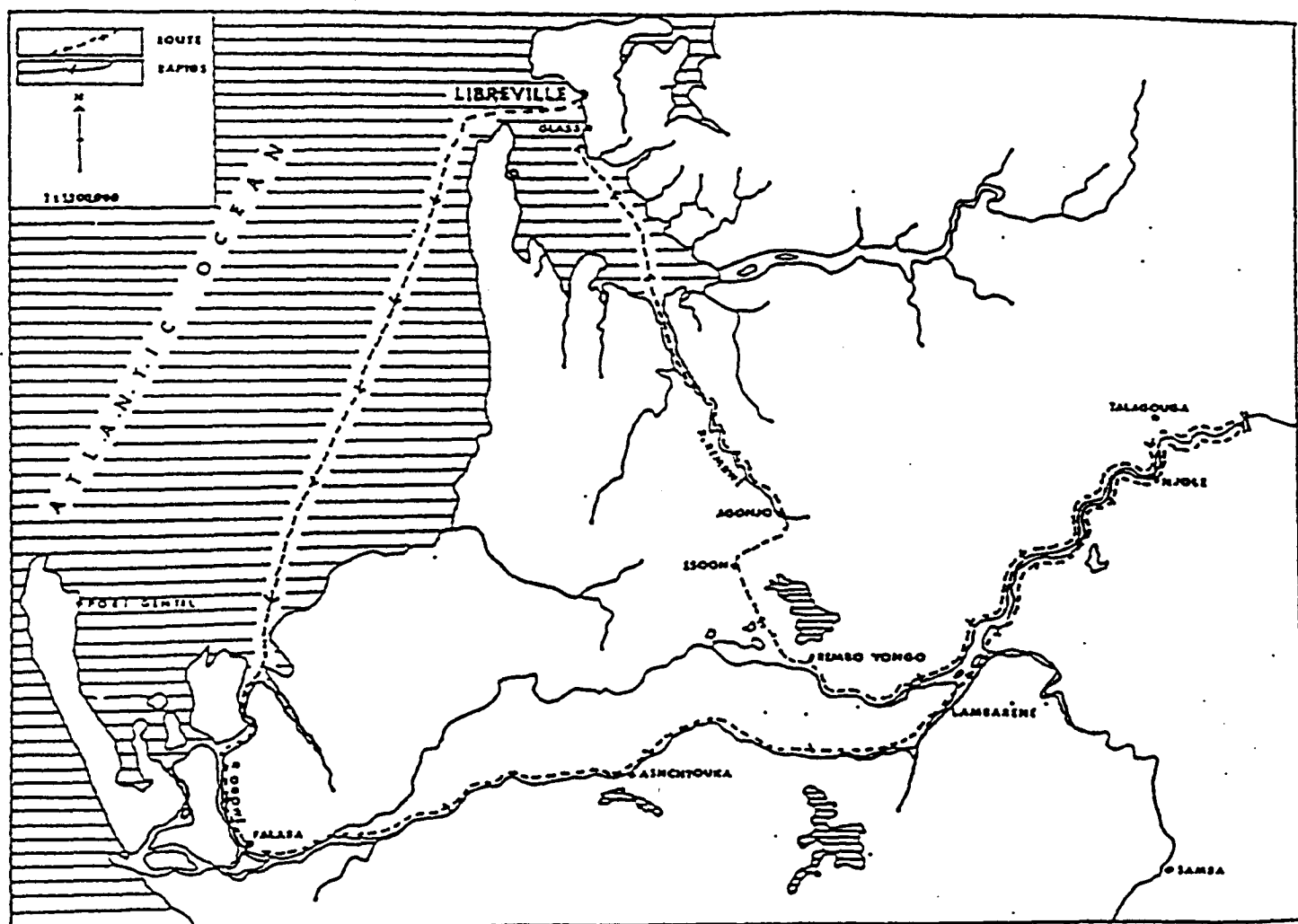


Figure 4 : Mary Kingsley's Route, 1895.

Source : KINGSLEY 1897 op.cit.

Mary Kingsley returned home with sixty-five species of fish and eighteen species of reptile, and three new species of fish were named after her. She hoped to remain in Britain for no longer than a year, but personal and political demands kept her there until 1900. She was also continually ill with neuralgia and rheumatism in contrast to her good health while travelling. This pattern can be traced in a number of other women travellers, suggesting the medicalization of women in the context of Victorian domesticity which could only be escaped by the independence gained while travelling. Mary Kingsley published two books about her travels : *Travels in West Africa* in 1897 and *West African Studies* in 1899.¹⁰ The first is more descriptive about her travels while the second includes her alternative plan for the government of West Africa. Mary Kingsley's controversial opinions were all underpinned by her support for trade in West Africa and, specifically, the Liverpool trading lobby. She criticised colonial administration, arguing that it was necessary to understand indigenous customs and that traders should have greatest influence over policy. She also criticised missionaries, supported the liquor trade, and attempted to place taboo subjects such as polygamy and cannibalism in their African contexts.

Mary Kingsley's final journey to Africa was to the South to nurse Boer prisoners of war. She contracted enteric fever and died in June 1900 at the age of 37. She was buried at sea with both naval and military honours. The most tangible memorial to her was the foundation of the African Society, now the Royal African Society.

¹⁰ Ibid. and KINGSLEY, M.H. 1899 : *West African Studies*; MacMillan, London. Mary Kingsley published two other books, both in 1900 : a short history book in 'The Story of Empire Series' called *The Story of West Africa*; Horace Marshall, London; and a collection of her father's writings : KINGSLEY, G.H. : *Notes on Sport and Travel*; MacMillan, London.

According to Mary Kingsley,

My life can be written in a very few lines. It is, and has been, and will be, one wholly without romance or variety in the proper sense of the word; it has just been one long grind of work, work worth doing, but never well done, and never successful in gaining the thing aimed at, a perpetual Waterloo in a microscopic way. Why this has been is perfectly clear; it arises from my having no personal individuality of my own whatsoever. I have always lived in the lives of other people, whose work was heavy for them; and, apart from that, I have lived a life of my own, strewn about among non-human things; but I doubt, even if an energetic individual were to go round with a broom and sweep the universe for me, that sufficient could be got together to be called a personality.¹¹

Mary Kingsley's tone in this quotation is overwhelmingly melancholic, in stark contrast to the remarkable life and vivid personality that emerges in her own and others' writings about her life and travels. Rather than celebrate and individualize her achievements, I hope to reveal their significance in broader discursive terms, particularly focussing on how Mary Kingsley negotiated 'home' and away, private and public spheres as a woman in the context of British imperialism in the 1890s. Overall, I hope to illustrate how discourses of gender, race and class constructed the patriarchal and imperial discourses shaping and constraining subjectivity over space and time.

¹¹ Mainly *About People* 20.5.1899 pp.468-9; *In the Days of My Youth* XLIX by Mary Kingsley.

PART II

CHAPTER 3 : DEPARTURE

TRAVEL WRITING AND GENDERED SUBJECTIVITY.

In this chapter I will consider departure in the sense of the preparations for travel as well as constructions of subjectivity at home. At this stage, I will focus on gendered subjectivity to discuss how this influenced the logistical preparations for departure in terms of conduct books, motives for travel, and the scale and expectations of the journey. Although I am emphasizing constructions of gender in the context of patriarchy at home and not focussing on constructions of, for example, race and class in the context of imperialism while travelling until Chapter 4, these elements were inseparable in the constitution of subjectivity. I hope to illustrate their spatial differentiation, and, while recognizing the broad parameters of patriarchy at home and imperialism while travelling, I hope to overcome any false polarity by discussing the construction of gender both prior to and during travel. In this way, I perceive 'departure' to include gendered subjectivity while travelling as well as at the point of departure. I will discuss the textualization of gender difference with reference to the writings of Mary Kingsley, emphasizing how representations of gender changed over space and time in her self-perception and perceptions of others, notably indigenous women.¹ Overall, I will discuss the relationships

¹ At this stage I am focussing on writings by Mary Kingsley, particularly *Travels in West Africa*. I will discuss reader responses to her travels and her books, articles, lectures and letters in Chapter 5 in the context of her return home and particularly her political identity. Prior to her departure I will review what others were writing, during her journey I will discuss Mary Kingsley's own writings, and on her return, I will focus on both her own and others' writings. This apparent asymmetry mirrors the material and metaphorical significance of travel, with Mary Kingsley only able to gain voice while away and reconstituting 'home' on her return. It also reflects the limitations of documentary sources, notably regarding perceptions of Mary Kingsley while travelling. Furthermore, although her books were widely reviewed, it is only possible to speculate about who her actual readers were, and who Mary Kingsley perceived her readers to be, particularly in terms of gender.

between travel writing and ethnographic observation and representation. Initially, however, I will outline the epistemological implications of studying the writings by one author - and the study of an individual more generally - in the context of poststructuralist claims for the 'death of the author'. In this context, I will consider the significance of the gendering of authorial subjectivity as well as authority.

THE GENDERING OF AUTHORSHIP AND AUTHORITY.

From poststructuralist perspectives, the multiple interpretations of a text should be seen as unconstrained by attempts to discern a single meaning intended by the author because

as institution, the author is dead : his [sic] civil status, his biographical person have disappeared; dispossessed, they no longer exercise over his work the formidable paternity whose account literary history, teaching and public opinion had the responsibility of establishing and renewing.²

The 'death of the author' seems contrary to the gendering of authorial subjectivity whereby the conditions under which men and women write are materially different, the social construction of gender affects how the writings of men and women are read, and the interpretations of texts are influenced by the gender consciousness of individual readers. Patriarchal discourses locate women both inside and outside culture and, more specifically, constructions of 'literature', making the feminine primarily an object rather than subject of the gaze and thus desire.³ In the case of imperial women travel writers, clear parallels exist with their position as

² BARTHES, R. 1975 : *The Pleasure of the Text*; translated by R. Miller; Hill and Wang, New York p.27.

³ DOANE, M-A. 1987 : *The Desire to Desire*; Indiana University Press, Bloomington.

insiders and outsiders in different cultures, and their desire to look being undermined by themselves becoming the object of the look. I will discuss the relations between masculinity and subjectivity, femininity and objectivity, in terms of complexities and ambivalence in the textual representations of gender difference.

For Foucault, notions of authorship reflect the critical '*individualization* in the history of ideas, knowledge, literature, philosophy, and the sciences'⁴ whereby the figure of the author came to be perceived to exist before and beyond the text. Such a conspicuous absence from the text was produced by and itself reproduced a position of privileged distance. Paradoxically, notions of 'the work' and 'writing' have 'hindered us from taking full measure of the author's disappearance, blurring and concealing the moment of this effacement and subtly preserving the author's existence'.⁵ Foucault refers to 'the author-function' which reflects the 'existence, circulation, and functioning of certain discourses within a society'⁶ pertaining to authenticity and authority. According to Foucault, the author-function split in the eighteenth or nineteenth century, when scientific discourse came to legitimize anonymity in the quest for 'truth'. In contrast,

⁴ FOUCAULT, M. : *What is an Author?*; in HARARI, J. ed. 1979 : *Textual Strategies : Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism*; Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York; pp.141-160, p.141.

⁵ Ibid. p.144.

⁶ Ibid. p.148. Foucault summarizes the 'author-function' in the following way on p.153 : '(1)the author-function is linked to the juridical and institutional system that encompasses, determines, and articulates the universe of discourses; (2) it does not affect all discourses in the same way at all times and in all types of civilization; (3) it is not defined by the spontaneous attribution of a discourse to its producer, but rather by a series of specific and complex operations; (4) it does not refer purely and simply to a real individual, since it can give rise simultaneously to several selves, to several subjects - positions that can be occupied by different classes of individuals.' Foucault goes on to acknowledge that his consideration of authorship has been limited to written texts, and should also include 'painting, music, and other arts' as well as 'transdiscursive' authors who 'can be the author of a theory, tradition, or discipline in which other books and authors will in turn find a place.'

literary discourse came to stress the importance of the author to an unprecedented degree.⁷ In light of this claim, travel writing seems distinctive because of the ways its content often seem to bridge such a divide, as well as the way in which the author as narrator is also the traveller.

For Foucault, authorial presence has been replaced by the author-function which relates to the conditions for the articulation of discourses rather than their individual, centred authority. In this way, the author as subject comes to represent ‘a variable and complex function of discourse’⁸ and meaning is not limited to the ideologically significant figure of authorial authority. Ultimately, the author-function would, according to Foucault, prompt the question ‘What difference does it make who is speaking?’⁹

It is important to deconstruct perceptions of the stable unity of meaning away from an authoritative authorial presence. However, as long as subjectivity continues to be constructed along lines of difference and power is exercised by defining, legitimating and exploiting such differences, the ability to fulfill an ‘author-function’ is not universal. Because of this, it seems more useful to refer to *author-positionality* in terms of constructions of subjectivity and marginality to dominant, often hegemonic, discursive formations. According to Cheryl Walker,

⁷ Ibid. p.149.

⁸ Ibid. p.158.

⁹ Ibid. p.160.

what we need, instead of a theory of the death of the author, is a new concept of authorship that does not naively assert that the writer is an originating genius, creating aesthetic objects outside of history, but does not diminish the importance of difference and agency in the responses of [marginalised groups such as] women writers to historical formations.¹⁰

The author should be seen as one among multiple presences behind a text, and thus does not imply textual unity fixed by the figure of individual authority. The text only then acquires meanings through the interpretations arising from the reflexivity of reading.

To refer to author-positionality, and the study of individuals more generally within the context of poststructuralism, relates to the *sites* at which identities are constructed and contested,¹¹ and therefore illuminates many discursive fields which are inseparable from wider matrices of power and authority. Gendered subjectivity is an important element in the construction of identity, and the conditions under which writing takes place, what is written and how it is read are inseparable from the gender of the author. Feminist literary theory and criticism have changed over time in much the same way as the study of women in, for example, history and geography, moving from essentialist attempts to make women the subject of enquiry to more profound critiques of subjectivity itself, recognition of constructions of difference, and calls for strategic essentialism. I will outline early attempts to describe a female literary tradition to place women travel writers within the historical context of writing by women more generally.

¹⁰ WALKER, C. : *Feminist Literary Criticism and the Author*; Critical Inquiry 16 (3), 1990, pp.551-571; p.560.

¹¹ See PRATT, M-B. : *Identity : Skin Blood Heart*; in BURKIN, E. PRATT, M-B. and SMITH, B. 1984 : *Yours in Struggle*; Firebrand Books, Ithaca; pp.11-63, for an example of the multiple sources and expressions of identity, and how these vary over space as well as time.

Elaine Showalter¹² has identified three phases in the development of a western women's literary tradition in English, beginning with a 'feminine' phase of c.1840-80 involving the imitation of male writing and a focus on the domestic sphere; a 'feminist' phase of c.1880-1920 characterized by opposition to masculine values and domination; and, finally, a 'female' phase since c.1920, marked by a consciousness of female identity and self-discovery. Although this classification is highly simplistic, it is useful to highlight broad changes over time. It is significant that women's travel writing at the end of the nineteenth century appears to bridge the first two phases, and I will discuss the extent to which discourses of femininity interacted and conflicted with discourses of feminism in Chapter 5.

According to Ellen Moers,¹³ the motif of travel has been important in women's literature and, in the 'feminine' phase, can be differentiated between indoor and outdoor travel. The former relates to the tradition of Gothic novels, where travel challenged the enterprise and physical strength of the heroine but maintained her respectability by being located indoors. The latter relates to imaginary, romantic themes, with the attraction of travel beyond domestic limits existing largely because of its unattainability. I will discuss the ways in which women travel writers such as Mary Kingsley could overcome domestic confinement and definition in terms of their construction when leaving their home sphere, and the gendering of their author-positionality as they wrote about their travels.

It is possible to argue that travel writing reflects a duality between narration and description in its ordering, with the former first and most

¹² SHOWALTER, E. 1977 : *A Literature of Their Own : Women Novelists from Bronte to Lessing*; Princeton University Press, New Jersey.

¹³ MOERS, E. 1978 : *Literary Women*; The Women's Press Ltd., London.

important, and the latter second and subordinate. However, by the late nineteenth century, these two features were often equally important, and travel was often written about in two separate volumes.¹⁴ In the case of Mary Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa* was a largely descriptive narrative about her second journey, appealing to a popular audience, while *Studies in West Africa* developed her political proposals and presented her research on, most notably, fetish which she defined as ‘the religion of the natives of the Western Coast of Africa, where they have not been influenced either by Christianity or Mohammedanism.’¹⁵ These books also differed in the presentation of authorial authority in the introductions to each chapter written in the passive, more distant, voice; in the former, Mary Kingsley was referred to as ‘the traveller’ but, in the latter, as ‘the student’, consistent with the titles of each book.

Travels in West Africa was published in January 1897 and by June five editions were in circulation, including an abridged version for a wider audience.¹⁶ In its first year, MacMillan had made three thousand pounds, indicating its wide success.¹⁷ Mary Kingsley’s correspondence with MacMillan began in July 1893 concerning the publication of a collection of her father’s work. The first mention of a book of her own was made in December 1894, with Mary Kingsley lamenting the disorganization of her

¹⁴ PRATT, M-L. : *Fieldwork in Common Places*; in CLIFFORD, J. and MARCUS, G.E. eds. 1986: *Writing Culture : The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*; University of California Press, Berkeley; pp.27-50; p.35.

¹⁵ KINGSLEY 1899 op.cit. p.113.

¹⁶ Both of Mary Kingsley’s books are very long; including appendices, *Travels in West Africa* is over 700 and *West African Studies* over 600 pages.

¹⁷ FRANK 1986 (a) op.cit.

'well intentioned word swamp.'¹⁸ Even at this early stage, her voice had been interpreted by MacMillan as masculine in tone, with Mary Kingsley indignantly responding

I do not understand what you mean by 'the story being told by a man.' Where have I said it was?¹⁹

In the same letter, questions of gendered identity and authorship arose in terms of how she would be named :

Of course I would rather not publish it under my own name, and I really cannot draw the trail of a petticoat over the Coast of all places - neither can I have a picture of myself in trousers or any other little 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 it not be sufficient to put M.H.Kingsley? - it does not matter to the general public what I am as long as I tell them the truth as well as I can - I have written it all with my eye on the 'Coast' who will of course know I was a lady and will also be the only people who will know the value of what I say, and I do not wish to appear ridiculous or unladylike before them.²⁰

Mary Kingsley based *Travels in West Africa* on diaries²¹ and letters she wrote to friends. On one level, this reveals different, layered sites of authorship whereby Mary Kingsley wrote about West Africa while in England but used her own writings from West Africa as source material. On another level, it is clearly problematic to think of travel writing as autobiographical, but this seems increasingly possible when such sources

¹⁸ Mary Kingsley to George MacMillan 18.12.1894.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Mary Kingsley found it necessary to justify including extracts from her diary, 'being informed on excellent authority that publishing a diary is a form of literary crime...Firstly, I have not done it before, for so far I have given a sketchy *resume* of many diaries kept by me while visiting the regions I have attempted to describe. Secondly, no one expects literature in a book of travel. Thirdly, there are things to be said in favour of the diary form, particularly when it is kept in a little known and wild region, for the reader gets therein notice of things that, although unimportant in themselves, yet go to make up the conditions of life under which men [sic] and things exist.' From KINGSLEY 1897 op.cit. p.100.

have been used. The use of information from such private and personal sources is made more explicitly known in travel writing by women than by men,²² paradoxically reinforcing notions of an individual author at the same time as, by highlighting personal, and potentially more emotional contexts, undermining the authority of that author as a neutral observer.

The influence of individuals besides the author in the production of a text serves to qualify notions of authority. *Travels in West Africa* was edited by Henry Guillemard, although Mary Kingsley denied this level of involvement in her Preface; after acknowledging his help, she wrote that he

has not edited it, or of course the whole thing would have been better, but...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 wanted it to be, saying firmly in pencil on margins 'No you don't,' where I committed some more than usually heinous literary crime, and so on. In cases where his activities in these things may seem to the reader to have been wanting, I beg to state that they really were not. It is I who have declined to ascend to a higher level of lucidity and correctness of diction than I am fitted for.²³

In this passage, at the same time as her tone is self-effacing, Mary Kingsley clearly establishes her individual identity and authority. However, in her letters to MacMillan, her frustration with Dr Guillemard is obvious, suggesting that such a public voice of authority was privately contested; for example, in August 1896 she stated that

I would rather take a 200 ton vessel up a creek than write any book...[and proceeds to criticise Dr Guillemard's corrections which] make the thing read easier and more patronising and presuming - 'appalling' for simply awful - 'dwelling' for house' [,] 'terminals' for ends - 'informed us that' for he said and so on.²⁴

²² STEVENSON op.cit.

²³ KINGSLEY 1897 op.cit. p.xx.

²⁴ Kingsley to MacMillan 20.8.1896.

Mary Kingsley believed that her appendix on trade and labour was the most important part of the book, and was vehement in her assertion that this should be revised by 'Liverpool experts' and not by Dr Guillemard, who 'knows nothing about it.'²⁵ In this way, Mary Kingsley exercised authority which resulted in her individual authority as an author being both undermined and legitimated.

To view the author as transcendent in her or his authority over and above the text perpetuates the fiction of the unproblematic unity of both text and subject.²⁶ I will discuss the plurality of voices within *Travels in West Africa* in terms of the gendered subjectivity of Mary Kingsley's representations of herself and others to further undermine perceptions of a stable, centred author. Initially, however, I will discuss the gendering of subjectivity prior to travel in the context of preparations for departure.

PREPARATIONS FOR DEPARTURE.

Motives for Travel.

For women such as Mary Kingsley, travel abroad facilitated 'a freedom of action unthinkable at home'²⁷ but could often only be realised when freed from domestic responsibilities, most graphically illustrated by Mary Kingsley travelling only after the death of her parents, and, even then, only when her brother was abroad and not requiring her services as a housekeeper. Despite - and because of - her evident sense of familial

²⁵ Kingsley to MacMillan 12.9.1896.

²⁶ FOUCAULT 1979 op.cit.

²⁷ MIDDLETON 1965 op.cit. p.4.

responsibility, Mary Kingsley found it necessary to legitimize her desire to travel. The motives she cited changed as she became more well-known. For example, in *Travels in West Africa*, there is

a charming but wholly misleading account, for Mary had become obsessed with West Africa ten and fifteen years earlier while reading Burton, Du Chaillu, and Brazza...Nothing could have been more premeditated, less like the whim she jauntily writes of here.²⁸

When she was more well-known, her travels came to appear more planned, but in terms of her filial duty to complete her father's anthropological work. For example, she wrote in 1899 that

It was the study of early religion and law, and for it, I had to go to West Africa, and I went there, proceeding on the even tenour of my way, doing odd jobs, and trying to understand things, pursuing knowledge under difficulties with unbroken devotion.²⁹

However, her father's unfinished book had not yet begun; rather there was a mass of uncodified information, and Mary Kingsley published two of her own books before a collection of her father's work.³⁰ Mary Kingsley's use of this, however, as a motive for her travels reflects her dual desire to be seen to be fulfilling 'feminine duty' at the same time as gaining scientific legitimacy. Her motives cited in *West African Studies* seem more planned, reflecting her desire to legitimize her 'studies' more than her 'travels'. Her tone implies an intellectual duty to travel to West Africa, establishing the authority of her own direct observation :

²⁸ FRANK 1986 op.cit. p.57.

²⁹ Mainly About People 20.5.1899 pp.468-9; *In the Days of My Youth* XLIX by Mary Kingsley.

³⁰ KINGSLEY, G.H. op.cit.

For the past fifteen years I have been reading up Africa...I found I had to go down into the most unfashionable part of Africa myself, to try to find out whatever the thing was really like, and also to discover which of my authors had been doing the heaviest amount of lying.³¹

The general climate concerning travel in West Africa was largely discouraging, as shown by the 'curious information' Mary Kingsley received before departing which emphasized 'the dangers...disagreeables...[and] diseases of West Africa'.³² In this list, the position of the traveller seems largely logistical and is reduced to 'the things you must take...the things you find most handy...[and] the worst possible things you can do in West Africa'.³³ Before discussing Mary Kingsley's preparations for departure, I will outline conduct books to illustrate the gendering of those perceived, and perceiving themselves, as travellers.

Conduct Books.

Books for male travellers³⁴ emphasized methods and equipment necessary for scientific observation and the management of indigenous servants, while conduct books for women travellers focussed on the appropriate behaviour of the traveller herself. This distinction reflects the professionalization of male travel in contrast to the personalization of female

³¹ KINGSLEY 1899 op.cit. p.221.

³² KINGSLEY 1897 op.cit. p.2.

³³ Ibid. p.2.

³⁴ Male travellers were clearly gendered subjects, but are not the focus of my research. See DRIVER, F. : *Geography's Empire : histories of geographical knowledge*; Environment and Planning D : Society and Space 10, 1992, pp.23-40. He states that '[t]he heroes of the colonial landscape - the explorer, the hunter, the soldier, the missionary, the administrator, the gentleman - were all gendered in particular ways, providing moral models for a generation of empire builders' (p.27) and points to the neglect of representations of masculinity, among other aspects of the culture of imperialism, by historians of modern geography.

travel. Francis Galton described travel as a career, and listed the necessary qualifications as follows :

If you have health, a great craving for adventure, at least a moderate fortune, and can set your heart on a definite object, which old travellers do not think impracticable, then - travel by all means. If in addition to these qualifications, you have scientific taste and knowledge, I believe that no career, in time of peace, can offer to you more advantages than that of a traveller.³⁵

Travel was seen to offer particular advantages for scientific observation to 'a man prepared to profit by them' because

He sees Nature working by herself, without the interference of human intelligence; and he sees her from new points of view; he has also undisturbed leisure for the problems which perpetually attract his attention by their novelty.³⁶

In other accounts, scientific observation was seen as an essential component of imperial duty; for example, the Royal Geographical Society stressed that

It is the duty of every civilised traveller in countries newly opened up to research, to collect facts, plain unvarnished facts, for the information of those leading minds of the age who, by dint of great experience, can ably generalise from the details contributed from diverse sources.³⁷

In this way, the individual observations contributed to the collective, imperialist enterprise of pursuing knowledge and, because of the emphasis on 'facts', understanding 'truth'.

The components and weight of the traveller's outfit was a major consideration for both Galton and the R.G.S.. Galton was particularly graphic in listing 'essential' items, which were disproportionate according to

³⁵ GALTON, F. 1883 (seventh edition; first edition 1854) : *The Art of Travel; or Shifts and Contrivances Available in Wild Countries*; John Murray, London; p.1.

³⁶ Ibid. p.2.

³⁷ FRESHFIELD, D.W. and WHARTON, W.J.L. 1893 (seventh edition) : *Hints to Travellers Scientific and General*; edited for the Council of the Royal Geographical Society; The Royal Geographical Society, London; p.446. Hereafter, I will refer to the Royal Geographical Society as the R.G.S.

race. Stores 'for each white man' would weigh sixty-six pounds, with an additional forty-four pounds of provisions for each six months; these necessities were, however, more than halved 'for each black man', who would require stores weighing thirty pounds and six-monthly supplies of seventeen pounds.³⁸ The main difference was the amount of clothes and bedding, with the traveller requiring thirty pounds in contrast to his servants' nine pounds.³⁹ One final example illustrates the scale of a recommended outfit, in this case for an African expedition. Although 'the absolute necessity for extreme moderation in the use of alcohol' is emphasized, the R.G.S. *Hints to Travellers* advised that

For an expedition not likely to last more than a year, the following amount will be found sufficient : two dozen of good champagne, three bottles of sherry, four bottles of brandy, and four of whiskey.⁴⁰

Another central concern of both accounts was the appropriate management of indigenous servants while travelling. It becomes of paramount importance to maintain both racial and class superiority by adopting a brisk, but, in the traveller's opinion, essentially good-humoured, tone of command. For example, the R.G.S. advised that

In all dealings with camp-servants and natives be first of all patient, next just and firm, dealing praise and blame alike sparingly, but heartily. Never lose your temper - except on purpose, and avoid banter.⁴¹

In a similar way, Galton advised the adoption of a 'frank, joking, but determined manner, joined with an air of showing more confidence in the

³⁸ GALTON, op.cit. p.11.

³⁹ Ibid. p.11.

⁴⁰ FRESHFIELD and WHARTON op.cit. p.27.

⁴¹ Ibid. p.5.

good faith of the natives than you really feel'⁴² and perpetuated the popular distance between a 'civilised' traveller/observer and 'savage' native by stating that

If a savage does mischief, look on him as you would on a kicking mule, or a wild animal, whose nature it is to be unruly and vicious, and keep your temper quite unruffled. Evade the mischief, if you can : if you cannot, endure it; and do not trouble yourself overmuch about your dignity, or about retaliating on the man, except it be on the grounds of expediency.⁴³

In contrast to these two books, conduct books written for women travellers focussed on the appropriate behaviour of the traveller herself, largely independently from her interaction with others, and in terms of fulfilling behavioural rather than scientific expectations. Conduct books represent one arena for the public discourse of bourgeois society, reflecting the ideological significance of literature.⁴⁴ Two transformations in the history of conduct books can be identified, with, firstly, the Enlightenment of the eighteenth-century marked by books constructing the ideal of a domestic woman replacing courtesy literature which portrayed aristocratic behaviour as the ideal to which both men and women should aspire; and, secondly, the emergence of a 'beauty system' whereby women came to be represented as objects requiring improvement to aspire to constructed images of femininity.⁴⁵ Such historical change rested on the increasingly

⁴² GALTON op.cit. p.308.

⁴³ Ibid. p.308.

⁴⁴ See, for example, BALIBAR, E. and MACHEREY, P. : *On Literature as an Ideological Form*; in YOUNG, R. ed. 1981 : *Untying the Text*; Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., Boston; DAVIS, L. 1987 : *Resisting Novels : Ideology and Fiction*; Methuen, New York; and ROBERTS, H. : *Propaganda and Ideology in Women's Fiction*; in LAURENSEN, D. ed. 1978 : *The Sociology of Literature*; Applied Studies : Sociological Review Monograph 26; University of Keele; pp.161-176.

⁴⁵ ARMSTRONG, N. and TENNENHOUSE, L. eds. 1987 : *The Ideology of Conduct : Essays in Literature and the History of Sexuality*; Methuen, New York.

explicit gendering of conduct, and in this context, conduct books imposed discursive rules on the behaviour of women in patriarchal society.⁴⁶

The role of conduct books in articulating and themselves reproducing patriarchal discourses through the ideology of conduct can be illustrated by *Hints to Lady Travellers at Home and Abroad* written by Lilius Campbell Davidson in 1889.⁴⁷ This alphabetical guide from 'accidents' to 'yachting', includes ninety-one entries, ranging from 'etiquette' to more starkly material concerns such as 'teapots' and 'wedges for doors'. Overall, this text attempted to inform women how to maintain respectability while violating the codes of society by travelling beyond the domestic sphere. Although she referred to the 'lady' traveller as 'her own escorted and independent person,'⁴⁸ travel for women was equated with danger and the inferiority of women was stressed. The entry for 'accidents' illustrates the helpless passivity promoted by the ideology of feminine conduct and the tone of deference with which it was textually represented :

⁴⁶ POOVEY, M.L. 1984 : *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer : Ideology as Style in the Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley, and Jane Austen*; The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London.

⁴⁷ DAVIDSON, L.C. 1889 : *Hints to Lady Travellers at Home and Abroad*; Iliffe and Son, London. Despite its title, most of the book addresses travel within the British Isles, although the implications of its codes of conduct would presumably be exacerbated for travel abroad.

⁴⁸ Ibid. p.255.

Fortunately, courage and calmness in the hour of peril are no longer rare feminine virtues in the present day, and even where they have not been bestowed by nature, they may very easily be acquired by cultivation and education. As a broad general principle, a woman's place in the moment of danger is to keep still and be ready for action. It is so much an instinct with the stronger sex to protect and look after the weaker, that in all cases of the sort, if there is a man at the head of affairs, he had better be left to manage matters without the hampering interference of feminine physical weakness. If there is no man, the woman will have to act for herself, but even then she will find it the best plan to keep still till the decisive moment arrives.⁴⁹

Sexual harassment was another potential danger while travelling but, by being attributed to female behaviour, similarly codified perceptions of femininity. According to Lillias Campbell Davidson, in all cases with which she had been familiar, 'the woman has had only herself to blame',⁵⁰ and she proceeded to state that

I am quite sure that no man, however audacious, will, at all events if he be sober, venture to treat with undue familiarity or rudeness a woman, however young, who distinctly shows him by her dignity of manner and conduct that any such liberty will be an insult. As a rule, women travelling alone receive far more consideration and kindness from men of all classes than under any other circumstances whatever, and the greater independence of women, which permits even young girls, in these days, to travel about entirely alone, unattended even by a maid, has very rarely inconvenient consequences.⁵¹

The threat of sexual harassment is thus minimized, any potential danger arises from the behaviour of the woman rather than the man, and the independence of travel is ironically only achieved by acknowledging feminine inferiority and dependence on men.

Further examples which illustrate the construction of feminine codes of conduct while travelling include the claim that a 'calm serenity of spirit is

⁴⁹ Ibid. p.12.

⁵⁰ Ibid. p.63.

⁵¹ Ibid. p.63.

really one of the most excellent things for keeping one cool on a melting day';⁵² a delicate appetite; the appropriate length and exertion of walks; and feminine frailty whereby

the struggle to make a respectable breakfast is not half such a price to pay as a whole day to follow of neuralgia, sick headache, exhaustion, ruffled nerves, and a thousand and one feminine miseries.⁵³

Although this conduct book seems to address universal standards of feminine behaviour, it was directed at a particular class of women travellers. A fixed social hierarchy was assumed and seemed to override constructions of gender; in this way 'lady's maids' were seen as a 'great nuisance, as a rule, [because]...the majority...are weak and impotent things in travelling.'⁵⁴ In addition, when discussing train carriages reserved for women on long distance journeys,

The occupants are seldom of an order to invite one's longings to have them as fellow-passengers, and consist, as a general rule...of babies-in-arms with their natural guardians, and of aggressive-looking females, who certainly do not strike the beholder as in any way needing the sheltering shield of a carriage specially dedicated to unprotected females.⁵⁵

These examples illustrate that such feminine codes of conduct were not intended to be universal; rather, they were directed primarily at upper and middle class women who perceived themselves as different from both women of lower classes and women who did not conform to their standards of

⁵² Ibid. p.189.

⁵³ Ibid. p.70. In addition, in contrast to the amount of alcohol perceived as essential for a man's travelling outfit, the only beverage referred to by Lillias Campbell Davidson was tea. This, however, seems to possess addictive and intoxicating potential. She claims, for example, that 'There can be no doubt that the intemperate use of this most delightful and refreshing beverage is becoming a grave evil amongst Englishwomen' (p.197) and that 'It is a thousand pities to abuse by excess one of the most rational, pleasant, and innocent indulgences which are open to the use of womankind.' (p.198).

⁵⁴ Ibid. p.134.

⁵⁵ Ibid. p.135.

appropriate feminine behaviour. Such standards thus became self-perpetuating in their exclusivity.

Mary Kingsley was familiar with the R.G.S. *Hints to Travellers*, but even if she herself had not read Lilius Campbell Davidson, it remains important to discuss such conduct books because of the ways they influenced more general perceptions of women travellers. Mary Kingsley's references to the former book parody both her own position as a woman traveller and the nature and authority of such books. For example, she suggested that

the Royal Geographical Society ought to insert among their 'Hints' that every traveller in this region should carefully learn every separate native word, or set of words, signifying 'I don't know,' - four villages and two rivers I have come across out here solemnly set down with various forms of this statement, for their native name.⁵⁶

During her ascent of Mount Cameroon, Mary Kingsley referred to the standards set by the R.G.S. to parody herself as an explorer dependent on an indigenous servant, by stating :

Nice situation this : a madman on a mountain in the mist. Xenia, I found, had no longer got my black bag, but in its place a lid of a saucepan and an empty lantern. To put it mildly, this is not the sort of outfit the R.G.S. *Hints to Travellers* would recommend for African exploration.⁵⁷

A final example illustrates how Mary Kingsley adopted a tone of self-mockery to legitimize her single status by referring to the *Hints to Travellers*. When questioned by an official concerned by her desire to travel through the rapids on the Ogowe River, she replied that

⁵⁶ KINGSLEY 1897 op.cit. p.237.

⁵⁷ KINGSLEY 1897 op.cit. p.578.

‘neither the Royal Geographical Society’s list, in their ‘Hints to Travellers’, nor Messrs. Silver, in their elaborate lists of articles necessary for a traveller in tropical climates, make mention of husbands.’⁵⁸

The Logistics of Travel.

The scale of Mary Kingsley’s journeys was considerably smaller than that envisioned and recommended by books such as *Hints to Travellers*. Unlike, for example, Stanley’s three hundred porters or the forty-four canoes and more than seven hundred men accompanying De Brazza by his third journey, Mary Kingsley’s guides never exceeded nine men.⁵⁹ The implications of this included the ability to travel and arrive in settlements unheralded, and the potential for more direct, personal contact between the traveller and people and places encountered.

Grants for travel were disproportionately available according to the gender of the traveller. Male travellers could receive significant financial backing, as when, for example, the New York Herald and the Daily Telegraph combined to offer Stanley twelve thousand pounds for his 1874-7 trans-African journey.⁶⁰ Grants and other forms of material and informational support were available to men through their membership of societies; the R.G.S. offered relatively large sums for male travellers who, however, consistently complained that they were insufficient to cover costs, while no woman traveller received money from the R.G.S. in the

⁵⁸ Ibid. p.167.

⁵⁹ BIRKETT, D. 1987 : *An Independent Woman in West Africa : The Case of Mary Kingsley*; PhD. Thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

nineteenth-century.⁶¹ Mary Kingsley took three hundred pounds on her first journey and travelled as a trader to pay her way.⁶² Because of their dependence on private sources of income and resources to travel, most women travellers at this time were at least middle class. On their return, publications could provide a new source of income, which was often directly channelled into further travels. Financial considerations were a central motivation for the publication of *Travels in West Africa*, with Mary Kingsley writing to MacMillan that

I am anxious to make money because I am now more than ever sure my Brother won't. I have myself only two hundred and sixty pounds a year and that only for fifteen years more - and I keep surviving in such a pointed way that there is nothing but the work house before me in my old age.⁶³

On her return, Mary Kingsley was a very popular speaker, but rarely made more than twenty pounds a lecture⁶⁴ and was subject to lower lecture fees and more limited venues for women generally. When Mary Kingsley became well-known as a traveller and political figure, she received, but refused, offers of grants, valuing the potential independence of financing herself through trading, writing and lecturing.⁶⁵

Constructions of gender clearly influenced perceptions of travellers prior to departure, as shown by conduct books addressed to particularly male or female readerships, and the logistics of travel in terms of scale and financing. Motives and expectations also varied in the differential need for

⁶¹ Ibid. See Chapter 5 for discussion of the debates concerning the admission of women to the Royal Geographical Society.

⁶² FRANK 1986 op.cit.

⁶³ Kingsley to MacMillan 18.12.1894.

⁶⁴ BIRKETT 1987 op.cit.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

legitimation. Essentially, masculine traditions of travel seemed to reflect public, and increasingly professional, perceptions, while women travellers were located within private, more personal spheres of appropriate behaviour. Constructions of gender continued to be important while travelling, and I will discuss Mary Kingsley's self-perceptions and perceptions of others in *Travels in West Africa*, to illuminate the spatial and temporal discontinuities of such constructions.

GENDERED SUBJECTIVITY OVER SPACE.

Textual Representations of Self.

The plurality of voices adopted by Mary Kingsley in *Travels in West Africa* undermines perceptions of her stable and unproblematic identity as an author and traveller. Throughout the text, masculine roles of explorer, trader and scientific observer coexist with feminine self-consciousness about appearance and behaviour. Ambiguities of gendered subjectivity are consistently present, arising from temporary license to behave in ways constructed as masculine while travelling but remaining constrained within the context of acceptable feminine conduct.

Mary Kingsley's humour throughout *Travels in West Africa* destabilizes any fixed authority of the narrator and becomes particularly important at moments when there is the potential for conventionally imperialist and masculine statements. This seems parallel with claims for 'anti-conquest' literature as it subverts imperial control and authority. However, this subversion is inseparable from constructions of gendered

identity which are largely neglected by Pratt,⁶⁶ as it also serves to mock both masculine and feminine stereotypes. For example, when navigating along the Rembwe :

regardless of danger, I grasped the helm, and sent our gallant craft flying before the breeze down the bosom of the great wild river (that's the proper way to put it, but in the interests of science it may be translated into crawling towards the middle.)⁶⁷

A further example is her statement that

I have seen at close quarters specimens of the most important big game of Central Africa, and, with the exception of snakes, I have run away from all of them.⁶⁸

In both cases, Mary Kingsley sets up a situation of colonial control which is at once subverted by parody.

Clear tensions exist between wanting to be included in a masculine tradition of exploration while seeking some form of self-definition.⁶⁹ Essentially,

in claiming a place in the gallery of white male travellers, Mary Kingsley was claiming more than a mere 'explorer' accolade. She was claiming a [spatial and behavioural] freedom from the gender restrictions of her own society, found in the white male status she could assume in Africa.⁷⁰

Mary Kingsley aligned herself with Burton, Stanley, Du Chaillu and de Brazza⁷¹ but was identifying with a dated tradition because explorers had,

⁶⁶ PRATT 1992 op.cit.

⁶⁷ KINGSLEY 1897 op.cit. p.343.

⁶⁸ Ibid. p.268

⁶⁹ BIRKETT 1987 op.cit.

⁷⁰ Ibid. p.121.

⁷¹ See, for example, for an account of African exploration by men : HIBBERT, C. 1982 : *Africa Explored : Europeans in the Dark Continent 1769-1889*; Penguin Books, Harmondsworth. See also BRANTLINGER, P. 1988 : *Rule of Darkness : British Literature and Imperialism 1830-1914*; Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London.

by the 1890s, been largely replaced by imperial administrators and, in the case of West Africa, by traders.

The main qualification for being included in a tradition of exploration was achieving a first of some sort. Mary Kingsley was the first European to cross from the Ogowe to the Rembwe by the route she followed, and was also the first to ascend Mount Cameroon by its south east face. These achievements receive the most detailed coverage in *Travels in West Africa* even though, for example, the former was less than a hundred miles and took less than a week, unlike the trans-continental journeys of some male explorers.⁷² In the latter case, Mary Kingsley identifies herself as ‘the third Englishman to ascend the Peak and the first to have ascended it from the south-east face’,⁷³ illustrating that such achievements were meaningful in terms of nationality and race rather than gender difference.

Mary Kingsley referred to the relative length of explorations, saying that

The ‘arm-chair explorer’ may be impressed by the greatness of length of the red line route of an explorer; but the person locally acquainted with the region may know that some of those red lines are very easily made in Africa...In other regions a small red line means four hundred times the work and danger, and requires four thousand times the pluck, perseverance and tact. These regions we may call choice spots.⁷⁴

This seems self-defensive in tone, and implies Mary Kingsley’s authority as someone who is locally acquainted with Africa. She proceeds to advocate the imperialist agenda of exploration whereby the explorer who ‘makes his long red line pass through great regions of choice spots’ and

⁷² BIRKETT 1987 op.cit.

⁷³ KINGSLEY 1897 op.cit. p.550. My emphasis.

⁷⁴ Ibid. p.353.

attains power over their natives, and retains it, welding the districts into a whole, making the flag of his country respected and feared therein, ...is a very great man indeed.⁷⁵

Mary Kingsley also identified with traders in West Africa, thereby 'adopting a male profession and belonging to a community that rarely encountered, and subsequently paid heed to, British gender divisions.'⁷⁶ Her respect for traders was a consistent theme in her writings and was underpinned by this self-identification; for example, she referred to 'old coasters and sea-captains' as 'most excellent people, but supremely human. I am one myself now, so I speak with authority'.⁷⁷ She valued their paternalism, describing traders as 'good-hearted, hospitable English gentlemen, who seem to feel it their duty that no harm they can prevent should happen to anyone.'⁷⁸ Most of all, Mary Kingsley valued the opportunities offered to traders for close contact with African people. She described such contact in a lecture to the Cheltenham Ladies College, explaining that

The trading method enables you to sit as an honoured guest at far away inland village fires, it enables you to become the confidential friend of that ever powerful factor in all human societies, the old ladies. It enables you to become an associate of that confraternity of Witch Doctors, things that being surrounded with an expedition of armed men must prevent your doing.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Ibid.p.353.

⁷⁶ BIRKETT 1987 op.cit. p.103.

⁷⁷ KINGSLEY 1897 op.cit. p.514.

⁷⁸ KINGSLEY 1899 op.cit. p.13.

⁷⁹ 'A Lecture on West Africa' by Miss Mary Kingsley in *The Cheltenham Ladies College Magazine* xxxviii; Autumn 1898; pp.264-280, p.267. Earlier in the same lecture, Mary Kingsley said : 'Just put yourself in their place and imagine a gentleman of inky complexion, mainly dressed in red and white paint, human teeth, and leopard tails and not too much of them, suddenly arriving in a village hereabouts. After the first thrill of excitement his appearance gave had passed away, and he was found anxious to sell something, anything, say bootlaces, he would be taken much more calmly than if he showed no desire to do business at all.'

Finally, Mary Kingsley located herself within the masculine tradition of scientific observation. Relating to masculine endeavours of exploration, trade and scientific enquiry enabled Mary Kingsley to travel spatially as well as socially beyond the gender restrictions of colonial settlements constraining women within the domestic sphere. For example, Mary Kingsley's most vigorous collecting of fish was around Calabar, suggesting her desire for, and scientific legitimation of, solitary excursions away from the colonial society of this administrative centre.⁸⁰ When writing about her scientific status, however, a plurality of voices reveals the ambiguities and self-consciousness of being a woman within a male sphere of activity. Most often, Mary Kingsley's humour parodies her position as an individual observer as when, for example, she describes a gorilla :

The old male rose to his full height (it struck me at the time this was a matter of ten feet at least, but for scientific purposes allowance must be made for a lady's emotions.)⁸¹

Throughout *Travels in West Africa*, Mary Kingsley portrayed herself within the masculine traditions of exploration, trade and science, but consistently undercut this by her self-conscious sense of propriety constructed as feminine. Her location within such masculine traditions while travelling illustrates the mobilisation of constructions of gender difference over space, but the coexistence of masculine and feminine identities highlights ambivalence rather than fixed, centred constructions of 'otherness'.

Mary Kingsley's concern with her appearance is the most visible aspect of her perception of, and constraint within, feminine codes of conduct.

⁸⁰ BIRKETT 1987 op.cit.

⁸¹ KINGSLEY 1897 op.cit. p.268.

For example, she was tempted to buy a leather hat in Freetown but resisted, stating

I do not feel I could face Piccadilly in one; and you have no right to go about in Africa in things you would be ashamed to be seen in at home.⁸²

Mary Kingsley's negotiation of masculine and feminine roles and behaviour was paralleled by the lack of a gendered subject in African languages whereby 'I am a most lady-like old person and yet get constantly called 'Sir.'"⁸³ Despite this tone of indignation, Mary Kingsley referred to herself in masculine terms which are consistently self-deprecating; for example, she stated that 'I am not a literary man',⁸⁴ 'I am not by nature a commercial man myself',⁸⁵ and, finally, '[a]lthough not a family man myself'.⁸⁶ Despite such nominal masculinity, she goes on to state adamantly that

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.⁸⁷

Other references to appropriate dress, however, subvert the ideals of feminine conduct. There are many examples of Mary Kingsley falling throughout *Travels in West Africa* - out of bed, through roofs of huts, down wells, and so on - but the most memorable occurs while following an indistinct path *en route* for the Rembwe River :

⁸² Ibid. p.19.

⁸³ Ibid. p.502.

⁸⁴ KINGSLEY 1899 op.cit. p.xii.

⁸⁵ Ibid. p.6.

⁸⁶ Ibid. p.29.

⁸⁷ KINGSLEY 1897 op.cit. p.502.

I made a short cut for it and the next news I was in a heap, on a lot of spikes, some fifteen feet or so below ground level, at the bottom of a bag-shaped game pit. It is at these times that you realise the blessing of a good thick skirt. Had I paid heed to the advice of many people in England...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 of my skirt tucked under me, sitting on nine ebony spikes some twelve inches long, in comparative comfort, howling lustily to be hauled out.⁸⁸

Mary Kingsley's identification with masculine traditions of exploration, trade and scientific observation highlight the primacy of imperial authority through constructions of *racial* difference, while her femininity more specifically underpinned and shaped her self-conscious *national* identity. In this way, Mary Kingsley perceived herself not only in relation to racial difference from Africans, but also in relation to national difference from other colonizers and perceived her appearance and behaviour not only in terms of feminine but also national propriety. For example,

when in Cameroons I had one dress, and one only, that I regarded as fit to support the dignity of a representative of England, so of course when going to call on the representative of another Power I had to put that dress on, and then go out in open boats to warships or for bush walks in it.⁸⁹

Mary Kingsley was most self-consciously aware of her appearance when meeting individuals from other colonizing nations. This applied to both men and women and can be illustrated by two examples; firstly, when she declined to meet a French nun :

feeling quite certain I should get misunderstood by the gentle, clean, tidy lady, and she might put me down as an ordinary specimen of Englishwoman, and so I should bring disgrace on my nation. If I had been able to dress up, ashore I could have gone;⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Ibid. p.269.

⁸⁹ Ibid. p.622.

⁹⁰ Ibid. p.351.

and, secondly, when preparing to meet a German officer :

I am in an awful mess - mud-caked skirts, and blood-stained hands and face. Shall I 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?⁹¹

For Mary Kingsley, the alliance between feminine and national respectability was characterized by a sense of personal inadequacy. This was, however, expressed in a humorous tone; for example, at one stage she believed that a French official was

trying to convince the others that I am an English officer in disguise on the spy; which makes me feel embarrassed, and anything but flattered. Wish to goodness I knew French, or how to flirt with that French official so as to dispel the illusion.⁹²

The plurality of voices within *Travels in West Africa* suggests the dynamic ambivalence of gendered subjectivity over space rather than the unproblematic fixing of identity. This is particularly clear in the ways in which Mary Kingsley identified with exploration, trade and scientific observation - all primarily constructed as masculine spheres of activity - while remaining self-conscious about maintaining feminine standards of appearance and behaviour. Her pervasive humour expressed the ambiguities

⁹¹ Ibid. p.563. Despite this decision, Mary Kingsley goes on to say that 'I receive a most kindly welcome from a fair, grey-eyed German gentleman, only unfortunately I see my efforts to appear before him clean and tidy have been quite unavailing, for he views my appearance with unmixed horror, and suggests an instant hot bath. I decline. Men can be trying! How in the world is anyone going to take a bath in a house with no doors, and only very sketchy wooden window-shutters?'

⁹² Ibid. p.140. A further example of the interaction of feminine and national self-consciousness is Mary Kingsley's statement that 'I...salve my pride as an Englishwoman with the knowledge that were I a Frenchwoman to travel in any of our West Coast settlements, she would have as warm an helpful a welcome as I get here, and I will be femininely spiteful, and say that she would do more harm in the English settlements than ever I did in the French. Think of Mme Jacot, Mme Forget, or Mme Gacon going into Calabar, for example, why there wouldn't be a whole heart left in the place in twenty-four hours!' Ibid. p.157.

of negotiating masculine and feminine discourses through parodying such constructions and further undermining perceptions of a stable authorial presence. Before considering constructions of race and class over space and time in Chapter 4, I will discuss Mary Kingsley's perceptions of other people while travelling in terms of gendered subjectivity. I will begin, however, by outlining the implications of gendered subjectivity for ethnographic observation and representation more generally.

Ethnographic Observation and Representation.

Current concern with a 'crisis of representation' in ethnography has stimulated greater sensitivity to textuality.⁹³ This relates to the discursive conditions for both writing and the relations of production rather than the analysis of fixed texts. In this way, the partiality of ethnographic 'truths' is stressed, and experimental writing is often advocated. According to Clifford,

The writing and reading of ethnography are overdetermined by forces ultimately beyond the control of either an author or an interpretive community. These contingencies - of language, rhetoric, power, and history - must now be openly confronted in the process of writing.⁹⁴

The recognition of such contingencies has post colonial potential to overcome enforced silencing. However, the history of ethnography is rooted in the context of colonialism and the different interpretations of this reflect on current attempts at textual representation of difference. It seems undisputed that

⁹³ See, for example, CLIFFORD and MARCUS op.cit. and CLIFFORD, J. 1988 : *The Predicament of Culture : Twentieth Century Ethnography, Literature and Art*; Harvard University Press, Cambridge.

⁹⁴ CLIFFORD, J. : *Introduction : Partial Truths*; pp.1-26 in CLIFFORD and MARCUS op.cit. p.25.

social anthropology emerged as a distinctive discipline at the beginning of the colonial era, that it became a flourishing academic profession toward its close, or that throughout this period its efforts were devoted to a description and analysis - carried out by Europeans, for a European audience - of non-European societies dominated by European power.⁹⁵

I want to focus on the relationship between ethnography and travel writing in the context of colonialism. Clifford claims that these are usually generically different,⁹⁶ but such a claim potentially perpetuates notions of ethnographic objectivity and authority. In contrast, writings by travellers (as well as by, for example, missionaries, naturalists and colonial officials) were crucial in providing the empirical basis for the theoretical arguments of comparative ethnologists.⁹⁷ Overall,

The strategy of defining itself by contrast to adjacent and antecedent discourses limits ethnography's ability to explain or examine itself as a kind of writing. To the extent that it legitimates itself by opposition to other kinds of writing, ethnography blinds itself to the fact that its own discursive practices were often inherited from these other genres and are still shared with them today.⁹⁸

For example, personal narratives may seem more akin to travel writing, but remain central components of ethnographies, although they tend to be located as a separate volume, or clearly bounded within a text as an introduction or first chapter.⁹⁹ This is underpinned by the paradox of ethnographic authority and its textualization:

⁹⁵ ASAD, T. : *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter*; pp.85-94 in HUIZER, G. and MANNHEIM, B. eds. 1979 : *The Politics of Anthropology : From Colonialism and Sexism Toward a View From Below*; Mouton Publishers, The Hague, Paris; p.90.

⁹⁶ CLIFFORD and MARCUS op.cit.

⁹⁷ STOCKING, G.W. 1987 : *Victorian Anthropology*; The Free Press, New York and London.

⁹⁸ PRATT, M-L 1986 op.cit. p.27.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

Fieldwork produces a kind of authority that is anchored to a large extent in subjective, sensuous experience. One experiences the indigenous environment and lifeways for oneself, sees with one's own eyes, even plays some roles, albeit contrived ones, in the daily life of the community. But the professional text to result from such an encounter is supposed to conform to the norms of a scientific discourse whose authority resides in the absolute effacement of the speaking and experiencing subject.¹⁰⁰

Parallel with his attempt to separate travel writing from ethnography, Clifford's neglect of feminist critiques of ethnographic writing perpetuates attempts at representation which are not grounded in the constructed and ambivalent subjectivities of those writing, reading, and being represented in ethnographic accounts.¹⁰¹ Gendered subjectivity is inseparable from all stages and forms of ethnographic representation. I will discuss Mary Kingsley's textual representations of people she encountered while travelling to illustrate the complexities of gender and its interaction with race in informing perceptions of difference by a western woman in the context of colonization. This relates to a critique of perceptions of a crisis of representation which are based on the unfounded assumptions that, firstly, travel writing is generically different from ethnography and, secondly, that ethnographic authority can be considered without foregrounding constructions of gender difference. By focussing on the writings of Mary Kingsley, I will address the claim that women ethnographers in the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. p.32.

¹⁰¹ See, for example, MARCUS, J. : *Predicated on Gender*; Social Analysis 29, December 1990, pp.136-144; who states that the absence of women from CLIFFORD 1988 means that 'what is offered as a critical anthropology or a critique of culture is in fact a critique of masculinist anthropology from a masculinist point of view. This form of the production of critique leaves the discipline largely intact and its relations of power once again obscured.' (p.139).

negotiate femininity in relation to disciplinarity (its authority as a unitary discourse, the constitution of authority as a male preserve), to identity (of authentic/inauthentic criteria, claims for competing identities within the ethnographic monograph) and to cultural difference (femininity written in a different cultural inscription).¹⁰²

Textual Representations of 'Others'.

Throughout *Travels in West Africa*, Mary Kingsley was consistently anxious to establish credibility as a scientific observer, emphasizing that, for example, 'I have written only on things that I know from personal experience and very careful observation', ¹⁰³ and stressing 'my own extensive experience of the West Coast.'¹⁰⁴ In addition, Mary Kingsley stated that

Unless you live among the natives, you never get to know them; if you do this you gradually get a light into the true state of their mind-forest.¹⁰⁵

Observation is, however, clearly reflexive and I will illustrate ways in which Mary Kingsley attempted to be identified as an objective, masculine observer while maintaining the more feminine characteristics of subjective observation.¹⁰⁶ In this way, the authority of observation seems dependent on

¹⁰² TURNER, L. : *Feminism, Femininity and Ethnographic Authority*; Women : a Cultural Review 2 (3), 1991, pp.238-254; p.251.

¹⁰³ KINGSLEY 1897 op.cit. p.xx.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. p.62.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. p.103. Direct observation was perceived as necessary by Mary Kingsley for personal and scientific legitimation and verification. She advises other travellers of this : 'Remember, you must always have your original material - carefully noted down at the time of occurrence - with you, so that you may say in answer to his Why? Because of this, and this, and this.' Ibid. p.439.

¹⁰⁶ I am conscious that my uses of the terms 'femininity' and 'masculinity' may seem essentialist. In Britain in the 1890s (for example) these ideological constructions had wide currency fixing a dichotomy and thus masking differences. I hope to reveal their ambivalence over space and time and to keep these two levels in tension throughout my discussion.

gendered subjectivity, masculine and feminine voices coexisted to undermine such authority, and Mary Kingsley's accounts of *other* people reveal as much, if not more, about herself.

Mary Kingsley perceived gender difference in essentialist terms whereby 'men are men and women are women all the world over'¹⁰⁷ and '[j]ust as your African man is the normal man, so is your African woman the normal woman.'¹⁰⁸ She also believed in the essentialist nature of racial difference, 'not of degree but of kind',¹⁰⁹ and likened this to the difference

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.¹¹⁰

For Mary Kingsley, clear axes of difference existed whereby she saw herself as inferior in terms of gender while at home, but racially superior while travelling. Her representations of other people - colonizers and colonized, men and women - thus have implications for whether and how notions of gender difference coexisted with racial difference.

A further generalization parodies her notions of essential masculinity and notions of feminine duty and service :

Remember that whenever you see a man, black or white, filled with a nameless longing, it is tobacco he requires. Grim despair accompanied by a gusty temper indicates something wrong with his pipe, in which case offer him a straightened-out hairpin.¹¹¹

It is notable that within *Travels in West Africa*, male colonizers are referred

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. p.207.

¹⁰⁸ KINGSLEY 1899 op.cit. p.375.

¹⁰⁹ KINGSLEY 1897 op.cit. p.659. I will focus on Mary Kingsley's perceptions of racial difference in the following chapter.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. p.659.

¹¹¹ Ibid.p.125.

to - either by name or as anonymous officials or traders - but personal encounters and characterizations remain largely undeveloped. Mary Kingsley identified most closely with traders, but these men were textualised as a body rather than as individuals. Her personal contact with individual traders seems more pronounced in her political activity on her return home. This was established through her prolific letter writing,¹¹² suggesting a distinction between her public and private writings. She was conscious of her gender inferiority to male colonizers while travelling and in her travel writing, but, on her return home, transcended such perceptions in the private sphere of correspondence which, ironically, underpinned her public, political identity.

In terms of indigenous men, Mary Kingsley's relationship with the Fan people receives closest attention and her closest identification in *Travels in West Africa*. Figure 5 presents photographs of Fan people which appeared in *Travels in West Africa* and were probably taken by Mary Kingsley. These people were infamous at the time for cannibalism, and Mary Kingsley used this to establish herself within the masculine tradition of exploration by comparing herself with :

de Brazza [who] got in touch with the Okanda and Adooma tribes, people less ferocious and more helpful than the Fans.¹¹³

¹¹² This is best illustrated by Mary Kingsley's extensive correspondence with John Holt of Liverpool from November 1897 to March 1900.

¹¹³ KINGSLEY 1897 op.cit. p.355.



Figure 5 : Photographs of Fan people which appeared in *Travels in West Africa*.

Source : KINGSLEY 1897 op.cit.

Mary Kingsley portrayed this relationship in the form of masculine camaraderie :

A certain sort of friendship soon arose between the Fans and me. We each recognised that we belonged to that same section of the human race with whom it is better to drink than to fight.¹¹⁴

The cannibalism of the Fans would be taboo if narrated by someone primarily identified as feminine. However, Mary Kingsley adopts a brisk, ironic and humorous tone, saying that

the cannibalism of the Fans, although a prevalent habit, is no danger, I think, to white people, except as regards the bother it gives one in preventing one's black companions from getting eaten.¹¹⁵

Mary Kingsley was more likely to relate to and reciprocate with women as individuals. This was particularly marked in the case of other colonizing women, although their gender identity seems at times ambivalent; for example, Lady MacDonald was a 'very sweet and gracious lady'¹¹⁶ and, although Mary Slessor was a 'very wonderful lady[,...]the sort of man [she] represents is rare.'¹¹⁷ In other cases, colonizing women were discussed - always favourably and individually - in terms of their appearance and conduct which highlighted their femininity; for example

Madame Forget is a perfectly lovely French girl, with a pale transparent skin and the most perfect great dark eyes, with indescribable charm, grace of manner, and vivacity in conversation.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ Ibid. p.264.

¹¹⁵ Ibid. p.330.

¹¹⁶ Ibid. p.12.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. p.74. Mary Slessor was a Scottish Presbyterian missionary who lived near Calabar for more than twenty years.

¹¹⁸ Ibid. p.152.

Similarly, throughout *Travels in West Africa*, Mary Kingsley emphasized the appearance of indigenous women, although this was more likely to be on collective rather than individual terms, and in a more conventionally sexualized, objectifying way. For example, Mary Kingsley seemed to establish herself as a distanced, potentially masculine observer¹¹⁹ by stating that

The 'Fanny Po' ladies are celebrated for their beauty all along the West Coast, and very justly. They are not however, as they themselves think, the most beautiful women in this part of the world. Not at least to my way of thinking. I prefer an Elmina, or an Igalwa, or a M'pongwe, or - but I had better stop and own that my affections have got very scattered among the black ladies on the West Coast, and I no sooner remember one lovely creature whose soft eyes, perfect form and winning, pretty ways have captivated me than I think of another.¹²⁰

Such naming and listing served to depersonalize and objectify the women being described and reflected imperialist strategies of control through categorization. This can also be identified in Mary Kingsley's generalizations about older women:

The usual statements that the African women age - go off, I believe, is the technical term - very early is, I am sure, wrong in many cases. Look at those Sierra Leone mammies, slightly spherical, I own, but undeniably charming; and the Calabar women, although belonging to a very ugly tribe, are very little the worse for twenty years one way or the other.¹²¹

In a similar way, Mary Kingsley's often detailed descriptions of clothes objectified indigenous women and established a privileged position for herself as viewing subject. The only other characteristic of individual

¹¹⁹ Because I am focussing on constructions of gender difference rather than sexual orientation, I am referring to Mary Kingsley's descriptions of indigenous women as potentially masculine rather than, for example, lesbian or bisexual. I hope that I am not perpetuating heterosexist bias but Mary Kingsley's articulations of gender difference are more evident than issues of sexual orientation.

¹²⁰ Ibid. p.72.

¹²¹ Ibid. p.224.

African women that was consistently remarked upon was their ability to speak English, reflecting imperialist imperatives.¹²²

The most sustained reference to the lives of African women lay in Mary Kingsley's discussion of polygamy, in which she advocated tolerance of this indigenous institution. Like the cannibalism of the Fans, polygamy would have been taboo if discussed by a voice primarily identified as feminine. However, Mary Kingsley cultivated an amused tone of attempted objectivity, arguing that one reason for polygamy was

that it is totally impossible for one woman to do the whole work of a house - look after the children, prepare and cook the food, prepare the rubber, carry the same to the markets, fetch the daily supply of water from the stream, cultivate the plantation &c.&c. Perhaps I should say it is impossible for the dilatory African woman, for I once had an Irish charwoman, who drank, who would have done the whole week's work of an African village in an afternoon, and then been quite fresh enough to knock some of the nonsense out of her husband's head with that of the broom, and throw a kettle of boiling water or a paraffin lamp at him, if she suspected him of flirting with other ladies.¹²³

Although a sexual division of labour is recognized, rather than draw out the common domestic sphere of women among both colonized and colonizing populations, the juxtaposition of two worlds in such a caricatured way means that underlying ideas of racial difference were not transcended by sensitivity to any common female experience. In addition, this description of domestic work differentiates Mary Kingsley in terms of her own class identity because she was in a position to employ another woman to do

¹²² See, for example, *Ibid.* p.116, p.420 and p.423.

¹²³ *Ibid.* p.211. This statement is virtually reproduced in the Appendix on Trade and Labour in West Africa, although here the cross-cultural comparison seems more universalized : 'it is perfectly impossible for one African woman to do the work of the house, prepare the food, fetch water, cultivate the plantations, and look after the children attributive to one man. She might do it if she had the work in her of an English or Irish charwoman, but she has not, and a whole villageful of African women do not do the work in a week that one of these will do in a day.' *Ibid.* p.662.

domestic work for her; furthermore, the charwoman is of a lower class and is thus not judged for not fulfilling the bourgeois ideals of feminine conduct.

Conclusions.

By discussing 'departure' in the sense of constructions of gendered subjectivity, I hope that I have illuminated their significance, ambivalence, and differentiation over space and time. I have focussed on an individual author to emphasize the positionality which arises from many, often conflicting, discourses which come together to establish the conditions and constraints for gendered subjectivity and which is expressed through textual representation. In this way, I view poststructuralist perceptions of the 'death of the author' to relate to the construction of author-positionality. By focussing on the writings of Mary Kingsley, I am not celebrating individuality in the sense of a universal, humanistic essence of subjectivity, but am rather attempting to illustrate the multiple constructions of subjectivity.

My focus on the gendered subjectivity of Mary Kingsley enables 'departure' to include both the temporal context of leaving home as well as the spatial context of gender identity while travelling. In the former case, I discussed the form of *Travels in West Africa* to illuminate arguments concerning authorial authority as well as preparations for departure including motives, conduct books, and general logistics. In the latter case, Mary Kingsley's textual representations of herself and others while travelling relate to broader arguments concerning observation and ethnography. All of these examples illustrate the unstable, ambivalent

constructions of gender difference which informed and emerged from Mary Kingsley's travels and writings.

To refer to author-positionality is therefore very different from notions of unproblematic, fixed authority. Gendered subjectivity is rather constructed and contested in many different ways over space and time. Its textual representation in the writings of Mary Kingsley reflects this complexity and, in the context of contemporary concern with a 'crisis of representation', reveals the need to foreground gender difference and to stress its immanence within the ambivalence of colonial representation more broadly.

CHAPTER 4 : JOURNEY

SPACE, PLACE AND IMPERIAL SUBJECTIVITY.

Building on my discussion of gendered subjectivity as a crucial component for temporal and spatial departure, I will now focus on imperial subjectivity in terms of constructions of racial difference over space. Imperial control relates to the exercise of power and authority over both people and places, and I will discuss how constructions of race and gender gave rise to distinctive representations by women travel writers, and how such representations were spatially differentiated in their significance and implications. I hope to address the ambiguities of being constructed as subordinate in terms of gender in the context of patriarchal society but able to share in the authority of colonizers defined in terms of race in the context of imperialism while travelling.¹ This relates to notions of a journey in terms of how material and metaphorical movement over space and time influenced Mary Kingsley's opinions on imperial politics and policy as she mediated the spheres of home and away. I will focus on *West African Studies* because of its political orientation, epitomized by a chapter outlining Mary Kingsley's 'Alternative Plan' for the government of British West Africa. However, I will begin with a topographical metaphor from *Travels in West Africa* which expresses her views on 'civilization'. This has important implications for her perceptions of colonized places and people as well as her own position in terms of gender, race and class identity in textually representing such

¹ Such ambiguities are stressed by, for example, SHERIDAN, S. : 'Wives and mothers like ourselves, poor remnants of a dying race' : *Aborigines in Colonial Women's Writing*; Kunapipi Vol.X (1 and 2), 1988 pp.76-91. She studies how the racism of white women differed from that of white men, and argues that 'They construct race difference and relate it to gender difference in specific ways, which on examination reveal the ambiguities of their position as members of the dominant power - but not quite; similarly, the ambiguity of their position as women, shared with Aboriginal women - but not quite.' p.77.

perceptions :

I do not believe that the white race will ever drag the black up their own particular summit in the mountain range of civilization. Both polygamy and slavery are...essential to the well-being of Africa - at any rate for those vast regions of it which are agricultural, and these two institutions will necessitate the African having a summit to himself. Only - alas! for the energetic reformer - the African is not keen on mountaineering in the civilisation range. He prefers remaining down below and being comfortable. He is not conceited about this; he admires the higher culture very much, and the people who inconvenience themselves by going in for it - but do it himself? No. And if he is dragged up into the higher regions of a self-abnegatory religion, six times in ten he falls back damaged, a morally maimed man, into his old swampy country fashion valley.²

COLONIZED PLACES.

Reading and Writing Landscapes.

Mary Kingsley's personal, aesthetic enthusiasm was paramount in her descriptions of colonized landscapes. The subjectivity of her response paradoxically undermines her claims for authority as objective observer, while establishing her as capable of vivid description and more sensual sensitivity. She claims subjective authority by stressing the individuality of her response :

To my taste there is nothing so fascinating as spending a night out in an African forest, or plantation; but I beg you to note I do not advise any one to follow the practice. Nor indeed do I recommend African forest life to any one. Unless you are interested in it and fall under its charm, it is the most awful life in death imaginable. It is like being shut up in a library whose books you cannot read, all the while tormented, terrified, and bored. And if you do fall under its spell, it takes all the colour out of other kinds of living.³

² KINGSLEY 1897 p.680. I will refer to the implications of this metaphor throughout this chapter.

³ Ibid. p.102.

The landscape seems to possess magical qualities, accessible only to certain, 'interested' individuals, and seems to exercise power over those individuals rather than to submit to their control. It is interesting that Mary Kingsley employs a metaphor of herself being able to read the landscape while others seem illiterate. This reflects, but significantly differs from, current notions of reading landscapes as texts, most notably developed by James and Nancy Duncan.

In his interpretation of the royal capital of Kandy in Sri Lanka in the early nineteenth century, James Duncan proposes a methodology for the interpretation of landscapes, illuminates the political configuration of landscapes, and analyses this in the context of a highly specific empirical example.⁴ Duncan refers to literal, tangible texts rather than expanding on the metaphorical notion of landscape as text so that the textuality of landscape on a conceptual level is superseded by the intertextuality of a specific example. The empirical specificities of texts in the Kandyan kingdom are illuminated, but the broader conceptual implications of reading a landscape as text are downplayed. In contrast, Mary Kingsley's reference to the textuality of landscape is more self-conscious in its referentiality, as she locates herself within that landscape. In this chapter, I hope to illuminate how her position as viewing subject was constructed along lines of gender, racial and class difference to illustrate the distinctive perceptions of a white, middle class woman travelling within and between patriarchal and imperial spheres.

To highlight the textuality of landscape has the potential for exploring the discursive constraints for interpreting places and spaces.

⁴ DUNCAN 1990 op.cit.

Duncan does not fulfill this potential because he focuses on a highly specific example from a position of privileged distance. In contrast, to consider the perceptions of an individual such as Mary Kingsley emphasizes the construction of multiple identities over space and time and the tensions of being an observer both inside and outside the landscape being represented.

Mary Kingsley located herself both emotionally and spatially in West Africa throughout her travel writing, expressing, for example, that 'I am more comfortable there than in England.'⁵ Within West Africa, Mary Kingsley felt more comfortable travelling through the bush rather than fixed in settlements. With the exception of Glass, she stated that 'I dislike West Coast towns as a general rule,'⁶ corresponding to her desire to move beyond colonial settlements to fish, explore and trade. Her vivid descriptions of landscapes while travelling are characterised by their personalization, whereby she becomes part of the landscape in her aesthetic response to it. For example, her description of the rapids on the Ogowe River seems metaphysical in its celebration of the ethereal power of the natural world :

In the darkness round me flitted thousands of fireflies and out beyond this pool of utter night flew by unceasingly the white foam of the rapids; sound there was none save their thunder. The majesty and beauty of the scene fascinated me, and I stood leaning with my back against a rock pinnacle watching it. Do not imagine it gave rise, in what I am pleased to call my mind, to those complicated, poetical reflections natural beauty seems to bring out in other people's minds. It never works that way with me; I just lose all sense of human individuality, all memory of human life, with its grief and worry and doubt, and become part of the atmosphere. If I have a heaven, that will be mine.⁷

Such personalized identification with the landscape seems contrary

⁵ KINGSLEY 1897 op.cit. p.xxi.

⁶ Ibid. p.347.

⁷ Ibid. p.177.

to the imperial strategies epitomized by the 'master-of-all-I-survey' genre of travel writing.⁸ The former reveals the subjectivity of an observer located within the landscape, while the latter relates to a panoramic gaze objectifying the landscape through the imperial power and authority of an external observer. The latter privileges vision, while the former includes other sensual responses as shown by Mary Kingsley's references to sound :

Woe! to the man in Africa who cannot stand perpetual uproar.
Few things surprised me more than the rarity of silence and
the intensity of it when you did get it⁹

with such 'uproar' including

The grunting sigh of relief of the hippos, the strange groaning,
whining bark of the crocodiles, the thin cry of the bats, the
cough of the leopards, and that unearthly yell that sometimes
comes out of the forest in the depths of dark nights.¹⁰

Rather than establish the landscape as a stage for the exercise of the imperial viewer's power, Mary Kingsley's descriptions of West Africa were more likely to prompt self-questioning, further highlighting her personal and reflexive sensitivity to landscape; for example,

as I sat on the verandah overlooking Victoria and the sea, in
the dim soft light of the stars, with the fire-flies round me, and
the lights of Victoria away below, and heard the soft rush of
the Lukola River, and the sound of the sea-surf on the rocks,
and the tom-tomming and singing of the natives, all matching
and mingling together, 'Why did I come to Africa?' thought I.
Why! who would not come to its twin brother hell itself for all
the beauty and charm of it.¹¹

⁸ PRATT M-L 1992 op.cit.

⁹ KINGSLEY 1899 op.cit. p.62.

¹⁰ Ibid. p.67.

¹¹ KINGSLEY 1897 op.cit. p.608.

Landscape Description as Anti-Conquest.

For Mary Louise Pratt, the 'master-of-all-I-survey' genre epitomizes the gendering of travel writing in which men were constructed as explorers by mobilizing the masculine heroic discourse of discovery.¹² Mary Kingsley's *Travels in West Africa* is cited as the main exception whereby

Through irony and inversion, she builds her own meaning-making apparatus out of the raw materials of the monarchic male discourse of domination and intervention. The result...is a monarchic female voice that asserts its own kind of mastery even as it denies domination and parodies power.¹³

Pratt describes this difference in spatial terms by contrasting 'her' 'vast and unexplored mangrove swamps...with the gleaming promontories her fellow Victorians sought out.'¹⁴ The position of the traveller within these spatial parameters also differed according to gender, with Mary Kingsley implicated within rather than distanced from the landscape. Pratt's tone conveys Mary Kingsley as an eccentric, intrepid explorer and perpetuates stereotypical images of women travellers when she pictures her

discovering her swamps not by looking down at them or even walking around them, but by sloshing zestfully through them in a boat or up to her neck in water and slime, swathed in thick skirts and wearing her boots continuously for weeks on end.¹⁵

Pratt argues that Mary Kingsley's descriptions are feminized in their domesticity.¹⁶ She illustrates this by describing the boat which Mary Kingsley steers down the Rembwe at night as 'a combination [of] bedroom

¹² PRATT, M-L 1992 op.cit.

¹³ Ibid. p.213.

¹⁴ Ibid. p.213.

¹⁵ Ibid.p.213.

¹⁶ Ibid. p.214.

and kitchen' and by characterizing Mary Kingsley as 'the domestic goddess keeping watch and savoring the solitude of her night vigil.'¹⁷ Mary Kingsley visualizes the landscape by describing

The great, black, winding river with a pathway in its midst of frosted silver where the moonlight struck it; on each side the ink-black mangrove walls, and above them the band of stars and moonlit heavens that the walls of mangrove allowed one to see,¹⁸

but such magnificence is only imagined under cover of darkness because '[b]y daylight the Rembwe scenery was certainly not so lovely, and might be slept through without a pang.'¹⁹ Mary Kingsley's solitude and her idealization of the landscape contribute to a value-system which rejects the textual strategies of male explorers, which took the form of 'fantasies of dominance and possession, painting that is simultaneously a material inventory.'²⁰

The ambivalence of Mary Kingsley's position within imperial discourses of power and authority is clear, but this should also be extended to her gendered subjectivity. Pratt assumes feminization and reinforces notions of Mary Kingsley as an eccentric individual rather than addressing the discursive complexities and ambiguities of gendered subjectivity. For example, Mary Kingsley clearly relishes her solitude but this violates codes of appropriate feminine conduct, and her responsibility in steering the boat seems contrary to more conventional notions of feminine passivity.

Pratt spatially locates Mary Kingsley as part of but separate from

¹⁷ Ibid. p.214. The description which Pratt refers to is KINGSLEY 1897 op.cit.p.338.

¹⁸ KINGSLEY 1897 op.cit. p.338.

¹⁹ Ibid. p.338.

²⁰ PRATT, M-L 1992 op.cit. p.214.

imperial goals. This position is seen as textually articulated by her 'masterful comic irreverence' because

At the same time as it mocks the self-importance and possessiveness of her male counterparts, Kingsley's irony constitutes her own form of mastery, deployed in a swampy world of her own that the explorer-men have not seen or do not want.²¹

Pratt's account is persuasive in its construction of Mary Kingsley's 'swampy world', but reduces the complex ambivalence of her identity constructed in terms of racial and gender difference. Such claims could be extended to the topographic metaphor I cited at the beginning of this chapter, so that confining Mary Kingsley to swamps aligns her gender difference with her own perceptions of the racial difference of Africans. This corresponds with Mary Kingsley's claims for essential differences in terms of race and gender, and illustrates her ambivalence as an individual discursively constructed by patriarchal and imperial forms of power and authority. However, another reference made to swamps seems to undermine this inferior position, when Mary Kingsley states that 'the English love, above all things, settling in, or as near as possible to, a good, reeking, stinking swamp.'²² This spatial subversion of imperial power seems inconsistent with both Mary Kingsley's claims for the peaks of 'civilization' as well as Pratt's claims for Mary Kingsley's autonomy confined to the swampy underworld. It also suggests a contrast between the ideals and day to day practice of imperial rule, the ambivalence of individuals within such discourses and strategies of control, and the need to avoid making exaggerated claims from isolated passages of text which are informed by

²¹ Ibid. p.215.

²² KINGSLEY 1897 op.cit. p.108.

perceptions of the individualization of subjectivity.

To locate Mary Kingsley primarily in literal and metaphorical swamps can be questioned by, for example, referring to her ascent of Mount Cameroon which could potentially implicate her in masculine and imperial discourses. However, Mary Kingsley remains ambivalent, stating that 'verily I am no mountaineer'.²³ She locates herself outside the masculine endeavour of mountaineering but admires and likens its dangers to those of her own travels :

My most favourite form of literature...is accounts of mountaineering exploits...I do not care a row of pins how badly they may be written, and what form of bumble-puppy grammar and composition is employed, as long as the writer will walk along the edge of a precipice with a sheer fall of thousands of feet on one side and a sheer wall on the other; or better still crawl up an *arete* with a precipice on either. Nothing on earth would persuade me to do either of these things myself, but they remind me of bits of country I have been through where you walk a narrow line of security with gulfs of murder looming on each side, and where in exactly the same way you are as safe as if you were in your easy chair at home, as long as you get sufficient holding ground : not on rock in the bush village inhabited by murderous cannibals, but on ideas in those men's and women's minds; and these ideas...give you safety.²⁴

Just as mountaineering skills can overcome the dangers of the natural world, so Mary Kingsley's intellectual skills can overcome the dangers of the human world. Both are presented as textually gripping for an audience at home.

Despite her perceived difference from mountaineers, and in addition to her analogous references to 'civilization' as mountain peaks and the dangers of different forms of travel, Mary Kingsley did climb Mount Cameroon on her second journey in West Africa. However, her ambivalent

²³ Ibid. p.594.

²⁴ Ibid. p.329.

polyphony in describing this ascent reveals the ambiguities of being constructed as both inside and outside, and moving between, patriarchal and imperial discourses.

From her earliest sightings of Mount Cameroon, Mary Kingsley both identified with and distanced herself from a masculine tradition of exploration:

Now it is none of my business to go up mountains. There's next to no fish on them in West Africa, and precious little good rank fetish, as the population on them is sparse - the African, like myself, abhorring cool air. Nevertheless, I feel quite sure that no white man has ever looked on the great Peak of Cameroon without a desire arising in his mind to ascend it.²⁵

If the panoramic vision achieved through mountaineering epitomizes the 'master-of-all-I-survey' genre of travel writing, Mary Kingsley's contradictory position in terms of gendered subjectivity also relates to her ambivalence in the context of imperialism. Even though she perceives such temptation as universal for colonizing men, Mary Kingsley stresses her individuality and authority by ironically characterizing her weakness in succumbing to it :

Do not...imagine that the ascent is a common incident in a coaster's life; far from it. The coaster as a rule resists the temptation of Mungo [Mah Lobeh, or Mount Cameroon] firmly, being stronger than I am; moreover, he is busy and only too often fever-stricken in the bargain. But I am the exception, I own'.²⁶

Mary Kingsley's account of her ascent of Mount Cameroon lacks the lively enthusiasm and good humour of the rest of *Travels in West Africa*. Her gendered subjectivity and her position in the context of imperial power and authority seem particularly ambiguous. For example, her ability to

²⁵ Ibid. p.549.

²⁶ Ibid. p.550.

identify with the masculine, imperial trope of panoramic vision is undermined by her view being obscured by mist. Furthermore, this obscured vision seems to enhance the natural beauty of the scene, which is perceived in primarily aesthetic rather than strategic terms :

The white, gauze-like mist comes down from the upper mountain towards us : creeping, twining round, and streaming through the moss-covered tree columns...Soon...all the mist streams coalesce and make the atmosphere all their own, wrapping us round in a clammy, chill embrace; it is not that wool-blanket, smothering affair that we were wrapped in down by Buana, but exquisitely delicate. The difference it makes to the beauty of the forest is just the same difference you would get if you put a delicate veil over a pretty woman's face or a sack over her head. In fact, the mist here was exceedingly becoming to the forest's beauty.²⁷

The landscape is feminized but its attraction lies in veiling rather than unveiling.

The ambiguity of Mary Kingsley's position as an imperial, gendered subject also emerged in her relations with the Africans in her party on the ascent of Mount Cameroon. She is unable to establish either masculine control or feminine reciprocity, and the resulting tension contrasts with her camaraderie with the Fans.²⁸ For example, they set out with insufficient water, she states that '[t]he men are sulky',²⁹ and she loses her temper when at one stage the men desert the expedition :

I am obliged to be guarded in my language, because my feelings now are only down to one degree below boiling point.³⁰

Her relations with her party are by now a source of strain rather than of amusement. The ascent is uncomfortable; Mary Kingsley laments her badly

²⁷ Ibid. p.570.

²⁸ See Chapter 3 for discussion of Mary Kingsley's accounts of her relationship with the Fans.

²⁹ Ibid.p.574.

³⁰ Ibid. p.579.

sunburnt face, and they travel through a tornado and a hurricane, suffering 'bitter wind and swishing rain'.³¹ She is undecided about continuing to the peak, lacking both the determination and enthusiasm of previous expeditions. She does continue, but her view from the peak is fully obscured by mist and this reflects her own position as attempting but unable to fully achieve masculine and imperial vision :

there is in me no exultation, but only a deep disgust because the weather has robbed me of my main object in coming here, namely to get a good view.³²

Mary Kingsley's ascent of Mount Cameroon which would most closely locate her within a masculine, imperialist tradition of exploration, conquest and surveillance, instead illustrates her ambivalent position within such a tradition. Although she is successful in her ascent, she is denied a view and the expedition is described as hard work rather than a source of pleasure in itself. This final expedition most closely relates to the masculine tradition of goal-oriented travel accounts rather than more feminine odysseys. Mary Kingsley's lack of success in achieving her goal of a view and the strain of the ascent itself reflects her tenuous position as a woman travelling in the context of masculine, imperial discourses.³³

³¹ Ibid. p.588.

³² Ibid. p.594.

³³ MIDDLETON 1965 op.cit. describes Mary Kingsley's ascent of Mount Cameroon in the following way : 'through it all runs a sense of strain not apparent in her far more dangerous adventures on the Ogowe. The carriers and servants she took were feckless and faint-hearted and she missed her Fan friends;...when she reached the summit it was so swathed in mist that she could see no more than a few feet in front of her. She was, one senses, coming dangerously near that point reached by so many great travellers when danger and hardship cease to be a challenge and become an addiction, when the leader begins to chivy instead of to encourage.' pp.171-172.

COLONIZED PEOPLE.

Reading and Writing Racial Difference.

Despite identifying personally with her African servants, referring to them by name and often characterizing them as individuals, Mary Kingsley supported her belief in essential racial difference by generalizing about 'the African character'. By the 1890s, however, such polygenesist ideas were dated and discredited because of, firstly, missionary thought which emphasized common humanity, and, secondly, Darwinist thought which explained difference in terms of evolution.³⁴

Travelling in West Africa undermined Mary Kingsley's preconceptions of Africans and she stated that

I confess I like the African on the whole, a thing I never expected to do when I went to the Coast with the idea that he was a degraded, savage, cruel brute; but that is a trifling error you soon get rid of when you know him.³⁵

Mary Kingsley's generalizations about race related wholly to male objects of study; for example, she outlined her belief that

the true Negro is...by far the better man than the Asiatic; he is physically superior, and he is more like an Englishman than the Asiatic; he is a logical, practical man, with feelings that are a credit to him, and are particularly strong in the direction of property...His make of mind is exceedingly like the make of mind of thousands of Englishmen of the stand-no-nonsense, Englishman's-house-is-his-castle type. Yet, withal, a law-abiding man, loving a live lord, holding loudly that women should be kept in their place, yet often grievously henpecked by his wives, and little better than a slave to his mother, whom he loves with a love he gives to none other. This love of his mother is so dominant a factor in his life that it must be taken into consideration in attempting to understand the true Negro.³⁶

³⁴ BIRKETT 1987 op.cit.

³⁵ KINGSLEY 1897 op.cit.p.653.

³⁶ KINGSLEY 1899 op.cit. p.373.

Indigenous men are perceived primarily in terms of race while indigenous women are perceived in terms of gender, suggesting that Mary Kingsley was able to identify with the masculine, imperial discourses objectifying both racial and gender differences.

Mary Kingsley equated race with nationality in the case of English identity, reflecting hegemonic discourses of imperial control. She outlined her simplistic classification of perceived racial difference only after a disclaimer which paradoxically undermines and establishes the authority of her 'feelings' :

I openly and honestly own I sincerely detest touching on this race question. For one thing, Science has not finished with it; for another, it belongs to a group of subjects of enormous magnitude, upon which I have no opinion, but merely feelings, and those of a nature which I am informed by superior people would barely be a credit to a cave man of the paleolithic period. My feelings classify the world's inhabitants into Englishmen, by which I mean Teutons at large, Foreigners, and Blacks. Blacks I subdivide into two classes, English Blacks and Foreign Blacks. English Blacks are Africans. Foreign Blacks are Indians, Chinese, and the rest.³⁷

Such perceptions were based on notions of the essential character of indigenous men and institutional differences. Although the nature of these institutions was seen to differ, the need for them was perceived the same, potentially suggesting more similarities than differences in constructions of difference along lines of characterization; for example, although 'the African'

culture does not contain our institutions, lunatic asylums, prisons, workhouses, hospitals &c, he has to deal with the same classes of people who require these things. So with him he deals by means of equivalent institutions, slavery, the lash, and death...It's deplorably low of him, I own, but by what alternative plan of government his can be replaced I do not quite see, under existing conditions.³⁸

³⁷ Ibid. p.385.

³⁸ KINGSLEY 1897 op.cit. p.499.

Gender Difference and Imperial Authority.

The ambivalence of women travellers such as Mary Kingsley who participated in masculine discourses of exploration and imperial power and discerned racial identity by objectifying men, suggests that while travelling, racial superiority came to supersede gender inferiority. However, such ambivalence was more complex than this distinction implies because of the tensions and contradictions of gaining temporary licence to behave in ways constructed as masculine while still aiming to satisfy feminine codes of conduct.

The imperial power and authority arising from constructions of racial difference ran parallel with the legitimization of study and observation primarily defined as a masculine quest for knowledge; in this way, while travelling

White women could act without Victorian social conventions, assume (male) professional status, and assert power over Black women and men. Mary Kingsley grasped all these opportunities, assuming the guise of a white male professional to allow her a freedom utterly inconceivable within her own society.³⁹

Mary Kingsley's inability to fully position herself and be positioned within such masculine discourses meant that she could ironically gain greater influence :

While the tensions of her adoption of white male status often curtailed her freedom of action, the temporary nature of her different professional disguises gave Kingsley a breadth of knowledge and expertise more rigidly identified Africanists of the period lacked. Not fitting easily into available professional categorizations, she could also swiftly adapt her assumed roles as the audience and circumstances demanded.⁴⁰

³⁹ BIRKETT 1987 op.cit.p.78.

⁴⁰ Ibid. pp.118-9.

Such discursive complexity in the construction of subjectivity varied over space within and between patriarchal and imperial spheres, enabling and constraining the positioning of Mary Kingsley in terms of primarily gender and racial identity as she negotiated such spheres.

According to Sara Mills, such negotiation was characterized by discursive multiplicity and instability whereby the travels and writings of women both transgressed and conformed to patriarchal and imperial discourses. In this way,

women travellers could not wholeheartedly speak with the voice of colonial discourse, at least not consistently, firstly because of their role in western society and the way this was structured by discourses of femininity, secondly, because some of them had rejected this role by travelling unchaperoned, and thirdly, because they had few discursive places within western colonial institutions.⁴¹

The implications of ambivalence can be identified in how women travel writers, themselves constructed as different in terms of gender, identified others in terms of race, and how these perceptions were translated and codified in their attitudes towards imperialism.

Both Birkett and Frank have argued that Mary Kingsley's 'whiteness' enabled her to transcend constructions of gender difference, but that

the legacy of sexual oppression paradoxically fostered...identification with the subjugated Africans whose lower station facilitated [her] own liberation in Africa.⁴²

⁴¹ MILLS 1991 op.cit. p.106.

⁴² FRANK, K. : *Voyages Out : Nineteenth-Century Women Travelers in Africa*; in SHARISTANIAN, J. ed. 1986 (b) : *Gender, Ideology and Action : Historical Perspectives on Women's Public Lives*; Greenwood Press, New York, Westport and London; pp.67-93; p.72. Also see BIRKETT 1987 op.cit. who argues that 'her 'whiteness' gave her opportunities which transcended gender limitations and Mary Kingsley exploited these at the same time as identifying with African subordination. The ambiguities of being defined as a racial superior and sexual subordinate are central to the analysis of her experience in Africa and her position in African affairs.' p.14.

However, as I have illustrated in the context of her perceptions of indigenous women and her definition of racial difference in terms of the objectification of indigenous men, Mary Kingsley's belief in essential difference along lines of both gender and race meant that 'the subjugated Africans' with whom she identified were perceived more in terms of racial than gender difference. Mary Kingsley's liberation was inseparable from her ability to identify with imperial power and authority which remained separate from and could not replace her gendered subjectivity. In this way, although her empathy with Africans arose from her ambiguous position as a woman sharing in imperial power and authority, this was limited to perceptions of racial identity. For Mary Kingsley to empathise with indigenous women constructed as both racially and sexually inferior by imperial and patriarchal discourses would have undermined her own ability to share in imperial power and authority and thus her ability to travel and to legitimize her travels.

It can be argued that the complex ambivalence of constructions of subjectivity over space reflected the negotiation of public and private as well as imperial and patriarchal discursive formations.⁴³ To share in imperial, masculine freedom thus corresponded with a public sphere of visibility which was spatially and temporally delimited, while more personal contact with colonized places and people corresponded with more feminine, private discourses. This parallels the coexistence of attempted objectivity and subjectivity in Mary Kingsley's observations and descriptions over space and time, and highlights the ambivalence of subject- and author-positionality on her travels and in her travel writing.

⁴³ See, for example, FRANK 1986 (b) op.cit.

Susan Blake has proposed an alternative interpretation of the coexistence and complexity of racial superiority and gender inferiority while travelling. She argues that as these are inseparable in the construction of subjectivity, another basis for authority and legitimation is necessary and takes the form of class identity. She compares the Cape to Cairo travel narratives written by Mary Hall in 1907, Ewart S.Grogan in 1900, and Frank Mellard and Edward Cholmeley in 1912.⁴⁴ Blake identifies clear gender differences between attempts to either overpower or accommodate Africans. Grogan attempted to physically overpower those encountered *en route*, and Mellard and Cholmeley tried to overpower Africans within the text, both because of an underlying ability to objectify African subjects. In contrast, Mary Hall attempted to achieve reciprocity both in her journey and in the text, relating to Africans as subjects rather than objects. This difference arose because

like her male contemporaries, Hall participates in the chivalric structure of social relations, but her position in it is split - superior in race and class, inferior in gender. ...The myths of race and gender...are interdependent. If Africans are savages, unarmed women must be vulnerable. Conversely, if woman's power, courtesy, is to work, Africans must respond to it; they must be courteous themselves. The validation of a woman's strength requires African subjectivity.⁴⁵

Blake's assumption that constructions of race and gender are inseparable conflicts with their evident ambivalence and spatial differentiation in the negotiation of imperial and patriarchal, public and private spheres while travelling. Such an assumption enables her to conclude that women travel writers displayed an ambiguous position in the context of imperial legitimation. This runs parallel with the claims of Birkett and Frank that

⁴⁴ BLAKE *op.cit.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* p.353.

women travel writers empathized with Africans but is substantively different because of her focus on class rather than race or gender :

the substitution of a sense of class superiority for racial superiority undermines the premises of empire. It transforms the cliché that Africans are childlike from a justification of imperialism to an attitude toward servants. It allows Hall [for example]...to acknowledge the social distinctions Africans themselves make and to regard African society as parallel to English. It is her own divided and self-contradictory position as a woman in English society that leads Hall to this implicitly anti-imperialist relationship to Africa.⁴⁶

Discourses of difference exist along lines of, for example, gender, race and class, and the prioritization of one over another reflects time- and place-specific discursive formations. Rather than artificially isolate one from another, subjectivity should be seen to include all of these constructions of difference which vary in their significance and visibility over space and time. The ways in which Mary Kingsley was identified and identified herself as a white, middle class woman travelling in the context of imperialism reveals the ambivalence and complexity of such constructions which were inextricably intertwined in her ability to travel and the textual polyphony of her writings about her travels.

⁴⁶ Ibid. p.354.

MARY KINGSLEY'S IMPERIAL POLITICS.

Mary Kingsley advanced a cavalier attitude towards imperial expansion, arguing that :

English government officials have very little and very poor encouragement given them if they push inland and attempt to enlarge the sphere of influence...because the authorities at home are afraid other nations will say we are rapacious landgrabbers. Well, we always have been, and they will say it anyhow; and where after all is the harm in it?⁴⁷

She listed reasons for imperial expansion in a schematic way, identifying 'religious' and 'pressure' reasons, with the latter subdivided into the 'external' imperative of war and the 'internal' imperatives of :

(1) the necessity of supplying restless and ambitious spirits with a field for enterprise during such times as they are not wanted for the defence of their nation in Europe - France's reason for acquiring Africa; (2) population pressure; (3) commercial pressure,⁴⁸

with the final two 'pressures' applying to German and English imperialism. For Mary Kingsley, the climate of West Africa meant that imperialism should be primarily oriented towards enlarging markets for surplus production, and she believed that the English were particularly suited to this endeavour, stating 'I know that no race of men can battle more gallantly with climate than the English'.⁴⁹

Mary Kingsley employed a tone of self-conscious femininity when she compared imperial governments. Her charmed, potentially flirtatious tone enabled her to praise French policy :

⁴⁷ KINGSLEY 1897 op.cit. p.674.

⁴⁸ KINGSLEY 1899 op.cit. pp.291-2.

⁴⁹ Ibid. p.302.

anyone can understand how a woman must admire the deeds of brave men and the backing up of those deeds by a brave Government.⁵⁰

Mary Kingsley's national and, in the light of her equation of nationality with race in the previous quotation and elsewhere, her racial pride is clear when she described the English as 'a truly great people'.⁵¹ However, she self-consciously exploits the feminine virtue of 'modesty' to veil, but not disguise, her criticisms of the present system of government:

There are three classes of men who are powers to a State - the soldier, the trader, and the scientist. Their efforts, when co-ordinated and directed by the true statesman...make a great State. Being English, of course modesty prevents my saying that England is a great State...she...will become a great State when she is led by a line of great Statesmen.⁵²

Mary Kingsley contrasted the paternal imperialism of colonists and traders, likening the former's protection of his 'wife and family' to the latter's protection of his trade.⁵³ This gave rise to a crucial difference in the perception of indigenous people because 'to the family man the native is a nuisance, sometimes a dangerous one' while the trader's 'wealth, prosperity, peace and industry' depended on good relations with 'native' customers.⁵⁴ Mary Kingsley advocated trade on economic and political grounds, arguing the necessity for expanded markets and for imperial government based on local knowledge. Overall, her political opinions can be summarized by the following statement :

⁵⁰ Ibid. p.267.

⁵¹ Ibid. p.297.

⁵² Ibid. p.297.

⁵³ Ibid. p.294.

⁵⁴ Ibid. p.295.

I have attempted to state that the Crown Colony system is unsuited for governing Western Africa, and have attributed its malign influence to its being a system which primarily expresses the opinions of well-intentioned but ill-informed officials at home, instead of being, according to the usual English type of institution, representative of the interests of the people who are governed, and of those who have the largest stake in the countries controlled by it - the merchants and manufacturing classes of England.⁵⁵

Conclusions.

Mary Kingsley perceived race and gender in terms of essential difference, and also perceived these categories as essentially different from each other. However, such perceptions were grounded in the ambivalence of her subjectivity over space as she travelled and as she wrote about her travels. I cited a topographic metaphor at the beginning of this chapter to illustrate her notions of the mountain peaks of western 'civilization' rising above the swamps which Africans both chose to and were forced to inhabit. This provided the context for my discussion of colonized people and places and the ambivalence of Mary Kingsley's subjectivity as a white woman travelling in imperial spheres of influence.

It appears that Mary Kingsley was primarily constructed in terms of her gender subordination while at home, but was able to share in racial superiority while travelling because of imperial power and authority. However, the discourses of difference of race, gender and class were more complex and ambivalent in their articulation over space than this clear distinction implies. It can be suggested that Mary Kingsley publicly supported imperialism but privately empathized with Africans at least partly because of her split position as both superior and inferior, inside and

⁵⁵ Ibid. p.314.

outside western discourses of power and authority. However, constructions of gender were also complex and contradictory in their articulation over space, with Mary Kingsley adopting both masculine and feminine voices and codes of conduct on her travels and in her writings.

Mary Kingsley's perceptions of essential difference are undermined by her own contradictory and ambiguous subject-position. This becomes clear in her personalization of both places and people which highlights the tensions of, on the one hand, seeming anti-conquest in the femininity of her subjective identification while, on the other hand, supporting imperialism by attempting to emulate more masculine strategies of objectifying vision. Her political sympathy with traders and her criticisms of the Crown Colony system of government reflect a desire to reconcile this tension, because of her arguments that traders should influence policy because of their local knowledge of West Africa and Africans.

In the following chapter, I will discuss how on her return home Mary Kingsley's political position led to the coexistence of public and private spheres of influence, and how her gendered subjectivity again seemed to gain preeminence in perceptions of her travels, writings and politics. Because of the many, complex ways in which constructions of subjectivity varied through space as she travelled, I will consider how 'home' was reconstituted on her return.

CHAPTER 5 : RETURN

RECONSTITUTING HOME.

'Home' is constructed in an arbitrary, retrospective way while travelling, and by necessity changes on the traveller's return.¹ It can be argued that travels themselves only exist when bounded by departure and return and are thus similarly retrospective. The significance of such a dialectical relationship between 'home' and away for imperial women travel writers lay in their own perceptions of 'home' and how they were perceived by others on their return. I will discuss the ways in which women travel writers, specifically Mary Kingsley, were constructed primarily in terms of gender difference, and how this paralleled but differed from such constructions prior to departure. I hope to illuminate the coexistence of public and private spheres of activity and influence by focussing on reader responses to Mary Kingsley's publications articulated by reviews; her political roles evident in her articles, letters and lectures; and more personal perceptions of her individuality which were expressed in obituaries. Initially, however, I will illustrate the familiarization and defamiliarization of the two worlds of 'home' and away in the writings of Mary Kingsley.

At several points in *Travels in West Africa*, Mary Kingsley juxtaposed 'home' and away in an incongruous way which highlights her unique position as travelling subject mediating these spheres. This is particularly evident in terms of the infrastructure of travelling itself; for example, she wrote that

¹ VAN DEN ABEELE 1992 op.cit.

changing at Lagos Bar throws changing at Clapham Junction
into the shade²

and familiarized fetish by stating that

you white men will say, 'Why go on believing in him then?' but that is an idea that does not enter the African mind. I might just as well say 'Why do you go on believing in the existence of hansom cabs,' because one hansom cab driver malignantly fails to take you where you want to go, or fails to arrive in time to catch a train you wished to catch.³

Travelling in West Africa was both unfamiliar and incongruously familiar, and the ways in which travel is inseparable from ways of knowing is translated onto Mary Kingsley's projected perceptions of home :

it's Africa all over; presenting one with familiar objects when one least requires them, like that razor in the heart of Gorilla-land; and unfamiliar, such as elephants and buffaloes when you are out for a quiet stroll armed with a butterfly net, to say nothing of snakes in one's bed and scorpions in one's boots and sponge. One's view of life gets quite distorted; I don't believe I should be in the least surprised to see a herd of hippo stroll on to the line out of one of the railway tunnels of Notting Hill Gate station. West Africa is undoubtedly bad for one's mind.⁴

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE RECONSTRUCTIONS OF 'HOME'.

To travel 'home' and to write about travelling from the perspective of 'home' reflects the reflexivity of such constructions and the immanence of a travelling and writing subject mediating spatial difference. I will contrast the public and private activity and perceptions of Mary Kingsley to illustrate the ambivalence of her subjectivity on her return and, more specifically, the ways in which she was primarily identified in terms of gender difference in the context of patriarchal discourses. I will discuss

² KINGSLEY 1897 op.cit. p.76.

³ Ibid. p.506.

⁴ Ibid. p.399.

reader responses to her publications to locate her political platform in the context of public recognition. I will also discuss her individuality and how constructions of private spheres of influence came to be publicly articulated in articles, reviews and obituaries.

Reader Responses to Women's Travel Writing.

Mary Kingsley returned from her second journey to West Africa in November 1895 and the earliest references to her travels appeared in the first week of December. For example, the Times wrote about her desire to downplay potential sensationalism, stating that

Miss Kingsley refused to relate any gorilla stories, saying that too much doubt was cast upon all such accounts by the public.⁵

The following day, a longer article was published in the Daily Telegraph which located her within but clearly different from a masculine tradition of exploration. The femininity of Mary Kingsley as 'heroine' established her as

⁵ The Times 2.12.1895. Mary Kingsley's publications were widely reviewed but the Times was conspicuously silent. Mary Kingsley stated that 'I hate all newspapers' in a letter to John Holt of 27.11.1897, but was most critical of the Times which she described as 'like the English government or the egg the poor curate got for breakfast when staying with his Bishop - parts of it are quite excellent - but it is in the main written by people who have been and who are in the Diplomatic Service...Like the diplomatic service the Times knows nothing about West Africa, but it would die rather than own it'(Mary Kingsley to John Holt 21.2.1898). The Colonial Editor at this time was Flora Shaw and her relationship with Mary Kingsley was perceived as distant and cool. In her correspondence with John Holt, Mary Kingsley stated as early as 2.12.1897 'She won't know me and I don't want her to - women!' and later described her on 20.2.1899 as 'a fine, handsome, bright upstanding young woman as clever as they make them, capable of an immense amount of hard work, as hard as nails, and talking like a 'Times' leader all the time. She refers to the Times as we, and does not speak of herself as a separate personality and leads you to think the Times is not a separate personality either.' The perceived animosity between Mary Kingsley and Flora Shaw seems to have been exaggerated; for example, Mary Kingsley wrote to John Holt on 21.1.1899 concerning reviews of *West African Studies* that 'The Times has not said one word. The gossip is that the Times means to wreak its most awful curse on me, not notice the book at all. It is said this action is inaugurated by Miss Flora Shaw who is commonly up here supposed to hate me, but I don't believe it, for I don't see why she would do so. I never interfere with her, and personally do not know her, but the Times is human inside, and I have been very uncivil to it - so I deserve all it can give.' See CALLAWAY, H. and HELLY, D.O. : *Crusader for Empire : Flora Shaw/Lady Lugard* in CHAUDHURI and STROBEL eds. 1992 op.cit. pp.79-97 for further discussion.

distinctive :

The latest African novelty is seen in the return of an English lady from the most surprising and courageous adventures, undergone without any assistance from the 'Creature Man', and in a portion of the Continent recently regarded as practically inaccessible.⁶

Such independence established her as primarily eccentric, as shown by the paternalist tone adopted to convey her travels through Fan territory :

What a country for an English Miss to traverse alone, where the only place of burial for the defunct is inside of his neighbour⁷

and the conclusion that

Yes! anything seems possible in Africa; yet almost more wonderful than the hidden marvels of that Dark Continent are the qualities of heart and mind which could carry a lonely English lady through such experiences as Miss Kingsley has 'manfully' borne.⁸

Gender and nationality seem inseparable and the construction of an 'English lady' seems to epitomize notions of appropriate feminine conduct transgressed by Mary Kingsley. In response to this article, Mary Kingsley emphasized the help she received from traders while travelling and downplayed her achievements, stating :

I did not do anything except things I had better have left alone - without the assistance of the superior sex...I just puddled round obscure corners and immersed myself in catastrophes,⁹

caricaturing herself in terms of gender inferiority.

Despite such early interest, the most sustained coverage of Mary Kingsley's travels followed the publication of *Travels in West Africa* and,

⁶ The Daily Telegraph 3.12.1895.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ The Daily Telegraph 5.12.1895.

particularly, *West African Studies*. From a poststructuralist perspective, texts are processes of signification articulated only through reading because

meaning has no effective existence outside of its realization in the mind of a reader¹⁰

For Jonathon Culler, reader-response is influenced by the sign systems that readers conventionally apply to texts through their, in this case, literary 'competence'.¹¹ This relates to the ideological construction of literature as the responses of each reader are constrained by their ability to perceive, read and interpret as discursively constructed subjects. Mary Kingsley's publications were widely read,¹² but the only way to ascertain individual readings of her texts lies in published reviews. These readings were themselves likely to be influential in enabling and constraining further interpretations because of their textually fixed authority. Reviews appeared in national and regional newspapers, women's periodicals, and more specialized, imperial journals such as *West Africa* and the *West African News and Mining Review* (see Figure 6). I will focus on constructions of Mary Kingsley as a gendered subject to illustrate the significance of such reviews in the public perpetuation of discursive formations of difference.

¹⁰ TOMPKINS, J.P. : *An Introduction to Reader-Response Criticism* in TOMPKINS, J.P. ed. 1980 : *Reader-Response Criticism : From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*; The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² As discussed in Chapter 3.

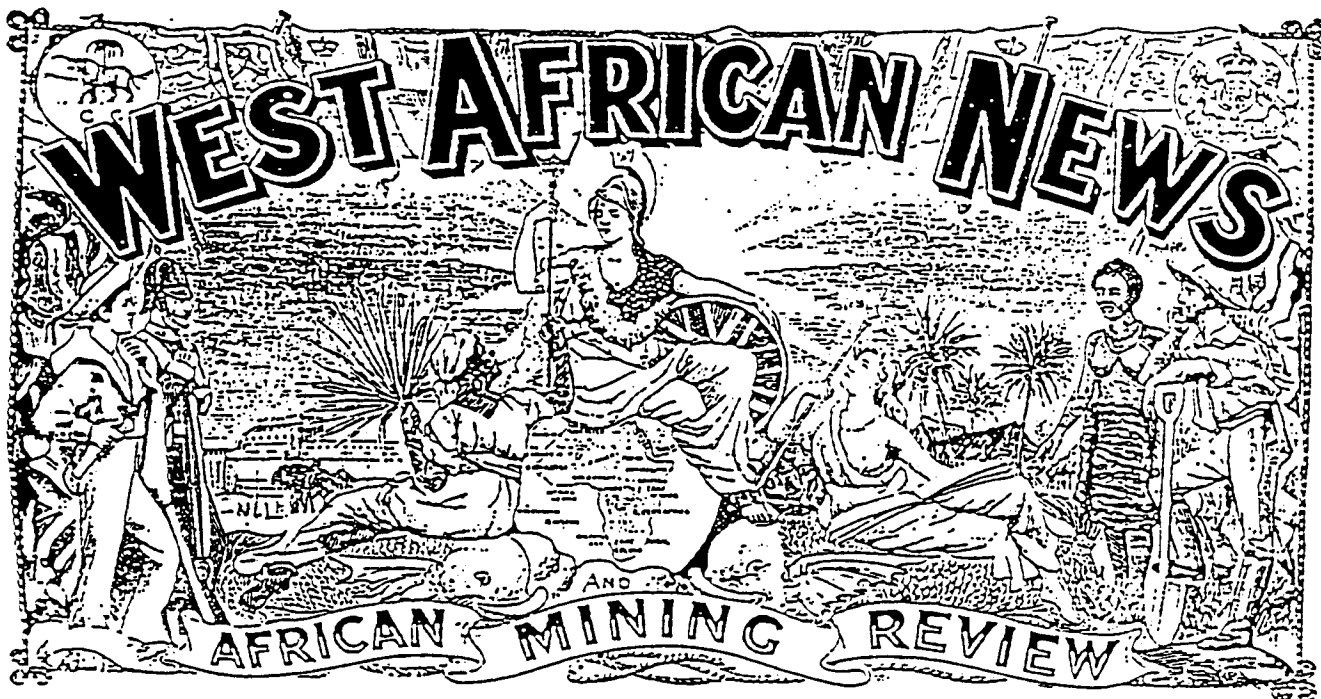


Figure 6 : Title Illustrations of the *West African News* and *West Africa*, depicting Britannia ruling supreme over West Africa.

Reviews of *Travels in West Africa* focussed on the novelty of a woman traveller, while reviews of *West African Studies* focussed on the book's style and content. Figure 8 illustrates the feminine image that Mary Kingsley was concerned to present when *Travels in West Africa* was published. In the former case, the Scottish Geographical Magazine stated that

This book is quite a new departure in African literature, and, after reading it, one is not surprised at its popularity and extensive sale, for such a sprightly, interesting, vivid, and in some respects audacious, account of travels in Africa, it has never been our lot to read - and the author a lady!¹³

Prior to departure, the codes of conduct for women travellers primarily related to appearance and behaviour in the face of potential dangers. After stating that 'female curiosity apparently has no limits', the New York Times characterized Mary Kingsley as conforming to feminine standards :

The lady for hard work...has no liking for bloomers or any masculine garb, but the highest opinion of the advantages of petticoats.¹⁴

¹³ Scottish Geographical Magazine Volume XIII Number IV, April 1897 pp.215-7; Urquhart Archive.

¹⁴ The New York Times 13.2.1897.



Figure 7 : Mary Kingsley in 1897

Source : FRANK op.cit.

Mary Kingsley's femininity in the face of adversity is vividly represented by the following review :

Civilisation clung more or less to her skirts at Cape Coast and other settlements; and it was with relief that Miss Kingsley re-embarked to fall in love with the wild beauty of Fernando Po, and to explore the Ogowe, a mighty stream watering Congo Francais.¹⁵

To describe the Ogowe as 'a mighty stream' and for another review to refer to Mary Kingsley's journey as 'her walk'¹⁶ minimized her achievements compared with the masculine tradition of exploration.

To locate a feminine subject in dangerous situations has the potential to both undermine and reinforce such constructions according to the tone adopted and the behaviour depicted. In a review of *Travels in West Africa*, an amused tone downplays the dangers encountered, conveying an eccentric, feminine subject rather than more masculine control and bravery :

it is not possible to follow the adventurous author through all her perilous situations, and readers must go to the book itself to see how she warded off the attack of a crocodile, tumbled into the water out of a canoe, escaped many other dangers, and was extricated from several awkward predicaments.¹⁷

Rather than displaying the physical, administrative or intellectual skill of masculine explorers, Mary Kingsley overcame danger through her more feminine behavioural virtues whereby she

carried a merry heart with her, and the success of this good medicine is shown by the way in which she escaped serious consequences in the course of her extended travels through the most unhealthy parts of Africa.¹⁸

This is paralleled by a review of *West African Studies* which stated that

¹⁵ The Illustrated London News 6.2.1897.

¹⁶ The Morning Post 14.1.1897.

¹⁷ The Morning Post 21.1.1897.

¹⁸ The Geographical Journal 9.3.1897 p.324.

her unfailing high spirits were a priceless possession to a wanderer in the jungle of countries where malignant melancholy is frequently epidemic.¹⁹

Several reviews of *West African Studies* characterised Mary Kingsley as an individual transcending conventional notions of feminine subjectivity. A tone of wonderment describing 'her venturesomeness and contempt of danger'²⁰ undermined notions of appropriate feminine conduct. In addition, she was described as being 'as plucky in her way as the masculine explorer'²¹ and that

As a politician Miss Kingsley is vigorous and determined, as a traveller she is shrewd and anecdotal.²²

I will discuss Mary Kingsley's public, political position to discern whether this underlay the broad change in responses to her travels and writings. Reviews of *West African Studies* were also more likely to locate Mary Kingsley's writings within a broader tradition of travel writing. Overall, her writings were judged favourably, as illustrated by the following statement :

No living traveller is half so amusing to read, and very few are half as instructive²³

Unlike the reviews of *Travels in West Africa*, those of *West African Studies* highlighted its form, style and content, which were perceived as inseparable. This represented a movement away from the curiosity value of

¹⁹ West African News and Mining Review 27.3.1901.

²⁰ The Leeds Mercury 31.1.1899.

²¹ The New York Times 25.2.1899.

²² The Daily Telegraph 31.1.1899.

²³ The Spectator 4.2.1899. A further reference to Mary Kingsley's place within a broader tradition of travel writing appeared in The Western Daily Press 31.1.1899 : 'It seems to have passed into a recognized thing that everyone who goes far afield, or who finds his, or her, way into a comparatively unfrequented country, should call upon those who have been left at home to digest an account of the wanderers' impressions and experiences. But those who possess the gift of making a travel-book really interesting are comparatively few, so that works from the pens of established writers and travellers are always welcome.'

Travels in West Africa to the more substantive value of *West African Studies*, supporting claims that travel writing often takes two contrasting forms. The inseparability of form, style and content is illustrated by a description of *West African Studies* as ‘rollicking fun and solid information’²⁴ but interpretations ranged from high praise to derision. I am particularly interested in how the reader-responses expressed in reviews of *West African Studies* revealed and reproduced perceptions of gendered subjectivity.

Most reviews criticised Mary Kingsley’s style of writing although some seemed paternal in excusing such faults and some praised her style because of its femininity. The harshest criticisms appeared in the Glasgow Herald which stated that :

Miss Kingsley’s faults as a writer, which did less serious damage to her narrative of travel, are here very tiresomely and sometimes very offensively apparent. She is extremely diffuse and irrelevant; has no notion of orderly arrangement; and, worst of all, she perpetually insists on being funny after the manner of the newest humorists. The consequence is that her pages often read like a bad imitation of ‘Three Men in a Boat’. It is a pity that Miss Kingsley has not tried to write in a more ladylike manner, because when she pleases she can write well enough. She has the skill of vivid and picturesque description.²⁵

In contrast, the most fulsome, indeed hyperbolic, praise for *West African Studies* celebrated her style for its essential femininity :

The fresh, vigorous, breezy style of the writer, as spontaneous and as refreshing as a moorland stream that bubbles with laughter as it leaps over difficulties or gets round them somehow, has a special charm about it...Of course she can be discursive. How could a lady, so crammed full of her subject, so light-hearted and gay in her manner and yet so earnest, too, be otherwise? But it is a discursiveness that lights up with bright touches of humour what in the hands of many male writers - nay, most - would be dull and heavy.²⁶

²⁴ The Daily Graphic 31.1.1899.

²⁵ The Glasgow Herald 31.1.1899.

²⁶ The Nottingham Daily Guardian 31.1.1899.

Most reviews, however, lay between these extremes, for example tolerating her 'countless unnecessary digressions' because

she is frankly so unconventional, and takes so keen a pleasure in her own flippancies;²⁷

describing it as

undoubtedly a very readable book, though the chaffy and somewhat flippant style of the authoress becomes a little tiresome;²⁸

and viewing the 'real power' of her description as 'infinitely preferable to literary polish'.²⁹

Mary Kingsley's 'knowledge' was discussed most extensively in the context of fetish while her alternative plan was little more than referred to. Her direct observations were praised but her political proposals did not receive the same level of legitimation through critique. The 'fact' based nature of her discussion of fetish was stressed, and she was seen to possess 'a consuming zeal for knowledge and a genuine passion for facts'.³⁰ Although the Daily News referred to 'the extent, variety, and reasoned order of her knowledge',³¹ the Standard stated that 'the effect of her essays [on fetish] is to confuse the mind.'³² A clear distinction was made between the value of her observations and interpretations; for example, the Glasgow Herald stated that

²⁷ The Standard 1.2.1899.

²⁸ South Africa 4.2.1899.

²⁹ St James Gazette 31.1.1899.

³⁰ The Manchester Guardian 31.1.1899. In addition The Sun of 3.2.1899 stated that 'One can feel how earnestly and conscientiously Miss Kingsley approaches her subject, setting forth her facts fearlessly, but drawing deductions with cautious reserve.'

³¹ The Daily News 31.1.1899.

³² The Standard 1.2.1899.

her remarks on the essential nature and origin of what is loosely called fetishism do not strike us as being very profound or helpful, but as an observer she has many interesting facts to tell.³³

Finally, *West African Studies* was criticised for failing to appeal to either the specialist or the general reader, with her style undermining the value of the content by not conforming to scientific standards. On the one hand, the *Echo* criticised the disparity between general interest - at least for male readers - and more specialized concerns :

After the first hundred and fifty pages in which he [the reader] has revelled in racy anecdote and swift artistic sketches, he becomes involved in disquisitions scientific and political which, though undoubtedly of great value to the specialist, scarcely carry the reader forward like the opening chapters of the book.³⁴

On the other hand, the *Yorkshire Post* argued that while Mary Kingsley's accounts of fetish

will interest the general reader, the student of such subjects is not as a rule the person who cares much for the kind of discursive chatter which Miss Kingsley pours out with such astonishing volubility. Still, she has looked at her subject on the spot, and that is more than can sometimes be said for learned writers on topics of this kind.³⁵

Overall, initial responses to *Travels in West Africa* reflected interest in the travels of a woman and thus with Mary Kingsley as author, but the reviews of *West African Studies* were more concerned with form, style and content. Clearly, however, this distinction was blurred, as shown by the underlying significance of perceptions of gender difference. Before discussing Mary Kingsley's political influence and whether this promoted changing perceptions of her writings, I will conclude with a quotation from *The New*

³³ The Glasgow Herald 31.1.1899.

³⁴ The Echo 31.1.1899.

³⁵ The Yorkshire Post 1.2.1899.

York Times' review of *Travels in West Africa* which reflects reader-responses more broadly over time :

The author's sex has probably had something to do with the interest awakened but not this alone could have carried the book on so successful a career. The vital merits of it have been the real source of its popularity. Miss Kingsley had an adventurous journey, and she showed remarkable courage and resources in meeting emergencies. But the book is unconventional in many ways. It abounds in humo[u]r, fresh information, bright descriptions, originality of view, and is written in an animated style.³⁶

Public Politics.

Mary Kingsley was an outspoken political figure on specific issues and imperialism more generally. I will focus on the extent to which her distinctive position as a woman traveller and author influenced her views, her means of expression, and their reception. I will then discuss the coexistence of this public role with her attempts to fulfill familial duty constructed as feminine and public perceptions of her more private personality. At this stage, however, I will outline Mary Kingsley's political position, her public roles in 'society' and in lecturing, and the paradoxical way in which private correspondence underlay her public influence, to discuss the complex ambivalence of constructions of gender difference in a conventionally masculine sphere of activity.

Because of her position as a white, woman traveller, Mary Kingsley felt both inside and outside society and culture in West Africa, but was similarly conscious of this on her return to Britain. This was most evident in her references to 'society' and to the general public as a whole, reflecting the

³⁶ The New York Times 5.6.1897.

distinctive ambiguities of her subject position on the margins of 'home' and away. This underlay and facilitated her criticisms of certain forms of imperialism. For example, in an undated letter to Alice Stopford Green, Mary Kingsley's frustration is clear :

There are a lot of people here who unless you can pour melted butter over their national vanity - it's nothing else - think you don't care about your country. I don't care about them for they have never been any use to any sort of country they belong to.³⁷

This is echoed in a letter to John Holt :

The general public seems to hunger and thirst after nothing but praise of England, and they call that Imperialism. They would never have had an Empire to intoxicate themselves over if the making of it had been in their hands.³⁸

Similarly, Mary Kingsley criticised 'this smug, self-satisfied, lazy, sanctimonious, 'Times' believing England'.³⁹

Mary Kingsley saw herself as detached from the conventions and constrictions of 'society', criticised

these fashionable smart foolish folk here who bore weary and disgust me with their ignorance conceit and airs of grandly good intentions,⁴⁰

and lamented the limitations imposed by notions of feminine conduct whereby 'woman-like I get tired of holding my tongue as I have to do up here.'⁴¹ She saw herself as an outsider, most graphically expressed in a letter to Lady MacDonald in which her frustration with the superficiality

³⁷ Mary Kingsley to Alice Stopford Green undated (a).

³⁸ Mary Kingsley to John Holt 21.1.1898.

³⁹ Mary Kingsley to John Holt 27.11.1897.

⁴⁰ Mary Kingsley to John Holt 29.4.1898. In addition, Mary Kingsley wrote to Alice Stopford Green on 22.9.1897 that 'I am sick, dead sick, of people from which you will judge I have been doing my Society duty and seeing them.'

⁴¹ Mary Kingsley to John Holt 21.2.1898.

and hypocrisy of socially acceptable behaviour is clear :

I have been watching the game here, just as I watch in Africa, as an outsider - and it is not half so good a game to watch. I was yesterday at two At Homes and a dinner, at every one of which I saw people who had abused their hosts up hill and down dale or who their hosts had abused ditto. Yet there they were all together smiling and calling each other by their Christian names and so on - it all seems to me silly and sinful and it[']s uncommon dull.⁴²

Mary Kingsley's dislike of 'society' duty heightened her identification with Africa and Africans, as shown by her statements that 'we Africans are not fit for decent society'⁴³ and 'Give me the West African bush and the calm of a cannibal town!'⁴⁴ The fixity of and the distinction between 'home' and away are thus undermined and, from a distance and her position of gender subordination, Mary Kingsley seems most able to identify with the racial subordination of Africans perceived as 'others'. Not only was 'home' constructed through travelling and returning, but on that return, Mary Kingsley's inability to feel 'at home' and her references to West Africa as 'home' reveal the destabilization of both 'home' and away.

Mary Kingsley's political influence was underpinned by her marginal position as a traveller personally able to bridge the social and spatial distance between colonized and colonizing worlds. This was a distinctive position and, following the publicity surrounding her travels and the publication of *Travels in West Africa*,

this early picture of her as a maverick traveller gave her the opportunity to espouse highly individualistic views and remain quite consistent in her public appeal.⁴⁵

⁴² Mary Kingsley to Lady MacDonald undated.

⁴³ Mary Kingsley to Alice Stopford Green 28.9.1897.

⁴⁴ Mary Kingsley to Mrs Gwynn 3.6.1899.

⁴⁵ BIRKETT 1987 op.cit. p.202.

More than this, however, her subject position was marginal because of constructions of gendered subjectivity. It is notable that Mary Kingsley perceived such marginality as a source of strength, enabling her distinctive voice to be heard. For example, she wrote to John Holt that

you men will be men. A Frenchman would not listen to an Englishman talking to him about how to manage his colonies but he don't mind a woman doing so.⁴⁶

Furthermore, what suggests patriarchal domination instead seemed to possess subversive potential for Mary Kingsley :

every bit of solid good work I have done has been through a man, and I get more and more fond of doing things this way. It leaves me a free hand to fight with.⁴⁷

Mary Kingsley further exploited her gendered subjectivity in her relationship and influence with Liverpool traders, caricaturing herself as their 'maiden aunt'.⁴⁸ Despite such notions of marginal strength and the potential for resistance, these were constrained within the strategic parameters of public politics whereby Mary Kingsley felt

as if I were always playing games up here with these people - it amuses but underneath I hate it, but I must do it for the stakes are mens lives.⁴⁹

Mary Kingsley played political games on a number of levels, including the public sphere of lectures, press coverage and publications; the official sphere of the Colonial Office; and the private, unofficial spheres of many

⁴⁶ Mary Kingsley to John Holt 13.12.1898.

⁴⁷ Mary Kingsley to John Holt 25.4.1899.

⁴⁸ Mary Kingsley to John Holt 20.2.1899. She wrote 'You do not know, Sir, how grateful I am to you for your toleration, how grateful I am to you for listening to me, like you would listen to a maiden aunt who tells you not to waste your money foolishly, not to be led away by grand talking people who give themselves airs...being a Kingsley I do hate humbug, and I do enjoy squashing it just as a maiden aunt objects to earwigs or 'Irish drapery'".

⁴⁹ Mary Kingsley to John Holt 9.3.1899.

individuals and companies with widely ranging interests. I will focus on how Mary Kingsley moved within and between these spheres as a woman in the context of patriarchal discourses of gender difference.

Following the publication of *Travels in West Africa*, Mary Kingsley increasingly moved away from a focus on specific issues such as liquor traffic to more general political proposals epitomized by her 'Alternative Plan' in *West African Studies*.⁵⁰ Her campaign for the removal of the hut tax in Sierra Leone represented a transition from highly specific to more general concerns. She privately argued that

West Africa my Lord is a mess, and I feel certain they will make it a bigger mess still by merely throwing in a lot of money, without having anyone there who understands how to manage it - and by trying to tax the natives in ways those natives regard as unfair and oppressive - I have no objection to the native being taxed, it is merely a matter of method,⁵¹

and referred to the hut tax as a 'criminally ignorant hasty grab for money'.⁵² Mary Kingsley publicly expressed her opinions in a letter to the *Spectator*, stating that 'taxing a man's individual possession is a violation of his idea of property'.⁵³ She introduced her argument as a response to an article which did not refer to the hut tax and stressed the need for effective and efficient imperial rule.⁵⁴

In her private correspondence, Mary Kingsley was vehement in her opposition to 'Jubilee Imperialism'

⁵⁰ BIRKETT 1987 op.cit.

⁵¹ Mary Kingsley to Lord Cromer 25.9.1899.

⁵² Mary Kingsley to Joseph Chamberlain 18.4.1898.

⁵³ Letter from Mary Kingsley published in *The Spectator* 19.3.1898.

⁵⁴ BIRKETT 1987 op.cit. Birkett also states that Mary Kingsley's letter was the first substantial article on the hut tax to appear in Britain.

that is conceited beyond words, that gets pains in it now and then from Mr Kipling with his 'white man's burden' but which won't work at facts and shrinks from criticism like an old lady from a black beetle. It is the black man's burden that wants singing for the poor wretch has to put up with a lot of windy headed fads and foolishness no good to him or the white man and a jest for the gods.⁵⁵

Publicly, Mary Kingsley expressed her opinions in another letter to the *Spectator* in which she contrasted

Our commercial expansion in the days of Elizabeth...marked by an intense love of knowledge of the minor details...[with] [o]ur colonial, or emigrant, expansion of the age of Victoria...marked by no such love of detailed knowledge; in its place there is emotionalism.⁵⁶

She proceeded to describe '[t]hat emotionalism I so deeply detest and distrust is windy-headed brag and self-satisfied ignorance'⁵⁷ and was supported by an editorial note stating that

[we] trust her plea for patience, thoroughness, and clear and clean intention, as against sloppiness, mental and moral, and vague well-meaningness, will not pass unheeded.⁵⁸

Mary Kingsley's opinions of imperialism were inseparable from her support of trade in West Africa. I will outline this allegiance in the context of her need to legitimate her political involvement, her desire to consolidate a trading lobby and to identify its leader, and her seemingly maternal interest. Following her direct contact with their employees while travelling, Mary Kingsley advocated the position of trading companies based in Liverpool. On her return, Mary Kingsley travelled literally and metaphorically between clearly characterized places. In this way, she helped to construct them as spatially and politically distinct and created a position

⁵⁵ Mary Kingsley to E.D.Morel 20.2.1899.

⁵⁶ Letter from Mary Kingsley published in *The Spectator* 13.1.1900.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

of authority for herself as a traveller within and between them. Mary Kingsley thus travelled not only between Britain and West Africa but also on her return, so that 'home' was more transient than fixed. For example, she wrote to E.D.Morel that

Liverpool as Liverpool sits on the fence. I love Liverpool but I do think it artful - just a little too obviously artful at times. Manchester is more reckless, stands up to its man...as the Times set now say 'Liverpool can do no harm in Miss Kingsley's eyes' - certainly I will never let London know if it does.⁵⁹

The ways in which both public and private spheres were important and inseparable in underpinning Mary Kingsley's political position are well illustrated by her desire to consolidate the interests of the Liverpool traders into an effective political lobby. She referred to the mercantile community as 'disgracefully unorganised',⁶⁰ perceiving the need for strong leadership. Her opinions of personal power were most vividly expressed in a letter written to Alice Stopford Green while sailing for South Africa :

Do not dream of in any way sacrificing yourself for any cause - I am not saying causes are not worth it but merely that they cannot be helped by sacrifice of that kind. Set yourself to gain personal power - don't grab the reins of power - but [while] they are laying on the horses neck, quietly get them into your hands and drive.⁶¹

This implies a desire for effective but essentially covert control with more private than public influence. Mary Kingsley's main channel for exercising such influence was her prolific letter writing, most notably to John Holt, and her political patronage of two young journalists, Stephen Gwynn and E.D.Morel, whose work she recommended to editors and publishers.

⁵⁹ Mary Kingsley to E.D.Morel 10.2.1899.

⁶⁰ Mary Kingsley to Joseph Chamberlain 3.9.1899.

⁶¹ Mary Kingsley to Alice Stopford Green undated from R.M.S. Moor, the Bay of Biscay. This was written in the context of the former's involvement in Irish politics.

Mary Kingsley's letter writing was often initiated through a female contact. For example, her first, indirect, communication with John Holt was to accept his wife's invitation to address the Highgate Literary and Scientific Institute.⁶² In other letters, Mary Kingsley used her distinctively feminine influence in the informal, private sphere of social introductions, for example inviting Mrs Holt to meet Alice Stopford Green.⁶³

Mary Kingsley felt a sense of duty in supporting the position of traders, but seemed more at ease in creating unofficial rather than official contacts. For example, her tone is despondent in a letter written to John Holt in May 1898 :

Alas I am sick at heart over the whole thing. You know I have stood up for all I am worth for trade and the trader. I have taken up the position accident gave me, just that I might use that position to teach people the importance of trade and the trader, and whats the good. I hate lecturing and writing letters to papers and articles in magazines and above all I hate being amiable to people who say 'Oh we must teach those horrid brutes a lesson - they must not be allowed to think that just because they fight we will let them have their way.' That's what I had the Pleasure [sic] of hearing yesterday from a high official.⁶⁴

Her private attempts to gain public influence were most graphic in her relationship with John Holt. She wrote :

What I want to see done Mr Holt is a Liverpool School of Politics formed for controlling African legislation...Now you are the man who can do it.⁶⁵

In her following letter, she instructed John Holt to write to the Spectator in

⁶² Mary Kingsley to Mrs Holt 14.3.1897. Mary Kingsley continued to correspond with Mrs Holt, largely referring to her state of mental and physical health, and, in an undated letter, writing that she was aware that she was a trial for John Holt and that she relied on Mrs Holt to ensure he did not worry 'about my communications.'

⁶³ Mary Kingsley to Mrs Holt 9.5.1899.

⁶⁴ Mary Kingsley to John Holt 5.5.1898.

⁶⁵ Mary Kingsley to John Holt 13.3.1898.

support of her letter opposing the hut tax :

Now what I want you to do is to write a letter to the Spectator...,short because long ones get back, pitch into me as much as you please, but go for the folly of the hut tax...The letter ought to reach the Spectator by Tuesday next, namely be posted tonight to the Editor of the Spectator [at the following address]...I need not say that if it does not suit you to write it pray do not, but if you want the tax off you must strike while the iron is hot, and we shall get it done. *I have written a letter to the editor about the possibility of having a letter from you.*⁶⁶

It seems that her personal admiration of John Holt led Mary Kingsley to exaggerate her influence among Liverpool traders as a general body. Even though Mary Kingsley was often successful in their manipulation, her position as a woman constrained her within private, personal circles of influence. She attempted to achieve public recognition of West African politics rather than public recognition for herself, and this was clearly shown in her concern that West Africa was being increasingly overshadowed by South Africa. Her instructions to John Holt were echoed in a letter to E.D.Morel in which she wrote :

Cannot you write a letter pointing out how misguided and tiresome I am, and what a blessed thing Imperial control is if it is altered so that its own mother would not know it etc, in fact any mortal thing you like, for I am sure West Africa's one chance of getting attended to is in gaining publicity in the press.⁶⁷

She described her primary role as publicising West African affairs :

⁶⁶ Mary Kingsley to John Holt 19.3.1898. My emphasis. John Holt obeyed these instructions and his letter was published in the Spectator on 26.3.1898. He defended Mary Kingsley's experience in West Africa and stated that 'That lady has, I believe, a real liking for her negro friends. She will not allow them to be abused as sodden drunkards on the one hand, or on the other considered simply as machines to be utilised solely for the financial benefit of the European Government which has taken possession of their country, without raising her voice in defence of both his character and his rights.' The editor criticised this letter, stating that 'our correspondent goes much too far in his generalizations. From challenging the expediency of a particular tax, as did Miss Kingsley, he slips into a general attack on our position.' In a letter to John Holt written on 27.3.1898, Mary Kingsley dismissed this criticism because 'What old Townsend chooses to stick in as a note to it don't matter for it is only Townsend, not his readers' and stated that 'Townsend hates blacks.'

⁶⁷ Mary Kingsley to E.D.Morel 20.2.1899.

I do my uttermost to create [a] reading public. I try to educate people to look for West African news in the papers. I do not care whether the news goes with me or against me. I want it there...because I honestly believe that the great mass of information on West Africa must make up for the truth and until the truth is known to the general public the GP [sic] will be content to let things slide there.⁶⁸

Mary Kingsley's support of Liverpool traders bridged publicly political and more privately personal spheres of influence because she believed that their local knowledge and experience should be channelled into policy making. References to a 'Liverpool sect' at this time relate primarily to the ideals of Mary Kingsley, John Holt and E.D.Morel and can be summarized in the following way :

It called on all having relations with West Africa to take note of the existing and traditional systems there. It desired that the West African should continue under British rule to be a landholder with security of tenure, an agriculturalist and trader. It advocated an increased study of West Africa, and demanded that time should be allowed for a gradual development from within the region, deprecating the swift and immediate introduction of European norms and formulae which not only dislocated the African polity but also made hybrids of the inhabitants.⁶⁹

However, the direct political influence of the Liverpool 'sect' was limited because

Its major proposals lacked any solid economic backing or wide public appeal. It was handicapped by the sublime opportunism of other Liverpool traders and by the institutionalized indifference of the British Chambers of Commerce.⁷⁰

Mary Kingsley gained personal publicity with audiences as well as readers because of the many lectures she gave. Her direct contact with people highlights her perceived detachment from them. For example, she

⁶⁸ Mary Kingsley to E.D.Morel 22.3.1899.

⁶⁹ NWORAH, K.D. : *The Liverpool 'Sect' and British West African Policy 1895-1915*; African Affairs : Journal of the Royal African Society 70 (281), October 1971; pp.349-365; p.350. Urquhart Archive.

⁷⁰ Ibid. p.368.

wrote to Alice Stopford Green :

Do you see the nasty things they say about me at the Women's Writers Dinner for dropping my g's - just as if it were not all I could do to hold on to the h's⁷¹

suggesting that the way she spoke identified her as belonging to a lower class. She lectured to diverse audiences, preferring northern industrial towns where 'I know how much to explain to half an inch'⁷² and caricaturing

These literary and scientific Institutions [which] amuse me much - they always write and inform you they don't want science and literature...What they want is 'something bright and amusing and magic lantern slides.' I have at moments grave doubts as to whether the Times and the Spectator are right when they say the British Public insists on being taken seriously.⁷³

Mary Kingsley viewed her lectures in pragmatic terms and wrote to her lecture agent that

English manufacturing towns I am personally fond of - for the rest every pound means five miles in West Africa next time out.⁷⁴

Mary Kingsley's lectures were diverse in content to suit her audience. For example, she spoke on 'The Trials of a Tropical Traveller' in 1897 at the Highgate Literary and Scientific Institute where

⁷¹ Mary Kingsley to Alice Stopford Green 22.6.1898.

⁷² Mary Kingsley to Hartland 16.3.1897.

⁷³ Mary Kingsley to Hartland 25.3.1897.

⁷⁴ Mary Kingsley to Christy undated.

Although she recited in a calm, unemotional style, and with an absence of anything like dramatic effect, Miss Kingsley yet managed to draw a sufficiently vivid picture of a traveller's life in Africa as to thoroughly impress her hearers with a sense of the dangers and difficulties that beset the stranger, especially a woman, in that comparatively little known region; and looking upon her placid features, and listening to the quiet tones of her voice, it seemed incredible that so slight a frame could have endured such hardships and faced such dangers as she did, and which, happily, it is given to few women to go through.⁷⁵

In 1898 she gave a lecture at the Cheltenham Ladies College which was reprinted in their magazine. Her humour is as evident as in her written accounts and is best illustrated by her references to her unmarried status and how she could manipulate interest in this while she was travelling :

I may confide to any spinster who is here present and who feels inclined to take up the study of [Africans] that she will be perpetually embarrassed by enquiries of, Where is your husband? not, Have you one? or anything like that, which you could deal with, but, Where is he? I must warn her not to say she has not got one, I have tried it, and it only leads to more appalling questions still. I think that it is more advisable to say you are searching for him, and then you locate him away in the direction in which you wish to travel; this elicits help and sympathy.⁷⁶

In this lecture, Mary Kingsley's homesickness for West Africa was most eloquently and vividly expressed. I will quote this passage at length because it highlights her wistful tone, her powers of more than visual description, and her sense of detachment on her return 'home' :

⁷⁵ Report of Lecture at the Highgate Literary and Scientific Institute. The lecture was dated as 23.3.1897.

⁷⁶ 'A Lecture on West Africa' by Miss Mary Kingsley in The Cheltenham Ladies College Magazine xxxviii; Autumn 1898; pp.264-280, p.270.

The charm of West Africa is a painful one. It gives you pleasure to fall under it when you are out there, but when you are back here, it gives you pain, by calling you. It sends up before your eyes a vision of a wall of dancing, white, rainbow-gemmed surf playing on a shore of yellow sand before an audience of stately cocoa palms, or of a great mangrove-walled bronze river, or of a vast forest cathedral, and you hear, nearer to you than the voices of the people round you, nearer than the roar of the city traffic, the sound of that surf that is beating on the shore down there, and the sound of the wind talking in the hard palm leaves, and the thump of the natives' tom-toms, or the cry of the parrots passing over the mangrove swamps in the evening time - and everything that is round you grows poor and thin in the face of that vision, and you want to go back to the Coast that is calling you, saying, as the African says to the departing soul of his dying friend, 'Come back, this is your home.'⁷⁷

In contrast to such personal content, after Mary Kingsley's death it was noted that she

was the only lady who has delivered an address to the Manchester Chamber of Commerce during its hundred years of existence; I think it is a proof of the respect and admiration with which her abilities were regarded in commercial circles, that she should have been asked to address a meeting of businessmen on matters concerning commercial interests.⁷⁸

All of these examples⁷⁹ illustrate in different ways how Mary Kingsley was primarily identified, and also identified herself, in terms of gendered subjectivity. In addition, her lectures show the ways in which she felt personally inadequate on a literal as well as figurative public platform, asking MacMillan, for example,

⁷⁷ Ibid. p.280.

⁷⁸ Letter from J.Arthur Hutton in West Africa, July 1900, p.96.

⁷⁹ Reports of other lectures include : 'Travels on the Western Coast of Equatorial Africa' by Miss M.H.Kingsley in The Scottish Geographical Magazine XII (III) March 1896, pp.113-124; The Times 31.1.1899 and 14.2.1900 (both accounts of lectures given at the Imperial Institute); 'The Fetish View of the Human Soul' by Mary H. Kingsley in Folklore VIII (2), June 1897 pp.138-151; and, finally, the Report of the 714th Meeting of the Magpie and Stump Society in Cambridge (undated) at which 'a very large majority' passed a motion proposed by Mary Kingsley 'That it is better for us to understand Alien Races than for Alien Races to understand us.'

why people...want me to lecture when I do it so badly passes me.⁸⁰

Her different audiences reflected the diverse interpretations of Mary Kingsley's travels, and the ways in which the content of her lectures changed according to her audiences reflected Mary Kingsley's awareness of this. However, at times she was on public display in social contexts in which she was unable to change sensationalist perceptions of her character and travels. For example, at a dinner party held in her honour in Edinburgh,

I felt highly inclined to ask them why they did not ask the lady who dives through the roof at the Aquarium and the female lion tamers. The side of me they pretend to admire is no higher than this sort of thing. 'Oh, Miss Kingsley how many men did you kill?' I who never lost a porter...⁸¹

Private Personality.

On her return, Mary Kingsley was active in both public and private spheres, illustrating the ambivalence of constructions of both these spheres and of gendered subjectivity. As well as laying the foundations for her publicly political position, her private correspondence was also a channel for self-reflection. I will discuss this in conjunction with the many published obituaries of Mary Kingsley to highlight the ways in which her life, travels and writings were ultimately attributed to her highly individual but at all times clearly gendered personality.

Mary Kingsley questioned her identity as a traveller and a travel writer, illustrating the conflicts arising from the coexistence of private and public spheres of activity and representation. For example, in a letter to

⁸⁰ Mary Kingsley to George MacMillan 22.10.1896.

⁸¹ Mary Kingsley to Dr Gunther 26.2.1896.

Lady MacDonald, she wrote

I am really beginning to think that the traveller - properly so called - the person who writes a book and gets his FRGS etc, is a peculiar sort of animal only capable of seeing a certain set of things and always seeing them in the same way, and you and me are not of this species somehow. What are we to call ourselves? I have been wading through many volumes of travel lately, among them Mr Robinson's; he went to Okano...this side up, fragile keep dry and all that sort of thing you know. Well! save for the names of the places, he might as far as local colour goes have gone to Korea or Cumberland...Still I do not reproach them but sympathize with them, deeply, now I have had a turn at writing an African book myself, and I have come to the decision that it is the greatest mistake to write a book about a place you have been to...personal experiences get in your way sadly. The amount of expurgation my journals have required has been awful.⁸²

Mary Kingsley's 'personal experiences' on her return to Britain were oriented around her sense of duty to family and friends. Tensions existed between her feminine sense of duty to others and her desire for self-fulfillment, and were most clearly expressed by her sense of personal inadequacy and melancholy. She wrote to Dennis Kemp that 'I have always a feeling of responsibility' and looked back to 'the dreadful gloom of all my life until I went to Africa' during which

I tried my best, and I know I failed, for my mother's sufferings were terrible, and my brother's health is now far from what I should wish.⁸³

Her perceived freedom to travel depended on her sense of family responsibility :

When I shall get out to West Africa I am not sure - because of my Brother. He is the only person who is a duty to me so I cannot leave him for my own pleasure, but apart from him I am wearying to be away for life up here tires without interesting me.⁸⁴

⁸² Mary Kingsley to Lady MacDonald undated (a).

⁸³ Mary Kingsley to Dennis Kemp undated (a).

⁸⁴ Mary Kingsley to Mrs Frazer 23.12.1899.

However, her sense of responsibility extended beyond her brother to a wider sphere of friends and relations as shown by her letters to Mrs Holt :

one of my mother's oldest friends became very ill and I had to be with her till she died the day after Xmas day, meanwhile the son of another friend a boy of 18 got influenza...- he died and she went mad and remains so. I have had to come home from her...⁸⁵

and, in her following letter, her responsibility to an uncle 'very ill and very, very tiresome and I have got to go down to his house so as to let his daughter off duty.'⁸⁶

The contrast between her personal doubts and public assurance was recognized by Mary Kingsley who described herself as 'a very tortured soul'.⁸⁷ Her public role seemed to mask her more profound insecurities :

the best part of me is...doubt, and self-distrust and melancholy, and heartache over other people. Why should I show it to people I don't care for and don't know? I put on armour and coruscating wit...when I go out to battle.⁸⁸

Her sense of inadequacy compared with other people was particularly pronounced in her friendships with other women. For example, she wrote to Sir Alfred Lyall that his wife was

so restful and pleasant to me whose home is in the valley of the shadow of death. I thought when I left Cambridge I had left that valley, but it was an error. It is evidently my home and I must reconcile myself to it, build my shimbec there and settle down, but it does me good to come out of it into Lady Lyall's sunshine.⁸⁹

Her melancholy is also clear in a letter to Alice Stopford Green :

⁸⁵ Mary Kingsley to Mrs Holt 1.1.1899.

⁸⁶ Mary Kingsley to Mrs Holt 30.1.1899.

⁸⁷ Mary Kingsley to Dennis Kemp undated (b), possibly May 1898.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Mary Kingsley to Sir Alfred Lyall 22.5.1898.

You don't know the sort of background of wretchedness that is behind things in my mind - that knowledge that all the people I have slaved for have never given me any gratitude and that there is another set of people for whom I have done nothing for whom I can never do anything who lavish on me kindness I do not deserve and then I see there must be something wrong in me, that these latter set, among which you are preeminent, must be under some delusion about me...I should be very miserable without you so perhaps the less I dwell on my innate unworthiness the better.⁹⁰

Mary Kingsley's melancholy was often closely tied to her physical health. The previous quotation followed her statement that 'I am in a nasty, fractious, naughty, miserable, lonely state of mind, but it will pass off when I am stronger.'⁹¹ Mary Kingsley's physical strength was in turn closely tied to her inability to enjoy England, as expressed to Lady MacDonald :

I am low in mind, principally from being low in my health with everlasting colds and headaches but also from having sort of lost the power of enjoying life in England.⁹²

Compared with her apparently excellent health while travelling in a region notorious for its dangerous climate, Mary Kingsley seemed sensitive to the British climate, suffering frequent colds, influenza and rheumatism as well as neuralgia and headaches. Compared with the lack of references to her health in her travel books, her correspondence on her return to Britain was punctuated by comments such as 'I am terribly weak and tired'⁹³ and 'I have been ill this week with one of my bad colds, and much depressed.'⁹⁴

The only time that Mary Kingsley complained of ill-health in Africa

⁹⁰ Mary Kingsley to Alice Stopford Green 31.1.1898.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Mary Kingsley to Lady MacDonald undated (a).

⁹³ Mary Kingsley to John Holt 29.1.1898.

⁹⁴ Mary Kingsley to John Holt 5.9.1899. In addition to these two references, in her correspondence with Holt Mary Kingsley described her tiredness, depression and illnesses in letters dated 23.1.1898; 16.2.1898; 3.3.1898; 13.7.1898; 5.8.1898; 27.10.1898; 7.1.1899; 19.1.1899; 13.2.1899; 3.8.1899; 28.8.1899; and 30.9.1899.

was while nursing in South Africa. In her last letter to Alice Stopford Green she wrote from Cape Town that 'My chest is still wrong - but do not worry about me.'⁹⁵ This final letter includes Mary Kingsley's most vivid reflections on her personality and the differences between 'home' and away which she bridged by travelling and returning :

I am down in the muck of life again - whether I shall come up out of this like I came up out of West Africa and associated with thinking people I don't know. It is a personally risky game I am playing here and it is doubtful - one nurse and an orderly who have only been on two days are down themselves - but if I do not believe me my dear Lady I am eternally grateful to you for all your kindness and your infinite toleration and thoughtfulness for me. I who was and am and never shall be anything but a mucker - all this work here - the stink the washing the enemas the bed pans the blood is my world, not London Society politics and that gallery into which I so strangely wandered - into which I don't care a hairpin if I don't wander again. Take care of yourself - you who can do so much more than I in what St Loe calls the haut politique and remember it is the haut politique that makes me have to catch large powerful family men by the tails of their night shirts at midnight stand over them when they are stinking - tie up their jaws when they are dead - 5 or 6 jaws a night I have had of late to tie up - Dam the haut politique.⁹⁶

* * * * *

Mary Kingsley died alone, according to her wishes,⁹⁷ on June 3rd 1900. Many obituaries were printed in national and regional newspapers, traders' journals, and women's periodicals. Most emphasized Mary Kingsley's character and appearance, illustrating that her subjectivity was constructed primarily along lines of gender difference on her return 'home'.

⁹⁵ Mary Kingsley to Alice Stopford Green 11.4.1900.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ FRANK 1986 (a) op.cit.

Although some obituaries did not explicitly praise Mary Kingsley's feminine virtues, they often implicitly reproduced them, as shown by a description of her as

a singularly lovable and original personality...a quiet retiring person absolutely unconcerned about herself, and ceaselessly occupied in doing service to others. She could feel for communities or parties without losing her sympathy for any individual, and though she was constantly engaged in controversy over the most contentious issues, personal enmity was apparently unknown to her.⁹⁸

The Times described her as 'a sincere and conscientious seeker after the truth,' with 'a modest and retiring disposition'⁹⁹ and the Atheneum listed

the variety of her richly endowed nature, her commanding intellect, her keen insight, her originality, her tenderness, her simplicity, her absolute freedom from cant or pretence, her delightful humour, her extraordinary grasp of the problems, physical, ethnological, or political, to which as occasion arose she turned her attention.¹⁰⁰

In addition, her 'sane and statesmanlike views on African questions'¹⁰¹ and her 'analytical, scientific mind'¹⁰² were praised.

However, most assessments of Mary Kingsley's character focussed on her gendered subjectivity, revealing less about her travels, writing and politics, than about contemporary constructions of femininity. E.D.Morel wrote

⁹⁸ The Saturday Review 9.6.1900 p.702.

⁹⁹ The Times 6.6.1900.

¹⁰⁰ The Atheneum 3790 16.6.1900 pp.750-1.

¹⁰¹ The Spectator 16.6.1900 p.836. My emphasis.

¹⁰² The British Empire Review July 1900 p.15.

That she, a weak woman labouring under the many disadvantages which under such circumstances her sex necessarily entailed, should have succeeded in effecting so much is surely a lesson to every one of us,¹⁰³

but most obituaries perceived her gender in essentialist terms, particularly relating to appropriate behaviour, sentiments and appearance. However, despite many attempts to portray Mary Kingsley as inherently feminine, these were often qualified by complex and ambivalent constructions of gender difference because of, firstly, the ways in which she was perceived to bridge distinctions between masculine and feminine characteristics, and, secondly, her perceived differences from other women.

Mary Kingsley's death promoted portrayals of self-sacrifice and feminine duty which elevated her as a heroine of similar stature as Florence Nightingale.¹⁰⁴ She was seen as superior to other nurses because

In 'the plague' of fashionable ladies who infested South Africa at a time when only conscientious, practical and sensible nurses were required, the very name of Mary Kingsley will appear as a bird of paradise above a flock of screaming, chattering magpies.¹⁰⁵

Although her death was seen as appropriately feminine, her life was seen as more ambivalent; for example, an obituary in the *Lady* stated that

She died at last a woman's death in a centre of civilization, but perhaps that will only strengthen people's memories to recall that she had lived like a man in strange countries where civilization had not gained the mastery.¹⁰⁶

It seems paradoxical that at the same time that Mary Kingsley was

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ For a discussion of the ideological significance of popular perceptions of Florence Nightingale, see POOVEY, M. 1988 : *Uneven Developments : The Ideological Work of Gender in mid-Victorian England*; University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

¹⁰⁵ The *Topical Times* 16.6.1900 p.4. This continues : 'I feel I must repeat of her, as Longfellow said of Florence Nightingale, with but one word altered : A lady with a Book shall stand, / In the great history of the land, / A noble type of good, / Heroic womanhood.'

¹⁰⁶ The *Lady* 21.6.1900 p.976.

seen to possess both feminine and masculine qualities and to transcend the standards of other women, she was primarily praised for conforming to ideals of feminine conduct. This illustrates the ambivalence of constructions of gender and their discursive discontinuities. Although her subjectivity was constructed in terms of gender difference, its ambivalence and representations of her individuality appeared to supersede such constructions. However, her individuality was only able to supersede the subject positions of others constructed as feminine, illustrating the power of patriarchal discourses of difference.

Mary Kingsley was thus represented as both the same as but different from other women. For example, she was seen to possess

a wealth of adventurous experience which belongs to few men, and to no other woman, of this generation;¹⁰⁷

it was perceived that

In her travels she went through experiences that make one realise the courage and undaunted pluck a woman can exhibit;¹⁰⁸

while travelling, '[s]he was quite ignorant of physical fear, a rather rare characteristic among women';¹⁰⁹ and, finally, her death was seen as

a loss to science, to the literature of travel, and, above all, to the West African colonies, upon whose condition and administrative requirements she wrote with an authority possessed by few Englishmen, and certainly by no other Englishwoman.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ The Spectator 16.6.1900 p.836.

¹⁰⁸ Western Mail 23.6.1900 p.1 of The Ladies' Supplement.

¹⁰⁹ Letter from Lewis Lusk in The Spectator 23.6.1900 pp.875-6.

¹¹⁰ The Manchester News 9.6.1900. In addition, The Westminster Gazette of 6.6.1900 stated that 'Her adventurous, lonely journeys in Africa, where Africa is deadliest and loneliest and most marvellous, had given Miss Kingsley a discipline which made her appear perfectly calm and collected under any circumstances.'

In all of these examples, Mary Kingsley was seen as different from other women because of her travels whereby she moved spatially and socially beyond the domestic constraints of Victorian patriarchy. Because her social transgressions were spatially distant and only possible when travelling away from 'home', domestic constructions of the inferiority of women could remain unthreatened. Indeed, in several articles, Mary Kingsley was praised as 'a womanly woman'.¹¹¹ The most extreme reference to Mary Kingsley as superior to other women stated that :

Thousands of women could have better been spared of purposeless lives. It is a stirring and touching story of a life of self-sacrifice which nurtured no hope of recompensating glory in a vision of the martyr's crown.¹¹²

In contrast to the spatial displacement of constructions of gender difference and Mary Kingsley's superiority acquired through travelling, other obituaries praised her exceptional femininity, transcending other women by conforming to rather than potentially challenging ideals of feminine conduct. For example, the obituary in the *Morning Leader* was entitled 'Mary Kingsley : Her Charms as a Woman, Nurse, Cook, and Conversationalist Told by One Who Knew Her' and ignored her identity as a traveller :

¹¹¹ In, for example, the *Western Mail* 23.6.1900 p.1 of The Ladies Supplement and *West Africa* June 1900 p.49.

¹¹² CLODD, E. 1916 : *Memories*; Chapman and Hall, London; Chapter VII *Mary Henrietta Kingsley* pp.75-82.

Mary Kingsley the woman will hold a much more important place than Mary Kingsley the traveller. Women travellers we have enough and to spare; girls in Greenland, lasses at Lhasa, women wherever and whenever they are not wanted, and Mary Kingsley only differed from the rank and file of such in being able to write a clever book about her travels. Mary Kingsley the woman was a much rarer character whose keynote was unselfish devotion to duty - not imaginary duty far afield, but the duty which lay nearest her hand, and which was most plainly her own, and so long as any such duty remained to claim her energies she disregarded all her own wishes and interests.¹¹³

Even when her achievements were not explicitly attributed to her travels, Mary Kingsley was still described as able to reconcile masculine and feminine behaviour :

Her high sense of duty and her love of truth, with her delicious humour, her capacity for hard work, and her unselfishness, followed her throughout her short span...In her, masculine courage and intellect met feminine heart, devotion, and true simplicity.¹¹⁴

Mary Kingsley's feminine attributes were also celebrated by Alice Stopford Green who described her as 'a skilled nurse, a good cook, a fine-needlewoman, an accomplished housewife' and stated that

It was her special gifts as a woman that gave to her work its unique and original character : in them lay her strength and her authority. She thought it may be truly said, through her heart : and it was in good measure the maternal instinct of protection and helpfulness that vivified her intelligence.¹¹⁵

The most vivid portrayals of Mary Kingsley as feminine took the form of visual descriptions of her appearance. These distinguished her from other women, countered preconceptions of her masculinity, and reproduced constructions of ideal feminine virtues. Most importantly, such descriptions

¹¹³ Morning Leader 14.6.1900.

¹¹⁴ The Atheneum 3791 23.6.1900 pp.784-5. This is echoed in Mainly About People 16.6.1900 p.670 in which Frank Bullen wrote that Mary Kingsley was 'a tender woman who coupled with her tenderness all the courage, energy, and will-power of the strongest man.'

¹¹⁵ Journal of the African Society 1, October 1901, p.3.

often characterized her personality as inseparable from her appearance, making her the object of a masculine gaze rather than a subject in her own right. Descriptions of her appearance were often detailed, as shown by the following account :

Rather under the medium height, slight, and somewhat spare, Mary Kingsley was fair in complexion and colouring. Her beautiful deep blue eyes were the most attractive feature in her face...Always neatly and unobtrusively dressed, her fair hair was smoothly parted and arranged without trace of a fringe. She was fond of wearing an astrachan cap, which she pulled down firmly over her forehead. She travelled in ordinary costume, and found no use in 'rational' clothes.¹¹⁶

Mary Kingsley's appearance was not described as conventionally beautiful but was praised for its femininity which differed from preconceptions of an intrepid, masculine traveller, illustrating the ambivalence of perceptions of her gendered subjectivity while travelling but the assertion of her femininity on her return. For example, Frank Bullen wrote that on their first meeting,

I turned, expecting to see a masculine creature with a harsh voice and an air of command. Instead I saw a graceful, willowy figure, most womanly, the large eyes alight with vivacious expression and yet with something beseeching in them. A woman manifestly nervous...¹¹⁷

In contrast, and at times in direct contradiction, the Manchester News described Mary Kingsley in a way that transcended conventional distinctions between masculinity and femininity :

¹¹⁶ The Pall Mall Gazette 6.6.1900 p.3. This commentary is similar to an account in Outlook 9.6.1900 which stated that 'In Miss Kingsley's personal appearance there was little beyond the bright twinkling eyes, intelligent forehead, and alert manner to suggest the clever author and distinguished traveller. She used to be seen in a little black bonnet of by no means the newest shape, and even in wading the streams and pushing through the bush of West Africa she refused to compromise in the direction of abandoning skirts.'

¹¹⁷ Mainly About People 16.6.1900 p.670. Frank Bullen went on to reiterate his 'surprise at the difference between the Mary Kingsley I had imagined and this sweet-voiced, most feminine reality.'

Miss Kingsley was tall, angular, but apparently of powerful physique. Her voice was somewhat strong, and her complexion darkened by tropical suns. She was moreover absolutely devoid of 'nerves'. But although strong-minded and strong-bodied, hardened by rough travel, she lacked nothing of the refinement of the English gentlewoman.¹¹⁸

The ambivalence of constructions of gender difference can be seen in the paradoxical ways in which Mary Kingsley's appearance reproduced ideals of feminine appearance while undermining ideals of feminine conduct. This paradox was resolved by displacing the latter to her travels while locating the former in the domestic sphere of 'home'. The distinction between 'home' and away was textually reproduced by the contrasts arising from textually juxtaposing appropriate appearance with inappropriate conduct. For example, a correspondent in the Highland News described a visit to Mary Kingsley :

As she stood there in her drawing-room in a very feminine, even fashionable dress of soft grey, it was curiously difficult to realise her for what she was - a daring pioneer into the death-haunted unknown.¹¹⁹

Finally, in a similar way, E.D.Morel described Mary Kingsley as a

medium-sized, frail-looking woman, with the kindly face and smooth greyish hair, [who] you knew, had faced cannibal tribes, amongst whom the most experienced official or trader would not venture, if at all, without an armed escort.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ The Manchester News 9.6.1900.

¹¹⁹ The Highland News 16.6.1900 p.12. This obituary of Mary Kingsley was printed in the column 'For the Ladies'.

¹²⁰ West Africa June 1900 p.51.

Conclusions.

Mary Kingsley was primarily perceived in terms of gendered identity on her return 'home' in contrast to the imperial power and authority she shared through her racial identity while travelling. However, her gendered subjectivity and her mediation between public and private spheres were more ambivalent than fixed and this ambivalence can be extended to the differences perceived to exist between constructions of 'home' and away. Mary Kingsley's reception as a traveller, a writer and a political figure was underlain by the marginality of her subject-position as a woman. This marginality was itself inseparable from the tensions between the displacement achieved through travelling away from the context of Victorian patriarchy and the domestication arising from her return to it. Mary Kingsley's correspondence illustrates how these tensions could arise from the coexistence of her public and private sense of duty to both Liverpool traders and to her family and friends.

As well as her personal presentations of public and private spheres, public recognition of Mary Kingsley also reproduced the complex ambivalence of her subjectivity on her return. Representations of Mary Kingsley changed over time, with reviews of *Travels in West Africa* emphasizing her character as traveller and author while reviews of *West African Studies* focussed more on form, style and content. The many published obituaries of Mary Kingsley returned to a focus on her individuality, most graphically representing her as a gendered subject in terms of behaviour and appearance. Such representations were, however,

ambivalent because Mary Kingsley was seen as surprisingly feminine and often more feminine than other women, while also being seen as able to participate in roles perceived as masculine. This paradox can be resolved because her behaviour was seen as both spatially and temporally differentiated with potentially masculine traits distanced in time and space while her femininity was celebrated on her return and current activities at 'home'. In this way, although Mary Kingsley could be praised as superior to other women, this conceptualization did not challenge patriarchal constructions of women's subordination because it was located away from 'home'. Overall, the complex ambivalence of constructions of gendered subjectivity illustrate the reflexive relationship between the arbitrary and retrospective constructions of 'home' and away and the distinctive representation of a woman who travelled between them.

POSTLUDE

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES TO WOMEN TRAVEL WRITERS.

In addition to the reviews, articles and obituaries which were published about Mary Kingsley and her writings, more general institutional parameters informed the reconstitution of 'home' for women travel writers on their return. I will illustrate such parameters by focussing on the debates concerning the admission of women as Fellows of the Royal Geographical Society in London;¹ and attempts to identify Mary Kingsley and other women travel writers of the 1890s as 'new women'. Although such debates were often tangential and at times in direct opposition to Mary Kingsley's interests, they were significant in influencing the public climate of opinion and reception of women travel writers.

The Royal Geographical Society and Women Fellows.

Mary Kingsley was vehemently opposed to women's suffrage and to the admission of women to Societies such as the R.G.S., arguing in the latter case that

I think that if we women distinguish ourselves in Science in sufficiently large numbers at a sufficiently high level the great Scientific Societies...will admit women on their own initiative or we shall form Scientific Societies of our own of equal eminence.²

¹ Hereafter referred to as the R.G.S. According to the Proceedings of the R.G.S. and Monthly Record of Geography N.S. 9, 1887, 'The privileges of a Fellow include admission (with one friend) to all meetings of the Society, and the use of the library and Map room. Each Fellow is also entitled to receive a copy of the New Monthly Series of the Proceedings and the Supplementary Papers'.

² Mary Kingsley to Mrs Farquharson 26.11.1899. Mary Kingsley was replying to Mrs Farquharson's request that she support a petition for the admission of women to the R.G.S. Mary Kingsley enclosed a copy of her letter to John Scott Keltie, Honourary Secretary of the R.G.S., on 27.11.1899 and wrote to him that 'I do not wish to alarm you but I feel it is my duty as a friend to warn you that there is a dangerous female after you, I enclose details. I'm terrified of her...'.

However, in the same letter, she became self-effacing, stating that

I have no right to speak at all...in science I am only a collector of specimens and as a traveller, though I have travelled further in West Africa than any of my countrymen still I have never fixed a point or taken an observation or in fact done any surveying work that entitles me to be called a geographer.³

Mary Kingsley expanded on her opinions in her next letter to John Scott Keltie. She believed that the presence of women would inhibit scientific discussion both because of the need for propriety and because of the interests of women themselves. In the former case, she wrote that if women were admitted to large scientific societies such as the R.G.S.,

I sincerely hope...they will make a separate Department - or let the ladies have a separate council Chamber in which they can speak their minds.⁴

Mary Kingsley illustrated her claim by referring to the Anthropological Institute,⁵ stating that

the presence of ladies is hindersome to the gentlemen. It is not hindersome to me because I can go and tell Tylor or in extreme cases Mrs Tylor, who can tell him why they kill twins in West Africa and such like things.⁶

In this way, Mary Kingsley perceived herself as separate from both women and men in scientific societies and revealed the importance of private channels of communication, often through a female contact. In the latter case - how the interests of women would lower the scientific standards of

³ Ibid.

⁴ Mary Kingsley to John Scott Keltie 1.12.1899.

⁵ The Anthropological Society of London was formed by twelve Fellows leaving the Ethnological Society of London in 1863. One of the reasons for this split was over the admission of women. The Ethnological Society - unlike the Anthropological Society - was in favour of admitting women. The two societies were reunited to form the Anthropological Institute in 1871, but women were not admitted as members until 1876. See CARELESS, V. 1974 : *The Ethnological Society of London 1843 - 1871*; M.A. Thesis, Department of Anthropology and Sociology, University of British Columbia.

⁶ Ibid.

the R.G.S. - Mary Kingsley wrote that

Your terms for admitting men are too low to stand it. Then the tone would fall to the level of the main body of the ladies interests - sensational adventures etc would take the place of your truly geographical papers on sub-oceanic changes and the geography of mammals etc.⁷

Again, Mary Kingsley detached herself from other women and echoed arguments expressed within the R.G.S. in opposition to the admission of women as Fellows.

The debates concerning the admission of women as Fellows of the R.G.S. illustrate its role in imperialist self-legitimation and the perceived masculinity which underlay this role. This was most graphically conveyed by the Anniversary Address of 1887 in which the President outlined that

What we require...is precise and accurate information of the earth's surface, however it may be obtained, and to train the minds of our youth in the powers of observation sufficient to enable them to obtain this information; if in so doing our countrymen continue to be stimulated to deeds of daring, to enterprise and adventures, to self-denial and hardships, it will assist in preserving the manhood of our country, which is more and more endangered year by year in consequence of our endeavour to keep peace within our own borders and to stave off strife with our neighbours.⁸

Two women received awards from the R.G.S. in the 1860s. Lady Franklin received the Founder's Gold Medal in 1860 for her 'devotion' in financing expeditions searching for her husband who died in the discovery of the North West Passage.⁹ In 1869, Mary Somerville received the Victoria Medal, but similarly her feminine attributes were seen as equally if not more important than her contributions to geographical knowledge; the

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ The Annual Address on the Progress of Geography 1886-7 delivered by General R.Strachey at the Anniversary Meeting 23.5.1887, p.630 in Proceedings of the R.G.S. and Monthly Record of Geography N.S. 9, 1887.

⁹ Journal of the R.G.S. 30, 1860.

Journal of the R.G.S. praised Mary Somerville because

in addition to her researches into the phenomena of the heavens and the earth, [she] has also excelled in the arts of painting, music and all feminine accomplishments.¹⁰

However, it was not until the 1890s that debates concerning women Fellows reached their height. In July 1892 the Council unanimously decided to admit women as Fellows and in November the first fifteen were elected to a Fellowship of over three thousand.¹¹ A small group of Fellows, most with naval or military titles, organized opposition to this and proposed a motion which was discussed at another Special General Meeting in April 1893, by which time a total of twenty one women had been elected. A motion in favour of admitting women was defeated by 147 votes to 105. However, debate continued and seven letters on the subject were printed in the Times, and a circular vote was held. The results of this were 1165 in favour, 100 agreeing to their admission under various restrictions, and 465 opposed to women Fellows. Another Special General Meeting was held in July 1893 when, despite the result of the circular vote, a motion to admit women Fellows was defeated with 158 in favour and 172 against. It was agreed that the women already elected could remain Fellows but that no more would be elected, and this remained the case until November 1912. A referendum was held in January 1913 and the motion to admit women Fellows was finally passed and accepted, twenty six years after it was first proposed.

The main arguments in support of women Fellows included the need for money to finance the relocation of the Society; competition from the

¹⁰ Journal of the R.G.S. 39, 1869; p.cxxxiii.

¹¹ See Appendix II for a list of the original women Fellows. All references for the following discussion are from the 'Ladies Box' of R.G.S. Additional Papers 93-99.

Royal Scottish Geographical Society which had admitted women since its foundation in 1884¹² and which had recently opened a regional branch in London; and, most immediately, the unwillingness of Isabella Bird Bishop¹³ to write a paper to be read by a man because of her ineligibility to be elected a Fellow. These were essentially pragmatic concerns which were, however, inseparable from underlying constructions of gender difference. I will focus on such constructions to illuminate perceptions of women travel writers which were expressed in the private sphere of debate within the R.G.S. itself; the public sphere of correspondence to the Times; and the legal sphere when both sides sought advice which changed the terms, form and content of the debate. I will address not only the content of the debates but also the form and language through which they were articulated.

Support for women Fellows was most strongly expressed in an anonymous letter to the Times published in May 1893 which asked

Will it be alleged by any serious or sensible person that Mrs Bishop is not a better Fellow, a better traveller, a better writer, and a more thorough Geographer than 19-20ths of the 3500 male Fellows? Can it be argued that an average woman is not as useful as a member of the Society as an average schoolmaster, or clergyman, or retired officer?¹⁴

At a meeting of the R.G.S., the differences between the explorations of men

¹² BIRKETT 1987 op.cit. Other societies which admitted women at their foundation included : the Royal Entomological Society (founded 1833); the Royal Botanical Society (1839); the Geologists Association (1858); the Manchester Geographical Society (1885); the Imperial Institute (1888); the Liverpool Geographical Society (1893); and the British Empire League (1899). The Royal Society (founded 1662) admitted women in 1945; the Linnean Society (1788) in 1904; the Geological Society (1807) in 1919; the Royal Asiatic Society (1823) in 1856; the British Association (1831) in 1843; and the Royal Colonial Institute (1868) in 1922. All from BIRKETT 1987 op.cit. p.341. The African Society - founded in 1901 in memory of Mary Kingsley - admitted women at its foundation.

¹³ Isabella Bird Bishop (1831 -1904) travelled, most notably, across the Rocky Mountains, India, Persia, Korea, China and Japan, largely on horseback, and wrote nine books about her travels. See BARR, P. 1986 : *A Curious Life for a Lady : The Story of Isabella Bird, Traveller Extraordinary*; Penguin Books, London.

¹⁴ Letter to the Times from "A Bona Fide Traveller" 29.5.1893.

and women were identified when one Fellow posed the following question :

The Society has frequently given sums ranging from one hundred to five thousand pounds towards geographical exploration and you have honoured your travellers who have come back, why not honour the ladies who pay their own way and bring to you the results of their explorations and discoveries.¹⁵

It was also argued that the R.G.S. played an important role in education and that it was short sighted to exclude women teachers from its Fellowship. However, this argument was used by those opposed to the admission of women Fellows because they believed it would lower the class character of the R.G.S., with one Fellow arguing that

I think the Society should not be a registry office for teachers and governesses and that kind of thing.¹⁶

It was argued that the admission of women would lower the scientific as well as class status of the R.G.S., most forcibly expressed in a letter from George Curzon published in the Times in May 1893 who stated that

We contest *in toto* the general capability of women to contribute to scientific geographical knowledge. Their sex and training render them equally unfitted for exploration; and the genus of professional female globetrotters with which America has lately familiarized us is one of the horrors of the latter end of the nineteenth century.¹⁷

In this letter, the existence of women travellers was displaced away from Britain so that as well as undermining the scientific and social integrity of the R.G.S., the admission of women Fellows would potentially threaten its national, imperialist strength. Such concerns were also expressed in meetings of the R.G.S., with, for example, one Fellow fearing that

¹⁵ Report of the Special General Meeting 28.11.1892.

¹⁶ Report of the Special General Meeting 24.4.1893.

¹⁷ Letter from George N. Curzon to the Times 31.5.1893.

if we had ladies here as a matter of right it would be more the object of the Council to provide for their amusement than for the progress of Scientific Research, that we should have lectures at which the popular element would predominate. We have already magic lanterns and dissolving views, in a short time we should probably have a piano.¹⁸

Despite such arguments, women had always been admitted to lectures as guests and, as found by Mary Kingsley later in the 1890s, information was forthcoming for women who intended to travel.¹⁹ It therefore seems that the status of the R.G.S. was seen as threatened by women only if they became formal subscribers able to call themselves Fellows. An underlying theme was the value of the initials F.R.G.S., with opposing Fellows arguing that

there is in the outside world, I am not saying our own eyes we know the value of F.R.G.S., which is practically nothing, but in the eyes of the outside world a somewhat real value given to these letters and the idea of [admitting women Fellows] in so far as it is made on behalf of certificated teachers and mistresses of Board schools is in order that they may have a fictitious value put after their names.²⁰

In other words, it was acknowledged within the R.G.S. that being a Fellow was virtually worthless, but that to those outside it had some market value which should be maintained and which would be undermined by the admission of women.

Despite these arguments, most of the debate within the R.G.S. avoided the actual issues by focussing on constitutional legality. Freshfield, one of the Honourary Secretaries of the R.G.S., criticised the tactics of

¹⁸ Report of the Special General Meeting 24.4.1893.

¹⁹ This is evident in Mary Kingsley's correspondence with John Scott Keltie. For example, she thanked him for the R.G.S. *Hints to Travellers* on 14.12.1895; she thanked him for a copy of the Journal on 5.1.1896; she sent notes requesting information on 28.3.1896 and 1.4.1896; and on 13.1.1897 she wrote that 'I have often wished to call and ask you things, but they were matters of small importance and I feared you might think me encroaching'.

²⁰ Report of the Special General Meeting 24.4.1893.

Fellows opposing the admission of women as 'a military and naval manoeuvre',²¹ and the hierarchy within the R.G.S. was criticised because it seemed to threaten individual autonomy; for example, a Fellow used similar imagery as Freshfield when he stated that

in voting on the question of women or no women we are voting on the question of whether we govern ourselves or are to be governed by the real quarterdeck in this Society.²²

Such an emphasis on Fellows' rights - and how these had been violated by the Council's mismanagement of the situation - was very class specific; for example, a letter from Admiral M'Clintock to the Times in June 1893 argued that the Council had not publicised its decision to admit women Fellows sufficiently widely; although notice of this appeared in the Journal of the R.G.S., this was

In the month of August, at a time therefore when everyone almost is away from London.²³

Much attention focussed on the issue of language. For example, a Fellow opposing the admission of women questioned

Can you turn he into she? Can you turn Chairman into Chairmanship?²⁴

and this was also supported by legal discourse which stated

The admission of Ladies was never contemplated at the time the Charter was granted which is proved by the fact that in the Rules of the Society the references to the Fellows are always made in the terms 'he' 'his' or 'Gentlemen' and these terms occur in the rules thirty eight times.²⁵

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Letter from Admiral F. Leopold M'Clintock to the Times 1.6.1893.

²⁴ Report of the Special General Meeting 24.4.1893.

²⁵ Letter from R. Webster and H. Sutton proposing a joint case to be submitted to Counsel 10.12.1892.

All proposals supporting the admission of women Fellows were accompanied by an Interpretation Clause stating that all masculine pronouns would be seen to include women. In this way, even if women were admitted, the Rules would not be changed; rather women would be subsumed within a masculine discourse.

The debates concerning the admission of women Fellows to the R.G.S. illustrate institutional mismanagement, the equation of gender difference with class status, and the desire to avoid the issues by focussing on constitutional procedure. It is ironic that the President of the R.G.S. in 1913 was George Curzon who wrote the letter to the Times most vehement in its opposition to the admission of women Fellows in 1893.

'New Women' of the 1890s.

'New women' of the 1890s challenged gendered divisions of labour, the ideal of the bourgeois home, and a fixed class hierarchy.²⁶ According to Ardis, the category 'new woman' differed from the Victorian 'angel in the house', single issue social reformers, 'Independent Women' who relied on their middle class status to endorse themselves professionally, and middle class women socialists who emphasized class rather than gender inequalities.²⁷ To be labelled, or to label oneself, a 'new woman' had important social, economic and political implications.

Women novelists of the 1890s were often described as 'new women'.
The changing structure and organization of publishing in the 1890s provided

²⁶ ARDIS, A.L. 1990 : *New Women, New Novels : Feminism and Early Modernism*; Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick and London.

²⁷ Ibid.

more opportunities for women to be published and this occurred to such an extent that

the common perception in the 1890s was that women were taking over the literary world. New publishing houses, new audiences for fiction, new publication formats : all were seen to give women writers, particularly previously unpublished women writers, a distinct advantage in the literary marketplace.²⁸

Descriptions of Mary Kingsley as a 'new woman' thus related not only to broad social, economic and political imperatives but also to more specifically literary contexts. I will discuss the extent to which Mary Kingsley was described as a 'new woman' in the context of her identity as a traveller and/or writer, her opposition to this description, and how she was perceived as a model for other 'new women' to emulate.

The Daily Telegraph referred to Mary Kingsley as 'a 'New Woman' of the nobler sort,' but proceeded to state that

We should, indeed, be far from recommending solitary travel in Africa, or in similarly barbarous regions, to any woman - even to the New Woman.²⁹

Mary Kingsley adamantly opposed this description of her in a letter replying to this article, writing

I do not relish being called a New Woman. I am not one in any sense of the term. Every child I come across tyrannizes over me, and a great deal of time I ought to give to science goes in cooking, &c. I do not think travelling now lays one open to this reproach.³⁰

Most references to Mary Kingsley as a 'new woman' were in obituaries published in women's journals. She was described as a model for other women and this served as a vehicle for implicit and explicit criticism

²⁸ Ibid. p.43.

²⁹ The Daily Telegraph 3.12.1895.

³⁰ The Daily Telegraph 5.12.1895.

of 'new women'. For example,

Mary Kingsley was one of the most wonderful women of her age, a lesson on the one hand to the indolent woman of the world ever seeking for fresh excitement to sting her out of langour, and, on the other, to the aggressive working woman who thinks work can't be done in skirts, and that it is 'superior' to talk contemptuously of men.³¹

Mary Kingsley was seen as different from other women because she was able to reconcile potentially masculine achievements with her essential femininity. It was argued that

In these days, when so much is said about women's work, and an impression seems to prevail that in order to accomplish any kind of work it is necessary for women to wholly sink their sexship, it is refreshing to be able to point out one who contrived not only to achieve fame for herself, but to do infinite credit to her sex, and yet not to lose a jot or little of the charm of womanhood.³²

Furthermore, in contrast to the external trademarks of 'new women', '[d]ivided skirts and the 'indispensible' cigarette were not in her way.'³³

Mary Kingsley's opinions of 'new women' can be most clearly discerned in the political context of campaigns for women's suffrage. When she refused to attend a 'Women's Conference', she wrote to John Holt that

They came down on me, four of them and no good looks to spare, to ask me why I had never given help or sympathy to the enfranchisement of women! I said because I thought it a very minor question. While there was a most vital section of Englishmen unenfranchised women could wait...I explained that men would always be chivalrous to women and strive to protect their best interests, that every voting Englishman was a representative of women, but he wasn't of men of another class to his own.³⁴

In another letter to John Holt, she scornfully described such women as

³¹ The Lady 21.6.1900.

³² The Lady's Pictorial 16.6.1900.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Mary Kingsley to John Holt 11.7.1899.

‘shrieking females, and androgens.’³⁵ Mary Kingsley not only perceived race and gender as essential and distinct categories, but also class and gender. In this way, she perceived West Coast traders to belong to a lower class from those with power and influence in government, and her desire to see traders rather than women enfranchised reflected her desire for their political influence and credibility in imperial policy-making. This position is most clearly articulated in a further letter to John Holt, in which she forcefully stated :

A vote in the conduct of the affairs of the British Empire you have not got, and you are a citizen of the Empire, representing one of England’s most important interests, but unrepresented politically. I suppose so far as the commercial men in England are as a body prosperous and busy they will be content with their ladylike position, but I think it would be well if they insisted on having the full vote.³⁶

Mary Kingsley explicitly correlates a lack of power with femininity, but rather than perceive the need for structural change in gender relations, she portrays traders as victims of political inequality. On another occasion, she expressed the belief that women’s suffrage would only serve to ‘make our political machinery more cumbersome.’³⁷

It seems paradoxical that Mary Kingsley - who was only able to gain independence while travelling beyond the domestic responsibilities of ‘home’ - should have been so vehemently opposed to women’s suffrage. This suggests the tensions of mediating ‘home’ and away, private and public spheres, all of which were underpinned by complex and ambivalent constructions of difference. Such a paradox thus clearly reflects the spatial

³⁵ Mary Kingsley to John Holt undated (a).

³⁶ Mary Kingsley to John Holt 5.9.1899.

³⁷ Mary Kingsley to John Holt undated (a).

as well as social parameters of travelling. Women such as Mary Kingsley often travelled for personal reasons linked to a desire to escape the confinement of domesticity. However, their travels and travel writing often caused them to enter the public sphere where it was necessary to legitimize their motives in terms of scientific and professional interests. This tension reflects that between femininity and the traits of masculinity while travelling. The desire to be distanced from suffragists and 'new women' could thus stem from the need for women travel writers to legitimize their travels and writings in the masculine, public realm of scientific research, professionalism and politics which arose from their construction as feminine on their return 'home'.

Conclusions.

The debates concerning the admission of women as Fellows to the R.G.S. and the literary and political constructions of 'new women' in the 1890s illustrate the ambivalence of institutional responses to women travel writers. Although I have described such institutional responses as broader contexts contributing to the reconstitution of 'home' than the reviews, articles and obituaries I discussed in Chapter 5, these channels and contexts were often inseparable. In a parallel way, although many of the debates were tangential to Mary Kingsley's travels and writings, they were important in informing attitudes towards her. Mary Kingsley's opposition to women becoming Fellows of the R.G.S. and to women's suffrage illustrate the ambivalent subject position of discursively constructed individual moving within and between the spheres of 'home' and away, private and public, on her travels and on her return.

travel writers, I illustrated how patriarchal and imperial discursive formations shaped and constrained subjectivity over space and time as women travelled within and between the spheres of 'home' and away.

I discussed the significance of 'departure' in the sense of constructions of gendered subjectivity both prior to and during a journey. I related poststructuralist notions of the 'death of the author' to constructions of author-positionality, and illustrated this with reference to *Travels in West Africa*. In the context of preparations for departure, motives, expectations, conduct books and general logistics were clearly differentiated by gender. In terms of gendered subjectivity while travelling, Mary Kingsley's textual representations of herself and others relate to broader issues of observation and ethnography. Overall, unstable and ambivalent constructions of gender difference informed and emerged from Mary Kingsley's travels and writings.

Mary Kingsley appears to have been primarily constructed in terms of gender subordination while at home, but able to share temporarily in racial superiority while travelling in the context of imperial power and authority. Such constructions were, however, ambivalent rather than fixed, as reflected by the textual polyphony of women's accounts of their travels. This ambivalence also extended to political spheres, with Mary Kingsley publicly supporting imperialism but privately empathizing with Africans because of her split position as both inside and outside western discourses of power and authority. Constructions of gender were similarly ambivalent over space, with Mary Kingsley adopting both masculine and feminine voices and codes of conduct on her travels and in her writings. Mary Kingsley's contradictory subject-position is particularly evident in her landscape descriptions. Her subjective identification with places as well as people coexisted with attempts to emulate more masculine, imperial

strategies of objectifying vision. Mary Kingsley's empathy with West Coast traders reflected her desire to reconcile this tension because she believed that traders should influence policy because of their local knowledge of West Africa and Africans.

In contrast to her ability to share in imperial power and authority while travelling, Mary Kingsley was primarily perceived in terms of gendered identity on her return 'home'. However, her gendered subjectivity and her mediation of both public and private spheres were more ambivalent than fixed, as were the differences perceived to exist between 'home' and away. This was apparent in her own and others' representations of her travels and writings. It seems paradoxical that Mary Kingsley was perceived as surprisingly feminine and even more feminine than other women despite - and indeed because of - having participated in roles perceived as masculine. This can be resolved because her behaviour was seen as spatially and temporally differentiated. Her potentially masculine traits were distanced in time and space but her femininity was reasserted on her return 'home'. Although she was often described as superior to other women, this did not challenge patriarchal constructions of women's subordination because it was displaced away from 'home'.

Imperial women's travels and their writings were clearly distinctive in material ways. These ranged from preparations prior to departure, the nature of the journey, and the reception of both women and their writings on their return. In this way, it seems clear that a journey itself represents only one moment of travelling, inseparable from departure and return. Because of the gendered significance of material travel, the metaphorical immanence of travel should also be seen as clearly gendered. Implications include the inseparability of discourses of power, 'truth' and knowledge, and,

more tangibly, the need to deconstruct theory, 'home', and difference.

A theme which has emerged throughout my discussion has been the significance of public and private spheres of influence, relating to spatial and temporal differentiation within the contexts of 'home' and away as well as while travelling between them. This significance can be traced at all stages of travel and in the process of writing about travel. For example, women were defined primarily in the private, domestic sphere before travelling into more public spheres. On their return, these spheres often coexisted, with private and public recognition and responsibilities redefining 'home'. In terms of writing, women travellers often based their published accounts on private letters and diaries, and their public roles were often underpinned by private networks and channels for communication, as shown by Mary Kingsley's prolific correspondence. Women travel writers celebrated their personal independence achieved through travel but often opposed more universal opportunities for independence such as women's suffrage. This apparent paradox reflects the tensions of legitimating private fulfillment within the public context of political and professional parameters. The coexistence of public and private spheres and the ways in which women moved within and between them suggests that attempts to dichotomize them should be deconstructed.

A further paradox relates to the epistemological concerns of studying an individual without celebrating individuality. I have focussed on the travels and writings of Mary Kingsley to illustrate far-reaching themes. These include constructions of difference in the constitution and contestation of subjectivity; the ambivalence of imperial representations; the material and metaphorical significance of travel; and the potential of feminism, literary theory and poststructuralism for writing histories, geographies,

historical geographies, and historiographies. I hope that I have substantively grounded these themes through my study of Mary Kingsley, whom I view as discursively positioned rather than biographically defined. Such a subject offers many opportunities for vivid description which is neither unique nor universal. Rather than view Mary Kingsley as a closed subject for understanding, the complex ambivalence of her subject positionality over space and time should facilitate multiple interpretations.

In Chapter 1, I outlined three broad contexts for my study of women travel writers and imperialism, namely the study of women in history, western women and imperialism, and women and the history of geography. For all of these areas of study, I hope that my work on Mary Kingsley has shown that a consideration of a subject depends on critical awareness of constructions of subjectivity. However, such contexts raise questions and imperatives beyond the scope of my current research. I would like to discuss the travels and writings of Mary Kingsley in conjunction with other women travel writers and also women novelists who situated heroines in imperial settings and could use the trope of travel to displace situations which could be unacceptable if set at 'home'. I would also like to compare the texts of women travel writers and women novelists with their male counterparts to reflect on gendered constructions of 'home' and away. In both cases, I would hope to extend such research to contemporary experiences and textual representations of travel as well as notions of 'home' and away more generally.

The substantive implications of my study of women travel writers and imperialism are inseparable from epistemological and methodological concerns. Poststructuralist, post colonial and feminist attempts to deconstruct the 'other' by foregrounding difference often overlap in their

desire to escape totalizing, imperial metanarratives. Such attempts often translate into a sense of heightened self-consciousness about one's own and others' representations. Writing itself, and particularly writing other people and places, has come under closer scrutiny. A greater awareness of historical, academic and institutional legacies has often accompanied this. Imperial women travellers should not merely be added to histories of geography but should prompt questions about those histories themselves. Feminist attempts to rectify the neglect of western women and imperialism should be conscious that feminism itself emerged at a time of imperialism.² Finally, to incorporate women into historical study should serve to critique ethnocentric and patriarchal silencing. In all of these broad contexts, however, gender difference should be seen as inseparable from many other constructions of difference. Although it is often strategic to highlight one over others, such constructions are not essential in their differences. Their interactions should rather be traced through both time and space to expose the complex relationships between power, 'truth' and knowledge.

The three interpretations of 'Only a Woman' that I outlined in Chapter 1 are inextricably intertwined. Women's travel writing was distinctive in the ways that women travelled, how they wrote about their travels, and how both their travels and writings were received. Patriarchal constructions of gender difference were powerful forces promoting such distinctiveness. The neglect of women travel writers and women in imperialism more generally also reflects patriarchal constructions of gender

² See, for example, BURTON, A.M. : *The White Woman's Burden : British Feminists and the Indian Woman, 1865-1915*; Women's Studies International Forum, 13 (4), 1990; pp.295-308. This is in part reprinted in CHAUDHURI and STROBEL 1992 op.cit.

difference. In this way, the more positive potential of 'Only a Woman' relates to attempts to study women and the challenges that arise from this. In my study of Mary Kingsley, such challenges have included coming to terms with her imperial suffrage and her outspoken opposition to women's suffrage and the admission of women to societies such as the R.G.S.. Finally, 'Only a Woman' relates to the significance of women travelling alone and the need to recognize their individual but often multiple identities without perpetuating stereotypes or celebrating heroism. In my study of women travel writers and imperialism, I have attempted to make women the subject of my enquiry but in so doing to address broader constructions of subjectivity.

POSTSCRIPT
WRITING TRAVEL WRITING.

Writing and travelling have been inseparable in all stages of my work on women travel writers. To produce a thesis seems too neatly bounded to reflect continual movement. To end seems artificial, abrupt and more difficult than beginning so this postscript is an attempt to mediate any sense of closure and completeness. It is also informed by the immanence of three underlying themes - subject positionality, the metaphorical as well as material significance of travel, and constructions of 'home' and away. These concerns have prompted me to allow the time and space to reflect on my own experiences of writing travel writing.

Like Mary Kingsley, I grew up in Highgate, and have always felt vaguely familiar with the Kingsley family remembered by the blue plaque on their house and Kingsley Place in Highgate Village. I too lived in Cambridge - although for my own rather than my brother's education. From *there*, however, our paths diverged, with Mary Kingsley travelling to West Africa and me to Canada. From *here*, however, our paths began once again to converge. It was ironic that the first paper I should write for a graduate course should be about women travel writers. Suffering acute homesickness, the achievements of women travelling alone seemed perversely inspirational. Home for Christmas, I talked to Gwynedd Gosling at the Highgate Literary and Scientific Institute, beginning spatially and academically at the beginning.

Most of my research was conducted in London during the summer of 1991. By this stage, 'home' and away were becoming increasingly blurred. I felt - and continue to feel - increasingly 'at home' in both Canada and

Britain but unsettled by the prospect and process of moving between them. My representations of both places to myself and others vary with my location and distance and I often perceive myself as the only link between them. Studying travel while at home seemed paradoxical, epitomized by my archival research in the British Library and the Royal Geographical Society. To speak of going 'into the archives' suggests a clearly demarcated, almost sacred place from which one will reemerge physically and spiritually closer to historical 'truth'. Perhaps it was because I was reading about travel in such a static environment, or perhaps because of the atmosphere of the R.G.S., I found archival research stifling. Initially, reading Mary Kingsley's original letters at the British Library was a thrill, but this soon dissipated in the face of her largely illegible handwriting and almost total disregard of punctuation. I am grateful for having access to archives at the R.G.S. and for Christine Kelly's expert help, but I found the refined, imperialist atmosphere overbearing. It was a strange sensation to be working at the very heart of Victorian London in Kensington Gore, which lies at the end of Exhibition Road, next to the Royal Albert Hall and opposite the Albert Memorial. Not only is the R.G.S. located a safe distance away from an underground station, but much of the walk between these points is itself underground, so that one seems to pass from the dark depths to a higher source of light. Once inside the R.G.S., even though women were highly visible - demanding identification on the door, as librarians, and serving lunch - I felt outside its masculine, imperialist world. I found myself not only surrounded but also overlooked by imperial imagery and heroes.

If my initial archival research was stifling in its stasis, the rest of it was exhilarating in its freedom. I was very lucky to learn about the material collected over many years by Beth Urquhart and to receive

permission from her daughter Sarah Urquhart and her husband Alvin Urquhart to gain access to it. The chain of coincidences resulting in two visits to Eugene, Oregon, are worth repeating. At first, I had been aware of Beth Urquhart through her friendship with Gwynedd Gosling, but was unaware of the scale of her research. Mona Domosh presented a paper on women travel writers at the Association of American Geographers Conference in Miami in 1991, which was attended by Alvin Urquhart, a Professor of Geography at the University of Oregon in Eugene. He told her of his late wife's research on Mary Kingsley and that he had several boxes of transcribed letters in his basement. Mona Domosh had heard about my interests through Gerry Pratt, and wrote to her to tell her of this source. I travelled to Eugene and was overwhelmed by the scale of Beth Urquhart's research. She had traced and transcribed hundreds of letters - and fragments of letters - written by Mary Kingsley, located all over Britain and Ireland, as well as collecting many articles and secondary source material. Dr Urquhart kindly let me work in his home and let me take all of the letters back to Vancouver to photocopy. I now have three box files full of Mary Kingsley's letters collected by Beth Urquhart - the most complete collection of its kind. My own travels seemed more appropriate to the nature of my research, although reading about Highgate - and even the R.G.S. - in Eugene made me think more acutely of 'home' than away. Rather than immerse myself 'in the archives,' the archives travelled with me. On my two trips they also travelled with Robyn, Natalie, Juliet and Richard, and we all saw Eugene, Portland and the Oregon Coast for the first time.

Throughout my research, at the same time as my own travels, I have been increasingly conscious that both reading and writing are themselves forms of travel. A point of departure is only named

retrospectively, and return is always to a different place. The traveller may feel like the only constant link between two places but the traveller, and thus the link, is ever changing. Although I have worked on my thesis in London, Vancouver and Eugene, I have spent most of my time reading Mary Kingsley's accounts of West Africa. My own writing represents another form of travel, with its detours and digressions, and me losing my way and arriving at unexpected but, often, all the more satisfying destinations.

Just as travel requires a point of departure, so it requires a point of return. For myself, I can only appreciate travel when I know that ultimately there is the possibility of returning 'home', and I look forward to returning to Highgate at Christmas. This point of return will also complete my archival travels as I hope to take Beth Urquhart's transcriptions to Gwynedd Gosling at the Highgate Literary and Scientific Institute. Finally, in terms of reading and writing as travel, this thesis itself represents a sort of return. In all cases, I myself, my point of departure and my point of return have changed. Rather than anticipate my return as a static and final destination, however, I view it as a point for many future departures.

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YOUNG, R. 1990 : *White Mythologies : Writing History and the West*; Routledge, London and New York.

APPENDIX I : PRIMARY SOURCE MATERIAL.

I. NEWSPAPERS AND JOURNALS.

I.i Articles and Reports of Lectures by Mary Kingsley

British Empire Review	August 1899 October 1899
Cheltenham Ladies College Magazine	Autumn 1898
Imperial Institute Journal	March 1899 April 1900
Times	31.1.1899 14.2.1900
West Africa and Traders Review Illustrated	July 1900 February 1901

I.ii Letters from Mary Kingsley.

Daily Telegraph	5.12.1895
Saturday Review	18.2.1899 25.2.1899
Spectator	28.12.1895 15.5.1897 19.3.1898 13.1.1900

I.iii Reviews of *Travels in West Africa.*

Geographical Journal	March 1897
Illustrated London News	6.2.1897
Morning Post	14.1.1897 21.1.1897
New York Times	13.2.1897 5.6.1897
Spectator	6.3.1897

I.iv Reviews of *West African Studies*.

Daily Chronicle	25.1.1899
Daily Graphic	31.1.1899
Daily News	31.1.1899
Daily Telegraph	31.1.1899
Dundee Advertiser	31.1.1899
Eastern Daily Press	31.1.1899
Echo	31.1.1899
Geographical Journal	April 1899
Glasgow Herald	31.1.1899
Illustrated London News	11.3.1899
Leeds Mercury	31.1.1899
Manchester Guardian	31.1.1899
Morning Post	31.1.1899
New York Times	25.2.1899
Nottingham Daily Guardian	31.1.1899
St. James Gazette	31.1.1899
Saturday Review	4.2.1899
Scotsman	31.1.1899
South Africa	4.2.1899
Spectator	4.2.1899
Standard	1.2.1899
Sun	3.2.1899
West African News and African Mining Review	27.3.1901
Western Daily Press	31.1.1899
Yorkshire Post	1.2.1899

I.v Obituaries of Mary Kingsley.

British Empire Review	July 1900
The Churchwoman	15.6.1900
The Gentlewoman	16.6.1900
Geographical Journal	July 1900
Highland News	16.6.1900
Illustrated London News	9.6.1900
The Lady	21.6.1900
Lady's Pictorial	16.6.1900
New York Times	6.6.1900
Pall Mall Gazette	6.6.1900 11.6.1900
St. James Gazette	9.6.1900
Saturday Review	9.6.1900
Spectator	16.6.1900
Standard	6.6.1900
Times	6.6.1900
Topical Times	16.6.1900
Western Mail	23.6.1900
Westminster Gazette	6.6.1900

I.vi Other Articles and Letters about Mary Kingsley.

British Empire Review	February 1900
Daily Chronicle	27.11.1897
Daily Telegraph	3.12.1899
Geographical Journal	January 1896
Illustrated London News	4.1.1896
Journal of the African Society	1901-2

London Review		21.5.1898
New York Times		10.1.1896
Saturday Review		18.2.1899
Spectator		23.6.1900 23.11.1901
Times	2.12.1895 7.6.1900 26.6.1900 7.8.1900	8.8.1900 14.8.1900 17.8.1900
West Africa and Traders Review Illustrated	June 1900 July 1900 August 1900 9.3.1901 1.6.1901 22.6.1901 29.6.1901 6.7.1901	November 1900 December 1900 13.7.1901 5.10.1901 19.10.1901 28.12.1901
West African News and African Mining Review		6.3.1901 26.6.1901

I.vii General Articles and Letters about West Africa.

Saturday Review	11.2.1899 4.3.1899 11.3.1899
Spectator	7.12.1895 26.3.1898
West Africa and Traders Review Illustrated	14.9.1901 12.10.1901
West African News and African Mining Review	27.2.1901 6.3.1901 27.3.1901 17.4.1901
	8.5.1901 22.5.1901 12.6.1901

II. MACMILLAN CORRESPONDENCE.

147 letters and fragments of letters from Mary Kingsley to George MacMillan, July 1893 to August 1899.

5 letters from Henry Guillemard to Mary Kingsley; 1 letter from Mary Kingsley to Henry Guillemard.

Source : 54914 MacMillan Archive, the British Library.

III. ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY.

III.i Correspondence.

4 letters from Mary Kingsley to Violet Paget Roy, 1893.

Correspondence from Mary Kingsley to John Scott Keltie, December 1895 to December 1899.

Correspondence from Isabella Bird Bishop to John Scott Keltie, October 1888 to August 1898.

III.ii 'Ladies Box' : R.G.S. Additional Papers 93-99.

Letters from August 1892 to March 1894 concerning the admission of women Fellows.

Reports of Special General Meetings on 28.11.1892, 24.4.1893 and 3.7.1893.

Extracts from Council Minutes 27.6.1887 - 4.7.1892 and 4.11.1912.

Legal Documents from December 1892 to April 1893 and November 1912.

III,iii Reports and Correspondence in the Times.

Report of Anniversary Dinner	15.5.1893
Letter from 'A Bona Fide Traveller'	29.5.1893
Report of Annual Meeting	30.5.1893
Letter from G.Curzon	31.5.1893
Letter from F.L.M'Clintock	1.6.1893
Letter from W.H.Russell	1.6.1893
Letter from D.W.Freshfield	3.6.1893
Letter from G.Curzon	5.6.1893
Letter from W.Hicks	10.6.1893

III.iv Journals at the Royal Geographical Society.

Journal of the R.G.S. 30, 1860 p.xciv : Founder's Gold Medal to Lady Franklin; and 39, 1869 p.cxxxiii : Patron's or Victoria Medal to Mrs Mary Somerville.

Geographical Journal June 1897 pp.589-604 : Report of Anniversary Address; July 1897 pp.19-50 : Paper by Isabella Bird Bishop on 'A Journey in Western Sze-chuan' read at the R.G.S. on 10.5.1897.

IV. BETH URQUHART'S COLLECTION.

IV.i Correspondence from Mary Kingsley.

Mary Kingsley to :

Joseph Chamberlain	April 1898-September 1899
Christy	June 1897-October 1899
Edward Clodd	January-August 1898
Lord Cromer	September 1899
Thiselton Dyer	March 1896
Dr. Frazer	January-November 1899
Mrs Frazer	December 1899
Professor Haddon	May-July 1896
Mrs Haddon	May 1897
Hartland	December 1896-October 1899
Alice Stopford Green	February 1897-April 1900
Dr Gunther	December 1894-October 1899
Stephen Gwynn	August 1898-February 1900
Mrs Gwynn	November 1898-June 1899
Ling Roth	November 1897-February 1900
Mrs Ling Roth	November 1897-February 1900
Sir Alfred Lyall	July 1897
E.D.Morel	February 1899-March 1900
John Holt	November 1897-March 1900
Major Nathan	February 1899-March 1900
St.Loe Strachey	February 1899-March 1900
Sir Edward Tylor	October 1896-October 1899
Mrs Tylor	October-December 1896

One letter from Mary Kingsley to Mrs Cowell (7.2.1891) and Mrs Brownlow (1896); two letters to Miss Bowdler-Sharpe (31.1.1897 and 11.2.1897).

Correspondence from Mary Kingsley to John Scott Keltie, George MacMillan, and Violet Paget Roy, as listed above.

IV.ii Articles About Mary Kingsley.

Athenaeum	27.1.1900
	9.6.1900
	16.6.1900
	23.6.1900
Mainly About People	16.6.1900
Outlook	9.6.1900

Beth Urquhart's Collection also includes other articles about Mary Kingsley and notes from diverse secondary sources which I have not referred to in my account of Mary Kingsley.

APPENDIX II
WOMEN FELLOWS OF THE ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY
1892-3.¹

<u>Name</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date Elected</u>
Mrs Isabella Bird Bishop	Widow, Traveller, Author	28.11.1892
Mrs Zelig Isababelle Colville	Wife of...	28.11.1892
Miss Maria Vere Cust	Late Hon. Assistant Secretary to the International Oriental Congress 1892.	28.11.1892
Mrs Cottereau Dormer	-	28.11.1892
Miss S. Agnes Darbishire	-	28.11.1892
Mrs Lilly Grove	Lecturer and Teacher of ? Modern Languages	
Miss E. Grey	Spinster	29.3.1893
Mrs Edward Patten Jackson	Widow, Traveller, Mountaineer	28.11.1892
Mrs Beatrice Hope Johnstone	Wife of...	28.11.1892
Miss Julia Lindley	-	27.2.1893
Miss Kate Marsden	Spinster	28.11.1892
Mrs Edward Maberley	Widow	28.11.1892
Mrs Julia Machenna	Widow	16.1.1893
Mrs Juliet Mylne	Widow	28.11.1892
Mrs Elizabeth Mortimer	Wife of...	13.2.1893
Mrs Nicholas O'Connor	-	28.11.1892
Mrs Mary Louisa O'Donoghue	Wife of...	13.3.1893
Mrs Emmeline Porcher	Widow	28.11.1892

¹ Source : Certificates of Candidature for Election; from the 'Ladies Box' of R.G.S. Additional Papers 93-99. These certificates read : 'We, the undersigned, recommend him as likely to become a useful and valuable Fellow.' Eleven of the twenty two women listed above changed 'him' to 'her'.

Miss Christina Rivington	of Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford; has visited Syria, Egypt, India, Burma, China, Japan &c.	28.11.1892
Mrs French Sheldon	Traveller in Africa	28.11.1892
Miss Florence M.Small	Governess	?
Lady Fox Young	-	28.11.1892
