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Venturesome women: Nineteenth-century British women travel writers and sport

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Venturesome Women: Nineteenth-Century British Women Travel Writers and Sport

by

Precious McKenzie-Stearns

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Department of English
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Dedication

For Colby and Wyatt

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Precious McKenzie Stearns

ABSTRACT

This dissertation analyzes the travel writings of Isabella Bird Bishop, Mary Kingsley, Florence Douglas Dixie, and Isabel Savory. While away from England, these women writers participated in cultural exchanges which led to reevaluations of British womanhood. British women travel writers operated not only within the power structures of gender but also within the structures of empire, class, and race.

Women travel writers blazed the trail for the New Woman of the end of the century. Before cycling and cigarette smoking were allowed, daring women such as Isabella Bird Bishop and Mary Kingsley crisscrossed the globe in defiance of patriarchal tradition and in search of their own pleasure— later both hallmarks of the New Woman. Contrary to conservative hopes, women travel writers increased in popularity, inspired young women to be daring and challenged the Victorian status quo by writing of the dangerous pleasures they experienced while abroad. As inspiration for the New Women, women travel writers reveled in danger and athletics, and in time, reshaped England's image of womanhood. Because of the positive accounts of athleticism provided by women travelers, female health became a prominent topic in society. By the early twentieth century, women had increased access and acceptability to physical pursuits.

Chapter One:

Introduction

“Most people journeyed by book.”
-Robert Colls, Identity of England¹

England, and English people, of the nineteenth century witnessed many great changes both at home and abroad. The century experienced rapid technological expansion, an increase in urbanization and, both optimism and doubt for the future. English citizens had much to be proud of: the middle classes were prospering, overseas colonies proved profitable, Christianity and Britishness reigned supreme. It was “the bourgeois century.”² Lofty aspirations fueled preoccupation with the self and self-improvement in the nineteenth-century.³ The Victorian period, which saw the rise of Utilitarianism, contributed to sentiments of intense individualism.⁴ Men and women of the nineteenth century were “remarkably conscious of the individual’s limitations; and it preached the sober doctrine of self-denial quite as persuasively as the more facile gospel of self-help.”⁵ Middle class values such as respectability, the importance of work, faith in progress, and religious earnestness, permeated the upper and lower classes. By the late nineteenth century, England “would indeed be set as a ‘Land of Hope and Glory.’”⁶ However, intense individualism generated alienation.⁷

As early as 1831 John Stuart Mill remarked transition seemed to be the leading characteristic of the time.⁸ Revolutionary democratic principles such as the *Rights of Man* dissolved old, fixed social structures.⁹ Mill encouraged English citizens to reject

rigidity and instead adopt a “lasting flexibility of mind.”¹⁰ Intellectuals such as Mill encouraged alienated men and women to redefine their positions in English society. Mid-century optimism however “was based not only on economic strength but on social balance.”¹¹ The torrential number of social movements created exhilaration and unease. Tennyson best captures the clash of intense emotions of this period. His *In Memoriam* (1850) portrays a doubting soul lost in a dispassionate world because of nineteenth century scientific advancements. Yet, *In Memoriam* reaffirms a faith based on moral order. Tennyson’s emotional struggles between disillusionment and faith reflect a “common emotional experience” of the time.¹²

Though each decade varied, the notion that progress was possible gave hope to many Victorian men and women. Benevolence and unselfishness fueled the English belief in progress. Reformers, missionaries and intellectuals sought not only to improve themselves but to help the poor and downtrodden as well. Novelist George Eliot stressed sympathy and tolerance in her writings. For Eliot, and others, “sympathy is fellow-feeling.”¹³ By 1867 a paradigm shift—from worrying over individuals to worrying about society— occurred.¹⁴

English citizens directed their attentions to the relationship between the sexes as a means in which to strive for balance and order. The English home and family became mythologized in fiction, poetry, theatre, song, sermons and advertisements. The home, imagined as warm, clean and virtuous symbolized a place of respite from the frenetic pace of the nineteenth century. More specifically, such a haven would allow a man to “recover the humanity he seemed to be losing” due to the “intense pressure of

competitive life,” which caused him to feel “more and more like a money-making machine, or a cog in the vast mechanism of modern business...But in the home he might escape from this inhuman world...He might feel his heart beating again in the atmosphere of domestic affection and the binding companionship of a family.”¹⁵ The home became a “temple of the hearth,” a shrine bolstered by bourgeois values.¹⁶

Victorian women were held responsible for maintaining this ideal. Women were “told to remember the needs of ‘world-weary men’ and to pray, think, strive to make a home something like a bright, serene, restful, joyful nook of heaven in an unheavenly world.”¹⁷

John Ruskin and Coventry Patmore, in their writings, praised and glorified a sweet, genuine, submissive, supportive ideal of Victorian womanhood. Radical critics of this school of thought, such as John Stuart Mill, instead emphasized individuality, freedom, education and the need for the exercise of the female mind and body.

Not surprising then, during the mid to late nineteenth century, leisure and recreation began to occupy public debate. Women and children worked long hours in factories, shops, and mines; the public, as well as organized labour unions, advocated for better treatment of workers. They asked for shorter work days and more holidays. Their rationale: leisure time would build stronger families, stronger families would build a stronger, more moral society. Middle class reformers actively sought to control the leisure options of the working classes out of fear that the working classes would spend their leisure time at pubs and brothels rather than with their wives and children. Even with social reform, not all Victorians had access to large quantities of free time. This was a privilege that marked the middle and upper classes from the lower, working classes.

Descriptions of women's leisure activities gleaned from travel accounts, advice manuals, as well as feature articles in magazines and periodicals broaden our understandings of nineteenth-century womanhood. Though my study will by no means uncover all forms of feminine leisure pursuits, I hope to discuss how British women travel writers challenged social taboos regarding choices of female leisure activity. This is significant because leisure opportunities, when abroad, often entailed activities that these women would not have been likely to participate in while in England. Rather than sedately play cards or sew by the fireside, women travelers preferred to ride horses, hunt big game or canoe wild waters— all activities that respectable Victorian women were not expected nor allowed to do.

This is not to say that Victorian women were not permitted leisure. Quite the contrary, leisure was looked upon as a mark of social status; moreover, “the middle-class rather than the rich or the masses were to dominate this domestication of leisure.”¹⁸ Successful middle-class men gained social status and respectability if they earned enough money to allow their wives to remain safely tucked in the domestic sphere. Over the course of the century, middle-class women withdrew from domestic labor as well. To further limit their participation in active life, “[M]iddle-class women succeeded in shifting some of the arduous labor of cleaning, cooking, and childcare to servants. For example, in Britain, the number of domestics had increased from about 100,000 in 1801 to 2 million by 1881.”¹⁹ Thus “servants enabled the privileged—but by no means aristocratic—homemaker to redirect her time and energy to the esthetics of Home Sweet Home.”²⁰ Since servants tended to middle class domestic tasks, middle class wives

became the focal point for the new domestic leisure built around ‘togetherness’ and gentility rather than the traditional and often rough community pleasures of peasant society.²¹ Organized by dutiful wives, leisure provided “moral training and sustenance for the young and men.”²²

While young English boys received training in academics, girls and women were trained in domestic crafts; “Victorian middle-class girls were still taught the arts of hand sewing, crochet, and lace-work”²³ rather than science, geography or mathematics. Middle class “daughters began to be educated for leisure: ‘the girls learned accomplishments; the boys received an academic education’ (Rowbotham, 1973, p.23).”²⁴ Private girls’ schools emphasized “husband-catching skills: coiffure, fashion, singing, and piano-playing for decorous courtship recitals in parental parlors.”²⁵ Gender prohibited middle-class girls from entering the public or professional spheres. Clearly, for “middle-class girls the most visible brothers’ privileges were education and sports.”²⁶

As the authors ask in *Women’s Leisure, What Leisure?*, “What does ‘leisure,’ a term traditionally applied to time free from paid work, mean in the context of women’s lives?”²⁷ Women, especially of the lower classes, spent vast amounts of time tending to domestic matters—vital household chores such as washing, cooking, and feeding children— which did not generate income for the family. If women were not occupied by domestic tasks, then they were expected to plan educational or moral leisure opportunities for their families. Middle-class women, who financially did not have to work in the public sphere, “took it upon themselves to do the ‘good work’ of visiting the homes of the poor, to educate the women in the ways of ‘good housekeeping.’” This was

usually organized through faith-based philanthropic societies, which were managed by men.²⁸

True leisure, however, involves some individual autonomy and is marked by freedom from obligation or constraint.²⁹ If free time means that one is free to do whatever one wants, what did Victorian women *want* to do? Eileen Green points out in *Women's Leisure, What Leisure?*,

As with many other areas of women's lives, uncovering a social history of women's leisure is no easy task. Though there is a growing body of feminist writing which aims to uncover the history of women's paid employment and domestic labour, there has been little comparable literature about leisure. In addition, though there is a good deal of historical material on leisure now available, this rarely tells us much about women's experiences. As Clarke and Critcher (1985) comment, the specific focus of much of this work on institutionalised forms of leisure means that 'the history of leisure is predominately a history of male leisure.' We might assume that in the past, as now, relatively few women are taking part in organised and visible leisure activities. Then, as now, women's leisure did not typically exist as discrete periods of time passed in public places. This explains in part why women appear so little in histories of leisure.³⁰

Indeed, since 1840 fashionable English women had been fox hunting, with the assistance of a plethora of safety gear, notably "a secure pommel for riding side-saddle, non-slip girths, safety stirrups and appropriate clothing."³¹ Demanding exercise for

women however was initially linked to the feminist movement. Harriet Martineau, in 1850, recommended physically demanding activities such as swimming and rowing. Moreover, during this period, Bessie Rayner Parkes lamented that “people endeavoured to check the physical power of their daughters as much as that of their minds.”³²

By the 1860s, however, upper class and upper-middle class women actively participated in several sports. Women engaged in croquet, archery, yachting, fox-hunting, and riding. Such activities were appropriate, or ‘safe,’ for women because they were “constrained by costume and custom.”³³ These leisure activities allowed both sexes the opportunity to play and watch together. Yet, women were expected to “play like gentlemen and behave like ladies.”³⁴ Women’s interest in leisure sport was viewed by critics as superficial. Hunting and shooting, for ladies, drew great amounts of vocal criticism. Even Queen Victoria, in a letter from 1882 to her daughter, Princess Victoria, expressed her distrust of athletic women; the Queen believed “it was acceptable for a woman to be a spectator, but only fast women shot.”³⁵ Lord Warwick, in 1917, remarked, “I have met ladies who shoot and I have come to the conclusion, being no longer young and a staunch Conservative, that I would prefer them not to.”³⁶ Magazine cartoons depicted women as “dizzy creatures with little interest in sport.”³⁷ Some thought women played sports only to flirt; the physiological need (not to mention mental need) for demanding exercise was thought unnecessary for ladies. As late as 1887 in America, author Charlotte Perkins Gilman was advised to “live as domestic a life as far as possible” as a treatment for her “severe and continuous nervous breakdown tending to melancholia.”³⁸ Mental and physical exertion was strictly forbidden because of her

condition. Medical science has discovered since then that physical exertion caused by regular exercise actually elevates mood; exercise and sport might have been a cure for Gilman. Contrary to many physicians' warnings and public scorn, some women of the late nineteenth century realized the importance of physical and mental stimulation and challenged the advice given by doctors, husbands and even their own mothers. Some women challenged Victorian gender roles by participating in organized sport, such as golf and tennis. They sought adventure, excitement and usefulness in spite of public ridicule. Significantly, neither male nor female Victorian novelists wrote about sporting women; they made no more than "occasional references to hunting, racehorse ownership and cricket."³⁹ Travel writers, however, inspired new options for women.

This study explores women travel writers who dared transgress the boundaries of Victorian respectability in leisure and answered the call initiated by Wollstonecraft and Mill. Mary Kingsley, Isabella Bird Bishop, Lady Florence Douglas Dixie and Isabel Savory were fortunate their social status and relative unattachment to familial obligations allowed them freedom to travel. While they traveled, these four women enjoyed the outdoors and sport regardless of opportunities for flirtation. All four writers were widely read and enjoyed by their contemporaries. Although Savory, Bird, Dixie, and Kingsley were not active champions of the feminist movement, adventurous women travel writers inspired the New Woman's movement because their readers interpreted their achievements as travelers, adventurers and sportswomen "as proof of female equality."⁴⁰ Travel literature and empire provided the impetus necessary for a Victorian sexual revolution. Nineteenth-century women travel writers laid the foundation for the late

century's New Woman movement—whether they intended to or not. The New Woman, of the late century, no longer contented herself with the home and hearth; she longed for adventure and excitement which the travel writing of the past decades had inspired.

Analyzing women's travel writing proposes significant challenges because women travelers, though far from England, were never completely free from British moral codes and British interests. While away from England, women writers participated in cultural exchanges that led them to reevaluate their definitions of womanhood and freedom. But women travel writers participated in debates other than the 'Woman Question.' Because of the competing and sometimes overlapping social expectations these women had, their texts are unstable, contradictory, transgressive. In *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism*, Sara Mills reads women travel writers as part of a larger enterprise rather than as examples of exclusive, exceptional women who escaped the structures of patriarchy.⁴¹ Mills points out that many critics,

in an attempt to construct a history of women travellers which depicts women in a positive way (i.e., one which portrays them as strong individuals whilst still retaining femininity), are very selective with the accounts they give of women travellers, for example, they leave out accounts in the original texts of cruelty or deceitfulness. Stress is laid on feminine qualities, such as the care that was felt for the 'natives.'⁴²

Instead, and I agree with Mills on this point, women travel writers negotiated tensions caused by competing power structures. Women's travel writings are not *de facto*

autobiographies or glorious advertisements for the New Woman. At times in the texts, the writer supports Victorian stereotypes and at other times, the travel writer is renegotiating competing positions. This oftentimes leaves the travel reader perplexed as to the writer's true position. But this is the beauty of the travel narrative. Travel writing can be daring, self-reflective, and spiritual in nature. Travel writing, like the nature of travel itself, negotiates the gray areas between power and desire.⁴³ Mills expands this interpretative framework:

Travel writing, like all writing, is produced in the conflict of several discourses, which are both textual conventions and also texts which are circulating within society. For women travel writers, there is a conflict between several of the discourses, but there are moments when the discourses do reinforce one another, for example, in the case of philanthropy, which falls within the discourses of femininity and those of empire.⁴⁴

Likewise, Indira Ghose maintains a position similar to Mills. Ghose writes,

For a critic drawing on insights from poststructuralism, there can be, of course, no inherently 'female gaze.' Women are 'multiply organized across positionalities along several axes and across mutually contradictory discourses'. Further, the category of woman is itself a social and cultural construction.⁴⁵

Women travel writers faced many of the same social constraints as their peers faced in England. For example, women were "not supposed to know or write about sex."⁴⁶ And, as Mills states, "Within this stereotype, women are supposed to travel in order to paint butterflies and flowers"—certainly not scale mountains, navigate rivers

and record data on foreign geographies.⁴⁷ Victorian women travel writers rejected their submissive position as ‘good wives’ at home, and many had no particular “affinity with domesticity.”⁴⁸ Ghose adds to this theoretical framework by stating: “what needs to be looked at in more depth is how notions of gender were bound up with hegemonic ideologies, and how women were both made an instrument of, and were complicitous with, the politics of imperialism.”⁴⁹ The Woman question is truly more about women’s place within the empire. Constructions based on class, race and religion are equally important when analyzing women’s positions or perspectives of the world.

This study attempts a feminist literary history analysis of Victorian women’s leisure as found in the travel writings of Mary Kingsley, Lady Florence Douglas Dixie, Isabella Bird Bishop and Isabel Savory. I position myself somewhere between Sara Mills, Janet Todd and Joan Scott. Attempting to correct theoretical weaknesses of the past, Todd acknowledges “that gender as a social construct has real material effects on individuals and on a culture” and because “women experience the world differently from men,” “politics, economics, and religion inform and influence the private and the domestic” as well as the public act of travel.⁵⁰ Woman, then, is a contested discursive space. The subject of Woman, with a capital W, is contradictory because she is, in certain instances, subjugated and “she has practiced the agency of constructing her subjectivity as well. So Woman is not merely a category, she is also a subjective positioning within which there is room for manoeuvre.”⁵¹ Nevertheless, historians such as Joan Scott reinforce the importance of challenging a “reductionist approach that privileges gender to the exclusion of all other factors that construct identity.”⁵² Like

Janet Todd, I find gender significantly influences experience however, like Sara Mills and Joan Scott, I realize women travel writers operate not only within the power structures of gender but within the structure of empire, class, and race. In early feminist scholarship, as Chandra Talpade Mohanty concludes, women were “characterized as a singular group on the basis of a shared oppression. What binds women together is a sociological notion of the ‘sameness’ of their oppression.”⁵³ To understand a woman, or man, for that matter, scholars must take into consideration the myriad of roles human beings encounter over their lifetimes. A woman of the lower classes would have had immensely different experiences than a woman of the upper classes; economics (and race) participate in the construction of identity as significantly as does gender. Therefore, to capture a more accurate understanding of women’s travel writing, particular attention should be paid to the diverse roles and power structures that women were a part of.

In the following chapters, female athleticism will be investigated in four travel narratives: Isabella Bird Bishop’s *The Hawaiian Archipelago: Six Months among the Palm Groves, Coral Reefs, and Volcanoes of the Sandwich Islands* (1875), Lady Florence Douglas Dixie’s *Across Patagonia* (1881), Mary Kingsley’s *Travels in West Africa* (1897), and Isabel Savory’s *A Sportswoman in India: Personal Adventures and Experiences of Travel in Known and Unknown India* (1900). These four texts were selected for a variety of reasons, most importantly for their representations of exploration, empire and their portrayal of athletic, outdoor-loving women who were quite opinionated about their status as women in the nineteenth-century. Each writer navigates the tensions between gender, sport and empire in distinct and unstable ways. By

choosing these particular texts— one text from each of the last decades of the Victorian era— social anxieties surrounding women’s roles found in their rhetoric provides modern readers with a comprehensive view of ideological shifts which occurred during this time.

Additionally, I placed the texts in chronological order in order to examine the internal evolution of the travel writing genre and of the empire. Because travel writing struggles with more than gender issues, I also explore a question posed by Mary Louise Pratt in *Imperial Eyes* (1992): “How has travel writing produced the rest of the world for European readership?”⁵⁴ Indeed, Victorian women travel writers blazed the trail for the New Woman of the end of the century. Before cycling and cigarette smoking, daring women such as Isabella Bird Bishop and Mary Kingsley crisscrossed the globe in defiance of patriarchal tradition and in search of their own pleasure— later both hallmarks of the New Woman. Contrary to conservative hopes, women travel writers increased in popularity, inspired young women to be daring and challenged the Victorian status quo by writing of the dangerous pleasures they experienced while traveling. As inspiration for the New Women, women travel writers reveled in danger and defiance and in turn, reshaped England’s image of womanhood.

In Chapters 2 through 5, I investigate what sport and travel suggest about nineteenth-century English society. In Chapter 2, I analyze how Isabella Bird Bishop’s travel narrative addresses social and political issues surrounding the native Hawaiians as the United States and England competed for its goods and territory. As a thoughtful nod to the missionaries’ earlier work, Isabella Bird praises the newly Christianized Hawaiian lifestyle. She also charts the islands’ resources and expounds on Hawaii’s value as a

colony. She is particularly captivated by the freedom enjoyed by native Hawaiian women. While in Hawaii, Bird escapes from strict British custom and rides on her horse like a man. In this chapter, I argue that Bird's travel narrative negotiates not only theories of womanhood but theories of empire as well. The female body and the equine body become the contested zones between 'civilized' and 'savage,' or the British Empire and 'the other.'

Lady Florence Douglas Dixie's *Across Patagonia* is examined in Chapter 3. In this travel narrative, Lady Dixie describes her journey across South America with her brother, and her husband. Dixie ponders the slavery of women and the dangers faced by women as she crosses the country on horseback. The adventurers encounter prairie fires, food shortages and thrilling hunts. As Dixie participates in the hunts, she questions English tradition. Her time spent in the open South American air does not masculinize her; rather it provides a lesson in self-reliance that transcends gender boundaries. Her womanhood, she believes, is strengthened because she has learned to provide for herself and survive in difficult circumstances.

Much critical work has focused on Mary Kingsley's *Travels in West Africa*, however in Chapter 4, I attempt to synthesize the work by scholars such as Alison Blunt, Catherine Barnes Stevenson, Katherine Frank, and Sara Mills, who have explored Kingsley's position as a solitary woman explorer. However, I deconstruct Kingsley's rhetoric in regard to her position as an active, sporting imperial subject. Kingsley's physical exertions remind one of classic adventurers, yet her negotiation of Africa reflects her deep and contradictory relationship with imperial Britain and racism.

In Chapter 5, I investigate Isabel Savory's *A Sportswoman in India: Personal Adventures and Experiences of Travel in Known and Unknown India*. Savory travels by boat, train, elephant and horse in order to experience the 'greatest jewel in the British crown.' She claims she travels to expand her mind and develop herself. To broaden her education, she catalogues India's riches, explores causes of poverty and ponders international relations. Her opinions are diverse and fluctuating; she criticizes British colonial policy regarding Kashmir just as she denigrates Indian social customs. As a British woman in India, Savory seems torn between defending her mother country and criticizing native policy. Clearly, she finds herself trapped between the roles of patriot and preservationist. Nevertheless, her narrative is a moving account of perseverance. Savory describes the joys as well as the challenges faced by sportsmen. Her narrative is rich with descriptions of avalanches and big game hunts. Although Savory's accommodations are more luxurious than the other travelers in this study, she is still placed in dangerous circumstances thought of as 'unsuitable for ladies.' She narrowly escapes death as her horse slides over a cliff; she leaps off his back just before he plummets to his death. Travel and danger foster Savory's self-reliance. Traveling also provides her with opportunities in which to criticize social policies in the empire.

Examination of these four travel narratives strengthens our understandings of women's positions in the empire. All four women challenged themselves physically in order to participate in the charting of the British Empire. British women travel writers renegotiated social expectations for women and reenvisioned their place within the empire. The final chapter of this study traces the impact that women adventurers had on

the nineteenth century and beyond. Because of the positive accounts of athleticism provided by women travelers, female health became a prominent topic in society. By the early twentieth century, women had increased access and acceptability to physical pursuits. Girls' schools taught physical education, in proper dress of course.⁵⁵ Popular magazines, such as *The Girl's Own Paper*, featured athletic activities for young women.⁵⁶ Medical doctors realized that "exercise improved women's health and childbearing capacity" yet this realization competed with increasing anxiety over the loss of feminine charms due to masculinization caused by exercise and sport.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, by the early twentieth century, women seized opportunities to participate in athletics thereby resituating themselves in the debate over women's rights. British women's travel writing functioned as "a medium for the construction of a self-confident female subjectivity."⁵⁸ Indeed, sport and travel inspired women to escape the tradition-bound domestic sphere in order to actively participate in empire building.

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- ⁴ Bernard Richards, *English Poetry of the Victorian Period, 1830-1890* (New York: Longman, 2001), 5.
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- ⁶ Gilmour, 245.
- ⁷ Richards, 5.
- ⁸ Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), 1.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 168.
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- ¹⁵ Houghton, 345.
- ¹⁶ As quoted in G.K. Chesterton, *Autobiography* (New York, 1936), 20.
- ¹⁷ Houghton, 345.
- ¹⁸ Gary Cross, *A Social History of Leisure Since 1600* (State College, PA: Venture Publishing, Inc., 1990), 103.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 104.
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- ²¹ *Ibid.*, 63.
- ²² *Ibid.*, 103.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, 108.
- ²⁴ Eileen Green, Sandra Hebron and Diana Woodward, *Women's Leisure, What Leisure?* (London: Macmillan, 1990), 41.
- ²⁵ Cross, 108.
- ²⁶ Sally Mitchell, *The New Girl: Girls' Culture in England, 1880-1915* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 105.
- ²⁷ Green, 4.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, 44.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, 38-39.
- ³¹ Mike Huggins, *The Victorians and Sport* (London: Hambledon & London, 2004), 80.
- ³² Mitchell, 106.
- ³³ Huggins, 80.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, 80.
- ³⁵ Maria Aitken, *Women Adventurers: Travelers, Explorers, and Seekers* (New York: Dorset Press, 1987), 85.
- ³⁶ Aitken, 85.
- ³⁷ Huggins, 81.
- ³⁸ Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "Why I Wrote *The Yellow Wallpaper*?" in *Women Who Did: Stories by Men and Women, 1890-1914*, ed. Angelique Richardson (London: Penguin Books, 2002), 398-9.
- ³⁹ Huggins, 159.
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- ⁴⁹ Ghose, 4.
- ⁵⁰ Kathleen M. Oliver, *(En)Gendering Silence: Women and Silence in the English Novel, From Richardson to Austen*, (unpublished dissertation: University of South Florida, 2000), 16.
- ⁵¹ Carol Smart, "Disruptive Bodies and Unruly Sex: The Regulation of Reproduction and Sexuality in the Nineteenth Century," *Regulating Womanhood: Historical Essays on Marriage, Motherhood and Sexuality*, ed. Carol Smart (London: Routledge, 1992), 7-8.
- ⁵² Ghose, 14.
- ⁵³ Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," in *Feminist Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. Reina Lewis and Sara Mills (New York: Routledge, 2003), 53.
- ⁵⁴ Steve Clark, ed., *Travel Writing and Empire*, 8.
- ⁵⁵ Kathryn Gleadle, *British Women in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 183.
- ⁵⁶ Mitchell, *The New Girl*, 105.
- ⁵⁷ Mitchell, 106.
- ⁵⁸ Ghose, 32.

Chapter Two:

“There’s nothing Western folk admire so much as pluck in a woman:” Isabella Bird
Bishop and her Adventures in Hawaii¹

Isabella Bird Bishop’s 1875 travel memoir *The Hawaiian Archipelago. Six months Among the Palm Groves, Coral Reefs, and Volcanoes of the Sandwich Islands* is an insightful commentary on the political situation the Sandwich Islands faced in the mid-nineteenth century as well as a fiery piece of feminist propaganda. Though Bird did not align herself with feminist organizations, her text resonated with late nineteenth-century women’s rights activists.² Her travel narrative encouraged British bourgeois women to carve out “new social spaces” for themselves.³ As Bird wrote about new spaces for women, she also wrote of new spaces for British capital.

To begin her critique of Hawaii and its civilization, Bird confronts the questions surrounding the mental and physical state of the native Hawaiians. They are not, she claims, savages nor cannibals. They are not identical to Fijians and perhaps most importantly, the native Hawaiians do not worship idols and do not run naked through the jungle. The Hawaiians are “on the whole a quiet, courteous, orderly, harmless, Christian community.”⁴ Early in her narrative, Bird describes the civilized order of the Hawaiian kingdom. She writes:

The Hawaiians show a great aptitude for political organization, and the islands have a thoroughly civilized polity. They constitute a limited monarchy, and have a constitutional and hereditary king, a parliament with an upper and lower house,

a cabinet, a standing army, a police force, a Supreme Court of Judicature, a most efficient postal system, a Governor and Sheriff on each of the larger islands, court officials, and civil list, taxes, a national debt, and most of the other amenities and appliances of civilization.⁵

Bird credits the missionaries with bringing the Bible, education and political systems to the Hawaiians. She acknowledges that the missionaries taught the Hawaiians how to read English and then the Hawaiians began to challenge ancient, oppressive feudal customs. Bird lays this foundation as if to prove to her readers that the Hawaiians are civilized and respectable. Bird's openness and fondness for native Hawaiian culture are markedly different than many Victorian male travelers on Pacific Islanders— such as Captain James Cook. Bird does not view Hawaiian women or men as sites for conquest; rather she hopes their natural, joyful lifestyle might influence Victorian culture in a positive manner. Perhaps the English might learn how to live healthy, pure lives because of information she provides in her travel book.

The Early Christian Missionaries in the Sandwich Islands

To better understand the conditions of the Sandwich Islands before Bird's arrival it is important to see the islands as the early missionaries did. The missionaries settled in Hawaii approximately fifty years before Bird's visit. In Ephraim Eveleth's *History of the Sandwich Islands with an Account of the American Mission Established there in 1820*, Eveleth describes the situation of the native islanders during the missionaries' early contact. Eveleth states "From the death of Captain Cook, until the introduction of

Christianity, in the year 1820, there was going on in the islands a regular deterioration in character, and an aggravation in vice and misery.”⁶ Divine intervention, in the form of boatloads of Christian missionaries were, in Eveleth’s opinion (among others), the only way in which to end the ‘misery’ of the islanders and ‘advance’ civilization. To adopt a post-colonial phrase, the missionaries were the first to take up “the white man’s burden” and attempt to bring the Hawaiians into the fold of Western civilization.

One missionary, a Mr. Stewart, records in his journal: “A first sight of these wretched creatures [sic] was almost overwhelming. Their naked figures and wild expression of countenance, their black hair streaming in the wind as they hurried the canoe over the water, with all the eager action and muscular power of savages.”⁷ During the first encounter, Hawaiians are perceived as savages. Nevertheless, the ‘savages’ the missionaries first encounter seem capable of ‘civilizing’ because of their curiosity regarding Western culture and their apparent adaptability. Mr. Stewart notes: “It is proper, however, to add, that the natives are rapidly adopting the English or American fashion of dress, and procure foreign cloth and garments as fast as they have the means of purchasing them.”⁸ Ironically, it seems as if the Hawaiians did not adopt Western dress as effortlessly and rapidly as Mr. Stewart preferred his readers to believe. Mark Twain’s *Roughing It* bemusedly describes the early missionaries’ frustration with Hawaiian clothing, or lack thereof. Twain writes:

When the missionaries first took up their residence in Honolulu, the native women would pay their families frequent friendly visits, day by day, not even clothed with a blush. It was found a hard matter to convince them that this was

rather indelicate. Finally the missionaries provided them with long, loose calico robes, and that ended the difficulty—for the women would troop through the town, stark naked, with their robes folded under their arms, march to the missionary houses and then proceed to dress!⁹

The missionaries were relieved to see Hawaiians experimenting with Western fashion but were no doubt concerned about their lightheartedness in such matters. By the time Mark Twain traveled to Hawaii in 1866, Hawaiians had adopted a code of dress that covered female genitalia. Hawaiian women wore “a single garment— a bright colored robe or wrapper as voluminous as a balloon, with full sleeves. This robe is “gathered” from shoulder to shoulder, before and behind, and then descends in ample folds to the feet.”¹⁰ Although the missionaries worked diligently to cover Hawaiian women, Hawaiian women, or so Twain reports, wore “seldom a chemise or any other undergarment.”¹¹ Hawaiians adopted some of the missionaries’ fashion, but certainly not all. Hawaiians resolved to remain Hawaiian.

The missionaries saw sin and vice in Hawaiian food, entertainment, and sexuality. To the missionaries’ dismay, not only did the native Hawaiians eat fruits fresh from the trees, sugar cane, wild hogs and dogs, the chiefs lived in shocking decadence compared to the poorer subjects of the islands.¹² The chiefs, not unlike European monarchs, enjoyed class privilege; Eveleth writes, “the chiefs may truly be said to live at their ease, enjoying a profusion of the produce of the land and sea, and having no other care but ‘to eat, and to drink, and to be merry.’”¹³ The missionaries also battled the “evils” of polygamy. The missionaries preached that polygamy “is an evil of which we can have no

just conception. It is the bane of human society. It destroys at once the sacredness of the relation between husband and wife.”¹⁴ Nevertheless, the missionaries believed the Hawaiians evolved from primitive ignorance into enlightened quasi-Europeans relatively quickly. For example, Eveleth states, “[T]hese people are acquiring the habits of civilized life, just in proportion as they enjoy the instructions and example of the missionaries.”¹⁵ Christian religion, bolstered by the moral examples set by responsible, “civilized” missionaries provided instruction and guidance that was thought lacking in the Hawaiians. Under Christian guidance, the missionaries believed they saw the “awakening intellect of a nation.”¹⁶

The “awakening intellect of a nation” was not accomplished without resistance. Twain reports, in 1866, that the King said: “[T]he foreigners like their religion—let them enjoy it, and freely. But the religion of my fathers is good enough for me.”¹⁷ Twain admired the pride and resistance to assimilation that he observed in the Hawaiians. In his *Notebook* he wrote: “[M]ore missionaries and more row about saving these 60,000 people than would take to convert hell itself.”¹⁸ Hawaiians welcomed foreign people to their islands but worked to retain their customs as they built their own Hawaiian empire. The Hawaiian goal was to retain sovereignty while increasing their national profit.

Christian mission work however is implicitly connected to empire building. Even Eveleth admits,

How gratifying is it, then, to find, that these privileges and encouragements of civilized life, are actually beginning to dwell upon the once benighted shores of Hawaii and her neighbouring isles! We cannot predict that they will ever become

like the British isles; but when we reflect, that righteousness is at the foundation of national, as it is of individual prosperity; and behold it taking deep root there; when we call to mind the natural advantages of these islands, connected with their great facilities for commercial intercourse with all nations, we are constrained to believe, that they are destined to hold an important rank in the civilized world.¹⁹

For the missionaries then, it was their moral, Christian duty to ready the ‘savage’ islands for the American and British empires.

The competing missions of the United States and England created diplomatic tensions in the Pacific. By the middle of the nineteenth-century, Hawaii found itself in a precarious position between England, France and the United States. Hawaii was much sought after due to the already high levels of Western civilization found in the islands. Such accomplishment marked the efforts of the early missionaries. In 1861, Sophia Cracroft, a famous Arctic explorer and forty-five year old spinster, wrote in a journal letter to her family in England, “[A]mong the indigenous races below the equator, in any event, none had reached the civilized refinement of the better class of Hawaiians, many of who were ‘highly educated and accomplished men.’”²⁰ For Cracroft, the “accomplishments” of the Hawaiians had in large part to do with their King Alexander Liholiho because he “regularly” received “the *Times*, the *Illustrated News*, the *Quarterly*, the *Edinburgh Review*, *Blackwood’s Magazine*, the *Westminster Review*, and *Punch*.”²¹ The Hawaiian king, at least for Sophia Cracroft, seemed a perfect “English gentleman.”²² In Cracroft’s opinion, such a display of British literary sophistication did not impede the missionaries’ imperial agenda. In fact, such displays of anglophilism may have heightened the

American advancement because the United States did not want to lose Hawaii to England. The United States aggressively negotiated with Hawaii. The practices of the American imperial machine did not meet with unanimous approval. Cracroft claims:

Of all people, the Americans must be the very worst for entering among and civilizing a savage people, since they at once fall foul of the fundamental institution of such a people-viz., that of the chiefs. The American theory being that all men are equal-niggers excepted!- and the Presbyterians being especially wedded to this principle, the Missionaries have ever held it as a rule to weaken the power of the chiefs-in fact, to destroy the Aristocracy of the Land. ²³

Whether or not modern scholars agree with Cracroft or Eveleth's sweeping generalizations does not mar the significance of Hawaii in the debate surrounding imperial expansion in the Pacific.

Early in the nineteenth century steamships crossed the Pacific, carrying goods and people from the United States, Australia, New Zealand, China and Japan. More specifically, the trade in sandalwood and fur brought many foreign steamships into Hawaii.²⁴ It was not uncommon for American missionaries to arrive in Hawaii via whaling ships.²⁵ By 20 July 1855 a treaty between the United States and Hawaii was agreed upon and signed. This treaty, which was in effect for seven years, "provided that unrefined sugar, molasses, coffee, arrowroot, livestock, and a number of other Hawaiian products should be admitted free of duty into the United States; and that wheat, flour, fish, coal, timber and lumber, staves and heading, and some other products of the United States should be admitted free of duty into the Hawaiian islands."²⁶ Between 1854 and

1874 domestic exports increased from less than \$275,000 to more than \$1,500,000.²⁷ Hawaii's molasses export in 1865 "amounted to half a million gallons."²⁸ In 1866, Hawaii yielded twenty-seven million pounds of sugar.²⁹ Indeed, Hawaii, an agricultural land of plenty, appeared ready to barter with imperial powers. Despite the free exchange of goods as well as the movement of people between Hawaii and Western imperial powers, Hawaiian officials resisted annexation and complete colonization.

By the time Isabella Bird Bishop arrived in Hawaii, King Kamehameha IV had reorganized the Hawaiian educational system. The act of legislature in the spring of 1855 removed the American missionary influence on Hawaiian schools.³⁰ And before that, in 1849, the Hawaiian government decided to maintain its independence from England and America and thus remain neutral. Hawaii hoped to develop policies that "were not anti-American or pro-British, but only pro-Hawaiian."³¹ Bird's travel text, which describes her experiences in the 'post-civilized' islands of 1872, rather a treatise on how to adopt the "white man burden"; is instead an adventurous foray on woman (singular) power. Similar to Hawaii's goal in the age of Empire, Bird attempts to remain "pro-Hawaiian."

The Freedom Found in Nature

Isabella Bird was a frail, sickly child. Her physical activity was limited by spinal complaints; walking long distances and riding side-saddle were quite difficult for young Isabella Bird.³² Her parents did, however, keep her out of doors as often as possible.³³ At eighteen, Bird underwent surgery to remove a tumor at the base of her spine.³⁴ When she was twenty, her doctor prescribed travel to improve her health; she journeyed to

America. Yet, the next year, her health suffered. In her thirties she continued to experience chronic backaches and moved in with her sister, as an invalid.³⁵ Although she and her sister, Henrietta, lived in a “dignified square” in Edinburgh and had “circle of high-minded, intelligent friends,” Bird’s health was never robust.³⁶ Bird remarks, in her personal letters, that she experienced “neuralgia, pain in my bones, pricking like pins and needles in my limbs, excruciating nervousness, exhaustion, inflamed eyes, sore throat, swelling of the glands behind each ear, stupidity.”³⁷ Victorian medicine did not alleviate her suffering. She frequently took three bromides per day and continued to feel “shaking all over” and experienced undefined terror of which she decides, “I am such a miserable being.”³⁸ Her back pains improved occasionally, yet she continued to suffer from other ailments. She wrote in a letter to her sister: “My back is better but my head remains so bad and I always feel so tired that I never wish to speak...I wish I cared for people and did not feel used up by them, for people one can always have. I like toil with occasional spurts of recreation. This is such an aimless life.”³⁹ She goes as far as to tell Henrietta that, if her health improved, she would prefer a servant’s life rather than her aimless life as a gentlewoman. She decides, “[M]anual labour, a rough life and freedom from conventionalities added to novelty would be a good thing.”⁴⁰

Aches and pains of the body, in the nineteenth century, were seen as forms of depression. For male sufferers, doctors recommended stimulating and invigorating exercise such as horseback riding and gymnastics. Fresh air, water, hardy food and sleep constituted remedies for chronic complaints.⁴¹ In fact, a nineteenth century handbook for physicians, *Tanner’s Index of Diseases*, “urged against the use of purgatives, sedatives,

and narcotics.” *Tanner’s* instead recommended “strengtheners” such as “strychnine, or nux vomica; phosphate of zinc and bark; bromide of potassium; and cod liver oil.”⁴² As a woman, however, Bird’s prescription was more restrictive, yet she found that when she traveled her health improved. Fresh air and exercise indeed benefited Victorian women as it did Victorian men. In 1872, Bird, at forty-two, sailed for the Sandwich Islands. There she indulged in fresh air and strenuous physical activity.

Bird utilizes nature and the terrain to encourage her feminist transformation. For example, when Bird sees Honolulu for the first time, she describes the lush greenery, the sea foam and then Honolulu, nestled and almost hidden “among cocoanut trees and bananas, umbrella trees and breadfruits, oranges, mangoes, hibiscus, and passion flowers.”⁴³ The discursive landscape is a model “for the ways in which women’s texts carve their feminisms out of the very materials that hem them in.”⁴⁴ In order for Bird to penetrate and ‘know’ the mysterious Hawaiian people and customs, Bird must first penetrate the thick, dense tropical wilderness. The wildness and remoteness that Bird sees excites her. Bird, enchanted by the beauty of nature, the fresh air and sunshine, exclaims “Bright blossom of a summer sea! Fair Paradise of the Pacific!”⁴⁵ Bird’s Hawaii is remote and distant from England. At first contact, Hawaii is a land set apart from the struggles of modernity. For Bird, Hawaii offers an alternative form of being. Feminist scholars believe this discourse of elsewhere is really not a discourse regarding a mythic place but rather “it is the elsewhere of discourse here and now, the blind spots, or the space-off.”⁴⁶ Hawaii is representative of the space away from England’s taboos. Paradoxically, Mark Twain’s arrival in Hawaii offers other images. Twain reports there

were “fat, ugly birds” and that Oahu “loomed” and that “black and dreary” and Molokai “lay like a homely sway-backed whale on the water.”⁴⁷ How might two contradictory accounts represent a “here and now” paradise for a Victorian woman? Bird finds her “here and now,” paradise in Hawaii because she has the opportunity to witness and experience freedom of movement— notably vigorous exercise— traditionally denied to most middle class Victorian women.

The first physical freedom Bird notices is women’s dress. In England, women on most occasions wore corsets, hats, and one or two layers of petticoats, long skirts, gloves, heels.... etc. When in Hawaii, because of the tropical climate, women’s dress codes underwent a bit of tailoring which Bird seemed to appreciate. She writes that the “foreign ladies” wore light, simple muslins and white straw hats with native flowers. She remarks that “[T]he foreign ladies, in their simple, tasteful, fresh attire, innocent of the humpings and bunchings, the monstrosities and deformities of ultra-fashionable bad taste, beamed with cheerfulness, friendliness and kindness.”⁴⁸ Women not confined in humpings and bunchings of Victorian fashion could participate in more physical activities. One Victorian conduct book, *Exercise for Ladies* (1837), states

[H]orseback riding produces in ladies a coarseness of voice, a weathered complexion, and unnatural consolidation of the bones of the lower part of the body, ensuring a frightful impediment to future functions which need not here be dwelt upon; by overdevelopment of the muscles equitation produces an immense increase in the waist and is, in short, altogether masculine and unwomanly.⁴⁹

Hawaiian women participated in athletics such as swimming, surf-riding, and horseback riding; such activities only heightened their attractiveness in Bird's eyes. Bird's laudatory comments differ significantly from conservative, nineteenth-century conduct books.

Regardless of conduct books' warnings, the activity Bird enjoys most and that the Hawaiians most enjoy was horseback riding. This activity would not have been possible without foreign contact. Horses were brought to the Hawaiian Islands in 1803 from California. Large numbers of horses continued to arrive from California in the 1820s and 1830s.⁵⁰ Hawaiians, by mid-century, relied on horses to travel across the rugged terrain more efficiently than by foot and also used horses as "recreation and entertainment." Hawaiians "became enthusiastic and expert equestrians, and to an appreciable extent horseback riding took the place of swimming and surf-riding in the life of the people."⁵¹ Since road systems were not yet advanced at this time, travel by carriages and wagons proved difficult.⁵² Out of necessity, Hawaiian men and women learned how to ride on horseback.

The freedom of movement Hawaiian women had, especially on horseback, astounded Bird. Such freedom contributed to robust health and fitness for women. She writes:

Saturday afternoon is a gala-day here and the road was so thronged with brilliant equestrians, that I thought we should be ridden over by the reckless rout...The women seemed perfectly at home in their gay, brass-bossed, high peaked saddles, flying along astride, bare-footed, with their

orange and scarlet riding dresses streaming on each side beyond their horses' tails, a bright kaleidoscopic flash of bright eyes, white teeth, shining hair, garlands of flowers.⁵³

Bird admires the careless abandon Hawaiian women exhibit on horseback. Yet, she continues to ride sidesaddle. Soon however, Bird adopts the Hawaiian fashion of riding astride because she slips up her horse's neck while crossing a rocky stream. Bird, following the advice of a man, allows a Mexican saddle to be placed on her horse so that she may ride astride. She claims she only allows this because she desperately wants to see the Kilauea volcano and the only way to accomplish this is on horseback.

Furthermore, she maintains this breach of etiquette is necessary for her own safety.⁵⁴

She agrees to 'go native' and rides like the Hawaiians. Up until this point in the narrative, Bird is a virgin on horseback. When she spreads her legs and rides astride for the first time, she is, like a proper, chaste 'lady' nervous, tense and afraid.⁵⁵ Bird reports she is bruised and sore from her first attempt at riding astride. More significant than losing her metaphorical virginity, is the fact that while Bird reports on Hawaiian social customs for her English readers, she is also actively challenging English social customs. By this point Hawaii was bombarded with American, French and Asian habits. Bird, similar to most women travel writers during the nineteenth century, observed and reported on the customs of the societies they visited. Hawaii was already well on its way to Westernization and few, if any native traditions, were left undisturbed by foreign contact. In order for Bird to penetrate Hawaii's mysteries, one native custom she had to adopt was riding astride. By riding astride, Bird breaks free from the expectations of the

British domestic sphere in which middle class women were assigned and expands her “arena of agency.”⁵⁶ By riding a horse like a man, Bird creates a new contact zone between her feminine body and that of the horse. She seizes power and authority for her narrative as she proves she is able to perform the same physical activities that a man might. In 1875 this was a very bold statement for a British woman.

Bird is not disappointed by the power she acquires while on horseback. She travels to the most remote, most rugged parts of the Hawaiian Islands. Nothing escapes her surveillance. For her courage, she is rewarded with many beautiful views from the back of her horse.⁵⁷ The high vantage points from the horse “provides her with a sense of all-encompassing vision;” certainly an unchallengeable perspective on the Hawaiian Islands.⁵⁸ Bird is not merely a surveyor, she is a participant. She experiences the visceral thrill of the ride, splash splashing through a stream.⁵⁹ Occasionally, Bird tethers her horse and establishes contact with the earthy elements of Hawaii. For example, she dismounts her horse to bathe in a waterfall. She writes: “[T]he sides were draped with ferns flourishing under the spray...I enjoyed a delicious bath, relying on the sun and wind to dry my clothes.”⁶⁰ After her wilderness bath, she meets a Hawaiian man and woman with “faultless forms” and “rich brown skin” who were catching shrimp in the stream. The couple joins Bird and they wade back to place where the Hawaiians’ horses are tethered. Once back to the horses, Bird writes, “the man insisted on my riding his barebacked horse to the place where we had left our own, and then we all galloped over the soft grass.”⁶¹

The Hawaiian's request was probably made out of deference for Bird; however, by accepting his offer, she breaches traditional codes of conduct for Englishwomen. Not only does she mount a strange man's horse, she does so bareback and most likely astride. She literally and metaphorically spreads her legs and makes intimate, physical contact with the natives. Although her skin meets only equine skin, the equine skin is the property of a Hawaiian man. Metaphorically, the horse becomes the contact zone between the Englishwoman and the native. Furthermore, Bird is unashamed by the free and liberal Hawaiian lifestyle. Though communal childrearing practices confound Bird, she tells her readers again and again: "I delight in Hawaii more than ever, with its unconventional life."⁶² It seems as if Bird delighted in the unexpected and vigorous. As she peers into volcanoes, tours sugar plantations and factories, rides over rocky coastline and splashes through streams, Hawaii must have seemed like a paradise compared to her life at home.

Her doctor prescribed travel and travel became Bird's cure. She had a change of climate, of scenery and most importantly, she could abandon her inhibitions and free herself from many Victorian social codes. For example, after she rides astride for the first time, Bird decides to alter her proper Victorian dress (for practical reasons, of course). With a new form of intense physical exercise and a new dress, Bird becomes a new and improved woman. She writes,

I am gaining health daily, and almost live in the open air. I have hired the native policeman's horse and saddle, and with a Macgregor flannel riding costume, which my kind friends have made for me, and a pair of jingling Mexican spurs,

am quite Hawaiianised. I ride alone once or twice a day exploring the neighbourhood, finding some new fern or flower daily, and abandon myself wholly to the fascination of this new existence.⁶³

Bird's daily horseback excursions opened new physical experiences for her. Thought of as an invalid and spinster at home, the challenge of mounting, and remaining mounted, refuted society's expectations of her. She gloried in the vibrant strength and freedom she felt while on horseback. Using a man's Mexican saddle rather than an uncomfortable side-saddle no doubt alleviated the strains on Bird's back. With modifications made to traditional, proper ladies' fashion and equipage, horseback riding revived Bird's senses. She confesses her pleasure in a letter to her sister, Henrietta. She writes: "I liked it, oh how I liked it...I did wild things which I can't do with white people, such as galloping wildly up and down hill, hallooing a horse to make it go, twisting my knee for a few minutes around the horn of the saddle, riding without stirrups and other free and easy ways. I thought of nothing all that day."⁶⁴ While in Hawaii, the natives apparently were charmed by her. Those who witnessed her fearless riding "laughed and waved and threw flowers after her and shouted 'paniola, paniola' and she laughed back, liking its sound. The word meant 'cowboy,' she learned later, 'lassoing cattle and all that kind of thing,' and secretly Isabella hugged it as a compliment, though it was not generally used as such about a foreign lady."⁶⁵

Bird's narrative persona is one of strength, logic and determination. As a solitary woman traveler, she had to prove herself. Mark Twain, on the other hand, recounts his

foibles with jest. His horseback excursions on the islands were less than idyllic; his equestrian prowess lacking. Twain admits,

I am probably the most sensitive man in the kingdom of Hawaii tonight—especially about sitting down in the presence of my betters. I have ridden fifteen or twenty miles on horseback since 5 P.M., and to tell the honest truth, I have a delicacy about sitting down at all. I am one of the poorest horsemen in the world, and I never mount a horse without experiencing a sort of dread that I may be setting out on that last mysterious journey which all of us must take sooner or later...⁶⁶

Twain confesses he prefers “a safe horse to a fast one—I would like to have an excessively gentle horse—a horse with no spirit whatever—a lame one.”⁶⁷ Whereas Bird adored horses and horseback riding, Twain finds little to appreciate in Oahu, his Hawaiian horse.⁶⁸ He claims that in Hawaii, one “can buy a pretty good horse for forty or fifty dollars, and a good enough horse for all practical purposes for two dollars and a half. I estimate Oahu to be worth somewhere in the neighborhood of thirty-five cents.”⁶⁹ Twain makes his position clear—equestrian adventure is not his forte. Yet, this does not detract from his social position or his manliness. Twain, secure in his social position as a white, American man does not have to prove to observers that he is experienced and capable. As a man, he embodied a certain level of athleticism; if riding proved not his sport, society expected him to excel at other games whether those were cards, golf, tennis or hunting. Additionally, Twain rides in any manner he wishes and if he makes a buffoon of himself, he has nothing to lose. He is still permitted to ride again the next day and

women still find him charming and endearing. Whereas Bird, and other women adventurers, had to prove to male observers— and even to some extent female observers— that they were capable and strong enough to handle the physical exertions so that critics would not banish them to the safety of the drawing room or the nursery. Therefore, Bird constructs her image as the Victorian heroine who “could be admired for her fortitude in the face of adversity” so that she remains active in the public sphere.⁷⁰ Twain’s subversive humor accentuates his difficulties. But, by overcoming his fears and continuing on his treacherous expedition, he builds a heroic, adventurer persona for readers. For both Bird and Twain, triumphing over obstacles ultimately made their achievements “that much more heroic and proved how much personal credit was due.”⁷¹

Hawaii embodies paradise for both Bird and Twain. Both writers are enchanted by uninhibited displays of sexuality and healthfulness. Bird writes, “[T]hese are indeed the ‘isles of Eden,’ ‘the sun lands,’ musical with beauty. They seem to welcome us to their enchanted shores. Everything is new but nothing is strange.”⁷² The Hawaiians “charmingly embodied an absolute anti-thesis to that Anglo-Saxon Puritan-Christian ethic” that the early American missionaries established.⁷³ Victorian British society also maintained strict Christian ethics. Twain sees the Hawaiian Islands as paradise, at least from a male heterosexual perspective. One ramble stands out for Twain; he writes:

At noon I observed a bevy of nude native young ladies bathing in the sea, and went and sat down on their clothes to keep them from being stolen. I begged them to come out, for the sea was rising and I was satisfied that they were running some risk. But they were not afraid, and presently went on with their sport. They

were finished swimmers and divers, and enjoyed themselves to the last degree.

They swam races, splashed and ducked and tumbled each other about, and filled the air with their laughter.⁷⁴

Isabella Bird Bishop creates her own adventure and imagines the Hawaiian people and landscape in her own feminist voice because of the freedom horseback travel allows. Bird's feminine perspective as narrator is unlike Annette Kolodny's reading of Pocahontas, since Pocahontas is not the narrator; she has no control or power over her audience. Similar to Pocahontas, Twain's nude female swimmers, are "captive in the 'garden of someone else's imagination.'" ⁷⁵ Bird holds narrative power; she is not objectified as a sexual plaything. While on the horse, Bird commands the animal and she is able to travel where she wishes, to experience what she wishes; she relies on herself. As Bird navigates her horse through the mountain jungles and streams, she controls the readers' imaginations. She crafts her own adventure tale and by doing so, she is not the victim, not the "other." Instead, others are captive in her imagination, her story.

The Women of England and Their Social Duties

Bird's narrative is a challenge to conservative Victorian ideologies. She states she has never seen "people live such easy, pleasant lives" as the native Hawaiians.⁷⁶ More importantly, Bird rejects the Victorian construction of the 'Angel in the House' "whose only thought was for her family and who was free from the taint of sexual awareness."⁷⁷ Although Bird does not understand Hawaiian parenting practices, she concludes "[T]hough they are so deficient in adhesiveness to family ties...the tie of race

is intensely strong, and they are remarkably affectionate to each other.”⁷⁸ For a middle class, Victorian woman, this is indeed a liberal perspective. Not only does Bird challenge conventional English patriarchy in her text, but she also offers alternative domestic possibilities. Bird confronts popular nineteenth-century conservative social beliefs proliferated by women, such as Mrs. Sarah Stickney Ellis (1812-1872). Ellis, a missionary and wife in the Hawaiian Islands, wrote wildly popular books on women and social duties. One of her books, *The Women of England, Their Social Duties, and Domestic Habits* was in its fifteenth edition by 1839.

Sarah Ellis preaches social and domestic usefulness for women. Unfortunately, some of the greatest problems with nineteenth-century English women, for Mrs. Ellis, are inactivity, frivolity, affectation, and ignorance. For example, Ellis claims:

The greater portion of the young ladies (for they are no longer *women*) of the present day, are distinguished by a morbid listlessness of mind and body, except when under the influence of stimulus, a constant pining for excitement, and an eagerness to escape from everything like practical and individual duty.⁷⁹

No doubt Bird is just the type of British lady Ellis targets. Although Bird dutifully tended to her ailing parents before her world travels, Bird escaped traditional domestic drudgery in search of excitement. Ellis finds such a quest for excitement almost sinful, but it is such excitement, such playful adventure which improves Bird’s personal health. If it were not for adventure, travel and physical exertion, Bird would have continued to lead a life of near invalidism. Therefore, by venturing outside of traditional, socially

acceptable roles for women that Ellis supports, Bird improves not only her health but also her quality of life.

Ellis believes nineteenth-century women needed no time for excitement and adventure because they had “deep responsibilities” and “urgent claims” because “a nation’s moral wealth is in your keeping.”⁸⁰ Ellis, as a globetrotting missionary, was fortunate to leave the stifling domestic confinement of the middle class in England. Although her recorded adventures did not involve swimming naked in mountain streams, she did sneak in more excitement than most of her contemporaries. At the very least, she had the privilege of travel. Additionally, Bird may not be as much of a playful heathen as Ellis’ text would suggest. Whereas Ellis advocated for conservative Christian reform, Bird advocated only for her own personal liberties. Bird does not shirk her ‘deep responsibilities’; as she surveys remote foreign lands for the British Empire, she provides valuable cultural information and economic data for imperial investors and politicians.

Paradoxically, Ellis and Bird are not as divergent on some points as one might assume. Ellis strongly believed “women should not be ignorant or helpless.”⁸¹ Bird certainly believed in doing and learning all she could. Both women believed women should be capable of handling any duty, even those traditionally done by men. Where their philosophies diverge is on the issue of the woman’s place of duty. For Ellis, a morally upright woman finds comfort and satisfaction in the maintenance of a good home—no matter how challenging. Of dutiful, good women, Ellis writes: “[S]he knows that her place in this home is not to be maintained without unceasing care.”⁸² Her inclusive use of the ‘she’ pronoun leaves no woman exempt from social duties. To stress

the woman's moral obligation to domesticity, Ellis adds: "[T]he happiness of the whole human family, and especially of man, supplies them with a never-failing motive," and the care of the family and home should provide women with personal "encouragement and reward."⁸³ It is clear, based on Bird's failing health in Britain, that the domestic front did not provide such inherent rewards for her. Abandoning domestic duties of the middle class Victorian woman, Bird transgresses social boundaries of respectability.

Perhaps what makes Bird's travel narrative progressive is that by rejecting motherhood and domestic entrapment, she subversively challenges British imperial identity and culture. Domestic virtue became the foundation of an Empire. Mrs. Ellis, in a book entitled *The Daughters of England. Their Position in Society, Character and Responsibilities*, directly associates ideal British femininity with empire. Ellis writes:

Thus, while the character of the daughter, the wife, and the mother, are so beautifully exemplified in connection with the dignity of a British Queen, it is the privilege of the humblest, as well as the most exalted of her subjects, to know that the heart of woman, in all her tenderest and holiest feelings, is the same beneath the shelter of a cottage, as under the canopy of a throne.⁸⁴

Paradoxically, the power of a woman on the throne benefits and yet restricts English women. After all, Queen Victoria "came to be seen as 'the Mother of the Nation' and the 'Mother of the Empire,' and in her wake the position of women as the upholders of British morality and vitality was considerably enhanced."⁸⁵ Issues such as women's health and education saw increased public discussion and yet ideological constructions of the ideal maternal woman hindered women that were not inclined to accept such a

lifestyle. Because Bird, for a time, abandons her mother country as well as bourgeois domesticity and instead finds excitement and value in the cultures of outsiders, she subtly rejects British imperial identity. By going native (and loving it), Bird offers readers the possibility of pure, delightful, childless and husbandless living beyond the reaches of the Empire with its strict moral codes of conduct. Whereas Ellis asks her young readers to ask themselves, “what am I? - how am I to act?- and, what are my capabilities for action?” in order to better serve and preserve noble England and advance imperial projects, Bird’s questions for her readers instead are ‘What am I? How can I have fun? And, what can other cultures teach me (and England)?’⁸⁶

Conclusion

At the turn of the century, some thought Isabella Bird Bishop was ahead of her time as she acted upon the radical philosophies of John Stuart Mill. Her self-determination and agency reflect an individualism that was still rare for English women. I would like to think Bird blazed the trail, yet she unabashedly admires the Hawaiian women who acquired such freedom before her. She writes, “I never saw such riding; I never saw ladies with such nerve. I certainly never saw people encounter such difficulties for the sake of scenery.”⁸⁷ With Hawaiian women as role models, Bird’s determination enabled her to push beyond traditional Victorian expectations of women as weak and submissive. Bird revels in this fact and candidly admits, “[O]ur adventures are a nine days’ wonder, and every one says that if we had had a white man or an experienced native with us, we should never have been allowed to attempt the perilous

ride.”⁸⁸ As Bird knew, she and Hawaiian women did not take such risks for scenery alone; they took risks and braved such difficulties for personal agency, for freedom. Bird published those risks and opened up magnificent possibilities of freedom for women in England.

Her carefully constructed narrative takes account of the limitations of feminine discourse.⁸⁹ Isabella Bird’s travel accounts “reflect an increasing concern with the justification of her travel, dress, and the maintenance of respectability while traveling alone with groups of men, indicating a more narrowly restrictive code of behavior for women in the latter half of the nineteenth century.”⁹⁰ But Bird did not write exclusively for women’s rights and as scholar Pat Barr notes, “[S]he did not attempt to provide herself with any broad-based philosophical justification for the way in which she quietly and serenely side-stepped the conventions of her time and yet, as a Victorian gentlewoman, the extent of her departure from those conventions was quite astonishing.”⁹¹ Bird’s early biographer, Anna M. Stoddart, praises her strength; Stoddart decides Bird “suffered no toil to impede her, no study to repel her. She triumphed over her own limitations of health and strength as over the dangers of the road.”⁹² Physical exercise she participated in while abroad improved her quality of life.

Bird did not align herself with any particular church although she hoped for the spread of Christianity. Moreover, she did not “advocate any special rites or dogmas.”⁹³ She did write for Hawaii’s right to independence. She indirectly challenged the American philosophy of manifest destiny by displaying admirable Hawaiian peoples and customs for English readers. Her text works as subtle propaganda for the Hawaiian cause. Perhaps

if English readers could see the value of Hawaiian culture and independence then England might hinder American annexation and in turn profit from the “jewel of the Pacific.”

Hawaii, however, was not a paradisiacal land that time forgot. Rather Hawaii, in the nineteenth century, was a contested zone between missionaries, capitalists, politicians and feminists from across the globe. During this century, Hawaiians actively worked to maintain peace in the Pacific while not surrendering their culture. This proved to be a difficult endeavor. Yet, at the end of the nineteenth century, almost 99 percent of all Hawaiians were literate; this made “Hawaii one of the most literate nations in the world.”⁹⁴ Such achievement did not come without cost. Since the Hawaiian educational system was founded on missionary ideologies, traditional Hawaiian knowledge and practices were lost in favor of American and English customs and institutions.⁹⁵ Isabella Bird Bishop glimpses Hawaii after the initial missionary crusade and just a generation before the fall of the Hawaiian kingdom. By analyzing the texts of Bird, Twain, Sophia Cracroft and Sarah Ellis, modern scholars gain insights into the myriad ways in which gender and empire supported and challenged each other in the Pacific. Furthermore, their texts in retrospect, demonstrate how France, England and the United States assimilated and then readied Hawaii for Western imperial expansion. More pointedly, these writers reveal the thoughts and actions of varied groups working within and outside of the empire. The philosophies and events described in their texts foreshadow the impending destruction of the sovereign nation of Hawaii. As scholar Houston Wood points out in *Displacing Natives: The Rhetorical Production of Hawaii*,

The pattern was thus established that would see American warships in 1820, a French frigate in 1838, and the British in 1843 aim their separate guns from offshore at Hawaii's Native government. These varied acts prepared for the day in 1893, when a company of U.S. Marines marched through the streets of downtown Honolulu past 'Iolani Palace to bolster a handful of American businessmen's demand that Queen Lili'uokalani yield her nation's independence to them.⁹⁶

Unfortunately, Isabella Bird Bishop's plea for Hawaiian sovereignty held no sway in the American quest for manifest destiny. The divisive effects of Western imperialism are still evident in Hawaiian culture. Lastly, as demanding physical exercise continued to carry negative connotations of unwomanliness and impropriety, Bird's personal feminist perspective on freedom and agency would take almost one hundred years to be realized for all women in both America and England.

¹ As quoted by Karen M. Morin, "Narrating Imperial Adventure: Isabella Bird's Travels in the Nineteenth-Century American West" in *Western Places, American Myths: How We Think About the West*, ed. Gary J. Hausladen (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2003), 217; quote orig. found in Isabella Bird, *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains*, 19.

² Morin, 217.

³ Morin, 218.

⁴ Isabella Bird Bishop, *The Hawaiian Archipelago. Six Months Among the Palm Groves, Coral Reefs, and Volcanoes of the Sandwich Islands* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1894), 3.

⁵ Bird, 3.

⁶ Ephraim Eveleth, *History of the Sandwich Islands: With an Account of the American Mission Established There in 1820 & With a Supplement, Embracing the History of the Wonderful Displays of God's Power in These Islands* (Philadelphia: American Sunday School Union, 1831), 78.

⁷ Eveleth, 18.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁹ Mark Twain, *Roughing It*, ed. Harriet Elinor Smith, Edgar Marquess Branch, Lin Salamo and Robert Pack Browning (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 460-61.

¹⁰ Mark Twain, *Mark Twain's Letters from Hawaii*, ed. A. Grove Day (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1975), 27.

¹¹ Twain, *Letters from Hawaii*, 27.

¹² Eveleth, 32.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 68.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 50.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 187.

¹⁷ Twain, *Letters*, 169.

¹⁸ Twain, *Letters*, viii. Despite his sympathetic views on Hawaiian customs, Twain did support a Christianized, democratic Hawaii rather than pagan feudalism.

¹⁹ Eveleth, 187.

²⁰ Alfons L. Korn, *The Victorian Visitors: An Account of the Hawaiian Kingdom, 1861-1866, Including the Journal Letters of Sophia Cracroft, Extracts from the Journals of Lady Franklin, and Diaries and Letters of Queen Emma of Hawaii* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1958), 15.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 16.

²² *Ibid.*, 17.

²³ *Ibid.*, 73.

²⁴ Ralph S. Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom: Volume II 1854-1874, Twenty Critical Years* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1966), 15.

²⁵ Kuykendall, 16.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 41.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 163.

²⁸ Twain, *Letters*, 259.

²⁹ Twain, *Letters*, 258.

³⁰ Kuykendall, 106.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 199.

³² Pat Barr, *A Curious Life for A Lady: The Story of Isabella Bird* (London: Macmillan, John Murray, 1970), 28.

³³ Anna M. Stoddart, *The Life of Isabella Bird (Mrs. Bishop) hon. Member of the Oriental Society of Peking* (London: John Murray, 1908; Research Publications, Inc.: History of Women (1977): fiche reel 769, no. 6164), 9.

³⁴ Evelyn Bach, "A Traveller in Skirts: Quest and Conquest in the Travel Narratives of Isabella Bird," *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature* 22.3/4 (1995): 588.

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- ³⁵ Bach, 588.
- ³⁶ Barr, 19.
- ³⁷ Ibid., 20.
- ³⁸ Ibid., 20.
- ³⁹ Ibid., 20.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid., 21.
- ⁴¹ Bruce Haley, *The Healthy Body and Victorian Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), 17.
- ⁴² Haley, 28.
- ⁴³ Bird, 14.
- ⁴⁴ Stacy Alaimo, *Undomesticated Ground: Recasting Nature as Feminist Space* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 20.
- ⁴⁵ Bird, 14.
- ⁴⁶ Alaimo, 20.
- ⁴⁷ Twain, *Letters*, 25.
- ⁴⁸ Bird, 15.
- ⁴⁹ Donald Walker, *Exercises for Ladies*, 1837, quoted in C.W. Cunnington, *Feminine Attitudes in the Nineteenth Century* (London: W. Heinemann, 1935).
- ⁵⁰ Kuykendall, 23.
- ⁵¹ Ibid., 24.
- ⁵² Ibid., 24.
- ⁵³ Bird, 22. Twain also remarks on the “free and easy” native female riders in *Letters*, 66-67.
- ⁵⁴ Bird, 43.
- ⁵⁵ Bird, 60.
- ⁵⁶ Sidonie Smith, *Moving Lives: Twentieth-Century Women’s Travel Writing* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 16-19.
- ⁵⁷ Bird, 103.
- ⁵⁸ Andrea Feeser, “Constance Fredericka Gordon Cumming’s ‘Picturesque’ Vision: A Christian, Westernized Hawai’i,” *Issues in Travel Writing: Empire, Spectacle, and Displacement*, ed. Kristi Siegel (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), 95.
- ⁵⁹ Bird, 106.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid., 160.
- ⁶¹ Ibid., 160.
- ⁶² Ibid., 230.
- ⁶³ Ibid., 70.
- ⁶⁴ Barr, 52.
- ⁶⁵ Ibid., 52.
- ⁶⁶ Twain, *Letters*, 44.
- ⁶⁷ Twain, *Letters* 45-46.
- ⁶⁸ Barr, 28.
- ⁶⁹ Twain, *Letters*, 50.
- ⁷⁰ Morin, 211.
- ⁷¹ Morin, 215. Morin does not include Twain in her framework.
- ⁷² Bird, 24.
- ⁷³ Barr, 27.
- ⁷⁴ Twain, *Roughing It*, 494-95.
- ⁷⁵ Alaimo, 1.
- ⁷⁶ Bird, 64.
- ⁷⁷ Suzanne Fagence Cooper, *The Victorian Woman* (London: V & A Publications, 2001), 10.
- ⁷⁸ Bird, 213.

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- ⁷⁹ Mrs. Sarah Stickney Ellis, *The Women of England, Their Social Duties, and Domestic Habits*, 15th ed. (London: Fisher, Son, and Company, 1839; Research Publications, Inc.: History of Women (1975): fiche reel 163, no. 1046), 12.
- ⁸⁰ Ellis, *The Women of England*, 13.
- ⁸¹ Ellis, *The Women of England*, 298.
- ⁸² Ellis, *The Women of England*, 306.
- ⁸³ Ellis, *The Women of England*, 307-08.
- ⁸⁴ Mrs. Sarah Stickney Ellis, *The Daughters of England. Their Position in Society, Character and Responsibilities* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1842; Research Publications, Inc.: History of Women (1975): fiche reel 201, no. 1335), vi.
- ⁸⁵ Cooper, 16.
- ⁸⁶ Ellis, *Daughters of England*, 7.
- ⁸⁷ Bird, 205.
- ⁸⁸ Bird, 113.
- ⁸⁹ Lila Marz Harper, *Solitary Travelers: Nineteenth-Century Women's Travel Narratives and the Scientific Vocation* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 2001), 136.
- ⁹⁰ Marz Harper, 136. Harper notes that as Bird became successful and a widow "past child-bearing age" she "was less bound by social restrictions," 140.
- ⁹¹ Barr, 14.
- ⁹² Stoddart, *The Life of Isabella Bird*, vi.
- ⁹³ Stoddart, vi.
- ⁹⁴ Elizabeth Buck, *Paradise Remade: The Politics of Culture and History in Hawaii* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 127.
- ⁹⁵ Buck, 127.
- ⁹⁶ Houston Wood, *Displacing Natives: The Rhetorical Production of Hawaii* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999), 9.

Chapter Three:

Hale and Hearty: Lady Florence Douglas Dixie

Florence Douglas was the youngest of six children born to Archibald William Douglas, the seventh Marquis of Queensbury, and Caroline Margaret Clayton Douglas.¹ She had a twin brother, James. Florence Douglas Dixie, a Victorian aristocrat, was “an unconventional woman who grew from a lithe, blond tomboy into a famous world traveller, big-game hunter, war correspondent, author, lecturer, feminist, and political activist.”² Lady Dixie challenged Victorian ideologies surrounding women’s athletics, womanhood and animal rights. She did not use her birthright of wealth and privilege to shelter herself from politics and activism.

As a child, Florence Douglas thrived on athletics and loved to join her older brothers in vigorous physical exercises.³ She very much enjoyed competing with her brothers. Scholar Brian Roberts notes, somewhat romantically, that, “[T]here was nothing that James could do which she could not equal. There was no horse, however wild, that she would not ride; there was no mountain torrent, however fierce, that she would not swim.”⁴ Her unconventional upbringing supports Mary Wollstonecraft’s theory that “women who display ‘vigour of intellect’ and rationality in adulthood have been ‘allowed to run wild’ as children.”⁵ Contrary to conventional Victorian ideologies which viewed women as the weaker sex, Florence Douglas appeared without fear and, as we shall see, much to the Court’s dismay, “she thought of herself as a boy, she spoke of herself as a boy, throughout her life she rode astride her saddle like a man.”⁶ Her love of

outdoor sports did not however detract from her femininity. After meeting Florence Douglas in 1872 in Geneva, Bulwer Lytton commented on her “dreaming face and earnest eyes.” He wrote the poem *To Little Florrie Douglas* in her tribute.⁷

Drawing largely from comments printed in her autobiographical novel, *The Story of Ijain, or the Evolution of a Mind* (1903), critics have focused on the turbulence of Douglas’ childhood.⁸ Her wild and unconventional upbringing certainly provided fodder for society gossip. Rumors circulated, in 1860, after her father accidentally shot himself while cleaning a gun. Her mother, in 1864, nearly lost custody of her children after her conversion to Catholicism. In 1865 her eighteen-year-old brother died during the first English attempt to scale the Matterhorn.⁹ And, during her preadolescence, her family spent six nomadic years in Europe. Such drama and turbulence—as critics label her childhood—no doubt shaped Dixie’s views on feminism. Her early family experiences fostered her passion regarding women’s rights (as *feminism* was a term not introduced until the 1890s).¹⁰ If events had differed, Florence Douglas may not have grown into the strong advocate she became in her adulthood. During her mother’s legal custody battle, Florence Douglas witnessed firsthand “the legal disempowerment of women.”¹¹ This experience, coupled with her habit of physical exercise with her brothers, helped her develop into a “hardy woman traveler and writer of strong feminist sympathies.”¹²

Florence Douglas’ youthful adventures delighted and shocked the Victorian aristocratic circle.¹³ In preparation for marriage, Douglas was expected to make an appearance at the Queen’s Court. From this appearance and then, after a series of parties,

she was to arrive at the safe harbor of marriage. Florence Douglas however resisted tradition. Not only did she refuse to wear the finery and the piled tresses required for a Court presentation but the Lord Chamberlain rebuked her for appearing before Queen Victoria with short hair and without the requisite finery. Rather than attend Court, Florence Douglas spent her time participating in sports. She rode horses, hunted and swam with men— “among whom was the Prince of Wales.”¹⁴ For a young woman to participate in athletics other than walking or croquet was scandalous. She preferred such physical exercise over domestic confinement and Court engagements. Critic Brian Roberts concludes, “[T]he only social occasions at which she really felt at home were the county hunts and race meetings. She was the darling of the horsey set (they marveled at her prowess in the saddle), and she became a great favourite of the Prince of Wales.”¹⁵

Her close relationship with the Prince of Wales no doubt insulated her from some social reproach. Yet, she did not escape the role expected of Victorian women. At age eighteen she married Sir Alexander Beaumont Churchill Dixie. He was six years her senior and hailed from a notable Leicestershire family. With Dixie she had two sons.¹⁶ The Prince of Wales was the godfather to one of her sons; her son was named Albert Edward in the Prince’s honor.¹⁷ Florence Douglas Dixie’s new role as wife and mother did not tame her “into a sedate Lady Dixie.”¹⁸ Instead, her experiences with the traditional domestic sphere deepened her frustration and passion regarding the position of women in Britain.¹⁹ Even as a young, privileged wife and mother, Florence Dixie remained concerned with women’s issues. She used writing to advocate for social reform. For example, in her blank verse tragedy, *Isola; or, the Disinherited*, Dixie writes about a

woman who rebels against her arranged marriage and demands equal rights. The heroine's death ushers in a new era which "guarantees religious freedom, social justice, and equality, as well as women's control over their own bodies."²⁰ Moreover, Dixie believed "that no nation could be free if its women were degraded by unjust laws."²¹ Her children's books portrayed strong, independent women. Additionally, Dixie was an advocate for "the serious study of sexuality, sex education for children, and population control." She hoped that one day women might control their own reproductive systems.²² Although she came from a life of privilege, she would develop into a passionate rebel who advocated for oppressed people such as the Zulus and the Irish.²³

Recovering Florence Douglas Dixie's work holds significance for scholars of Victorian England. Her narratives trace the emergence of Victorian feminism as her writings present women who are physically strong and capable rather than weak and submissive. She challenges one of the foundational Victorian arguments surrounding women; to believe that women required protection seems groundless after reading Dixie's *Across Patagonia*. In *Across Patagonia* British womanhood appears active, hardy, resilient, and brave. Furthermore, in this text the relationship between the sexes hinges on respect and equality—traits rarely found in Victorian England.

Destination Patagonia: Following the Romantic Tradition

After her son's birth, Dixie hoped to escape the social ennui she experienced in England.²⁴ Her destination choice, Patagonia, stemmed from her reading; Julius Beerbohm's *Wanderings in Patagonia or Life Among the Ostrich-Hunters* (1879) stoked

Dixie's curiosity. Beerbohm, like Dixie, seems to have traveled to Patagonia to escape and to find adventure. He writes, "I seemed to be leaving the old world I had hitherto known behind me, with its turmoils and cares and weary sameness, and to be riding merrily into some new sphere of free, fresh existence."²⁵ Beerbohm's textual representation of Patagonia as a place for a "free, fresh existence" certainly appealed to Dixie's desire for freedom and novelty. Beerbohm specifically recommends Patagonia as a place to travel to in order to regain health. Beerbohm attests:

Those whose health has deteriorated, and whose nerves have been unstrung in the fulfillment of the stern exigencies of their professions, and the still, more arduous duties society imposes on its votaries; those who cannot do this, that, or the other 'as well as they used to'...to these I would recommend Patagonia. Nowhere else is there an area of seventy-two thousand square miles, which you may roam over without meeting a human being, and where, at the same time, you are safe from any danger from fevers, wild beasts, noxious serpents.²⁶

Beerbohm romantically portrays Patagonia as a place set apart, a space off, far away from modern anxieties. Only later in his travel book, after encounters with rebel fighters, Beerbohm claims he will not return to Patagonia. Yet, he does indeed return, with Lady Dixie.

Dixie's treatment of Patagonia is unique in that her language echoes earlier Romantic writers—Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats.²⁷ *Across Patagonia* provides scholars with an example of nonfiction written in the Romantic tradition.

During her adventures in the wilderness Dixie draws heavily on her emotions in order to

make Patagonia come alive for her readers. Her emphasis on emotions and physicality is similar to the Romantics. Emotions “opened up the inner as well as the outer world in a way that made it important to begin to understand the relationships between self and other, man and nature, imagination and materials.”²⁸

Across Patagonia is a romantic book in the Wordsworthian tradition. It is unusual that a female writer would write of “traditional pursuits for the boy-child of nature.”²⁹ Her accounts of horseback riding and ostrich chasing seem far removed from the conventional image of Victorian womanhood. For some nineteenth-century readers Dixie appeared as a wild woman. The wild woman, as an archetype, is in close contact with the natural world. The term *wild woman*, as psychologist Clarissa Pinkola Estés, explains is “tacit, prescient, and visceral.”³⁰ Dixie’s participation with nature and the environment reflects her desire to transcend social customs and experience physical thrills. The wilderness, and her emotional reactions to it, provided Dixie, and other women writers, “a way to portray women’s psychological and social experience, and to assess the effects of gender on the individual’s relation to society.”³¹ Dixie provides an alternative paradigm of womanhood for the Victorian domestic ideal.

Romanticism plays a crucial role in understanding Dixie’s authorial agenda. Scholars have defined Romanticism as a “love of nature, interest in the insights and homely wisdom of childhood and the people who live close to nature, and deepened sense of the self’s relationship to the natural world.”³² Such characteristics were found in women’s writing, especially in poetry. What makes a text “romantic is its uneasy combination of a fascinated attraction to a space of otherness with a dawning realization

that such places are inevitably doomed by the encroaching world of modernization.”³³

This is significant for Dixie’s exploration of Patagonia as she escapes London high society. Yet, British imperialism and even civil war were already threatening Dixie’s South American retreat.

Additionally, a key point within the Romantic tradition is the inclusion of the sublime. One definition of the sublime is the transcendence of the self over an experience or object which poses a threat.³⁴ Dixie’s text provides many examples of an individual overcoming adversity; the “Homeric (or romantic) view of the sublime in which the protagonist’s encounter with a potentially overwhelming obstacle leads to heightened powers and a resurgence of life.”³⁵ Her writing challenges how scholars have viewed the female sublime. Scholars maintain that the Victorian female sublime “emphasized not power over nature but the power of nature in a given place, and not rhetoric of presence so much as a rhetoric based in absence, especially absence of the self. The women who engaged this female sublime featured themselves as witnesses or participants, not monarchs.”³⁶ Examples of the romantic sublime function in Dixie’s text as a technique in which she records her reactions to experiences. However, Dixie’s selfhood is often present in the text. She may wonder, question and even doubt her abilities in the presence of danger but she actively attempts to master the situation. Nevertheless, the sublime is present. If “the central moment of the sublime marks the self’s newly enhanced sense of identity; a will to power that drives its style, a mode that establishes and maintains the self’s domination over its objects of rapture,” then Dixie’s narrative certainly follows the masculine tradition of the sublime.³⁷ Yet, paradoxically,

at other points in her narrative her rhetoric adopts traits of the feminine sublime in that “the feminine sublime does not attempt to master its objects of rapture.”³⁸ At these points Dixie muses on native species or geography, quite content to remain an observer rather than act as a participant. Danger forces her to adopt the masculine sublime whereas quiet moments encourage her to use the feminine sublime.

Scholar Barbara T. Gates asserts that in the Victorian female sublime “there is always an attempt to capture nature’s sublimity—in both its beauty and its terror—but the true experience of the sublime moment is felt to escape the pen.”³⁹ *Across Patagonia*’s racing narrative pace and climatic points leaves the writer, as well as readers, out of breath. Crucial to grasping the concept of the feminine sublime is the tenet that it is “a domain of experience that resists categorization, in which the subject enters into relation with an otherness—social, aesthetic, political, ethical, erotic— that is excessive and unrepresentable.”⁴⁰

Dixie’s actions and reactions *other* her from ideas of traditional Victorian womanhood. Likewise, her role as a human in the wilderness is also a form of *othering*. Dixie’s athletic adventures in Patagonia create other worlds for her Victorian readers. Implicit within her position as a traveler is her responsibility to categorize and record her adventures. Although she includes accounts of her expedition and data on the native South Americans, Dixie is, in relation to Patagonia, an *other*. In the South American wilderness, Dixie’s aristocratic status has little significance. While chasing animals for much needed food, Victorian gender constructs seem of little importance; survival for the entire party depends on active participation in the hunt.

Dixie's text is representative of the sublime in "that the very nature of the sublime—its ability to blur distinctions between observer and observed, reader and text, or spectator and event."⁴¹ Dixie's action packed narrative encourages readers to live vicariously, to follow along with her on her adventures. Indeed, "for the sublime event is precisely one in which what happens to 'the other' also happens to the subject who perceives it."⁴² Much like the romanticism surrounding Edmund Burke's literature on the French Revolution, Dixie's use of the romantic sublime stirs readers' emotions. Scholar Elizabeth Bohls posits this question for eighteenth-century scholars and I apply this to Dixie's writing: "Did the female intellectuals seize on the individualistic aesthetics of the sublime in resistance to the reflexive subordination and self-effacement advocated by conduct literature and woven into the texture of women's daily lives?"⁴³ In short, did Dixie use romantic characteristics, specifically the sublime, in hopes of raising the awareness of women's issues? Certainly before Isabella Bird, Mary Kingsley, Isabel Savory and Florence Dixie, "women did not fit the traveler's image as heroic explorer, scientist, or authoritative cultural interpreter."⁴⁴ Dixie's use of the sublime (and proof of physical prowess) indeed positions her as a heroic adventurer similar to the male heroes from the novels of H. Rider Haggard. By writing in the romantic tradition, Dixie encourages women readers to rethink their cultural positions and opportunities—to follow their passions.

Argentina and Britain

Unlike Isabella Bird, who prided herself on traveling unchaperoned, Florence Dixie went to Patagonia with her husband, her two brothers, John Sholto, Lord Queensberry, Lord James Douglas, and a male friend, Beerbohm, who had recently published *Wanderings in Patagonia*.⁴⁵ Dixie begins *Across Patagonia*, with the provocative question: “Patagonia! who would ever think of going to such a place?” Friends comment, “Why you will be eaten up by cannibals!”⁴⁶ At the southern tip of Argentina, Patagonia seems remote. Argentina was not, however, as remote or unknown as Dixie would like her readers to believe. Working within a new historicist framework will better contextualize Dixie’s contributions to the field of nineteenth-century studies. In *Across Patagonia* Dixie does not mention specific British projects in Argentina. However, British capitalists and politicians were quite interested in the region long before her adventure. She dedicates *Across Patagonia* to Albert Edward, the Prince of Wales.

Since the 1825 signing of the Anglo-Argentine Treaty of Friendship, Commerce, and Navigation, Great Britain was poised to gain from a favorable relationship with Argentina. The Treaty’s “chief provisions were that Great Britain would recognize Argentine sovereignty and independence” and that “both British and Argentine citizens living in the other’s country would enjoy the rights accorded all foreigners, and that subjects of both countries would be allowed free access to the trade of the other.”⁴⁷ The Treaty proved beneficial to Great Britain as Britain was more powerful than Argentina—“free trade ultimately meant free reign for English capitalists.”⁴⁸ By 1862 President Mitre “opened the Argentine economy to foreign investors and creditors, mostly British.

The outcome was a kind of development by which Argentina supplied raw goods and a ready market for British manufactures while its own industrial potential went unrealized.”⁴⁹

By 1874 Argentina’s economy became even more dependent on Britain as Britain provided a strong market for Argentine exports. Britain also invested in Argentina’s transportation and communications projects.⁵⁰ British companies controlled three-quarters of Argentine railways by the 1870s.⁵¹ And, after the invention of the refrigerated car, Argentine beef became a profitable export to Europe as beef could remain fresh on the voyage across the Atlantic.⁵² Many Argentine administrators worked to make Argentina alluring for foreign investment and settlement. Specifically, President Nicolás Avellaneda “intensified the wars of displacement and extermination against the Indians, thereby making available large tracts of new lands” for wealthy immigrants during the Conquest of the Desert (1870s-1884).⁵³

Although Dixie portrays Argentina as a land, or “space-off,” from struggles associated with modernity, British imperial projects were, in fact, well established by the time Dixie journeyed to the region in 1878.⁵⁴ England’s economic interest in the region lends greater significance to Dixie’s narrative for scholars working on empire. Moreover, Dixie had a close friendship with the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII). Her findings on Argentina may hold particular relevance for scholars analyzing British projects and attitudes within the region. Certainly, her social status guaranteed her an audience. Her favorable reports on the wildlife and people of the region contributed to the continuation of the flow of British capital to South America. By 1880, Beerbohm and Dixie (among

others), helped put Argentina “on the map.” And, “the existence of a government which looked favorably on foreign investment was a further incentive for all sorts of traveling entrepreneurs: miners, businessmen, investors, cattle-ranchers.”⁵⁵ All of this contributed to the strength of the British economy.

Dixie’s *Across Patagonia* is also significant for scholars working on gender studies and travel writing in that few travelogues, written by women on Argentina were published during this time. Travel books written by men on Argentina during this period had economic goals. Male travel accounts hoped to open South America to further capitalistic endeavors.⁵⁶ In this respect, Dixie’s travel account is unique to the field of South American studies. Not only does she reflect on wildlife, nature, culture and sport, she presents women with visions not commonly thought possible. Additionally, Florence Dixie’s “writing on Patagonia challenges the tradition of writing on the region started by Darwin. Male travel writers refer to each other, quote each other, and share each other’s basic assumptions on the region. By neglecting to quote any of these figures, Dixie disclaims their authority and challenges their hegemonic position.”⁵⁷ While reading *Across Patagonia*, one might assume Dixie was the first person to set foot upon Argentine soil; it certainly seems as if she were the first Brit to set foot on Argentine soil. Although she admits to reading extensively on the region before the voyage, Dixie exclusively quotes Beerbohm. She even allowed Beerbohm to illustrate *Across Patagonia*.⁵⁸

In his text, Beerbohm references “the canonized narrators of Patagonia such as Musters and Darwin.”⁵⁹ Beerbohm’s text differs from Dixie’s in that he traveled to

Patagonia as an engineer on a surveying mission whereas she went to the region for a vacation.⁶⁰ His book includes illustrations of various types of soil and sediment. Her book focuses on sport and nature. Before Dixie, travel writers feminized Patagonia, “stressing its vacuity, its infertility.”⁶¹ Specifically, most male travel writing on Patagonia portrayed the region as “an empty and barren woman ready to be penetrated and fertilized, a conflation of all women, both virginal and treacherous at once.”⁶² Dixie’s writing on Patagonia differs markedly from those of her male predecessors. She writes of herself as a viewer yet she is “also looked at, viewed, defined.”⁶³ Dixie participates in othering and is also the other.

Even though the Conquest of the Desert was nearing its climax during her visit, Patagonia symbolizes freedom and escape for Dixie rather than an opportunity for possession. Patagonia is her destination choice because “it was an outlandish place and so far away.”⁶⁴ In a dangerous, war torn land, she hopes to abandon civilization and social restrictions. Strangely, she looks to Patagonia to revitalize her. Certainly, the allure of newness and of the untouched draws Florence Dixie to Patagonia. She muses: “And I was to be the first to behold them?—an egotistical pleasure, it is true; but the idea had a great charm for me, as it has had for many others.”⁶⁵ She appears oblivious to the genocide that was occurring in Patagonia.

Rather than force her Britishness on Patagonia, she hopes Patagonia will influence her temperament. Her experiences in Patagonia later lead her to question British customs. As she geographically distances herself from English aristocrats, she analyzes her own experiences with English tradition. For example, Dixie has ambivalent

feelings regarding hunting. She is excited by the chase and also haunted by “the slaughter of innocent animals.”⁶⁶ Her hunting experiences in Patagonia lead her to join the Humanitarian League and she eventually publishes a pamphlet, *The Horrors of Sport* (1895). In this pamphlet she asserts that, contrary to English aristocratic tradition and values, hunting is barbaric and senseless.⁶⁷ Yet, in *Across Patagonia*, Dixie remains silent on the displacement and massacre of the native tribes— done in order to entice foreign investors.

Observations Regarding Women and the Natives

Throughout much of her life Dixie supported ideologies of equality between the sexes. Many of her novels imagined utopian societies where men and women were equal. She also spoke out against the exclusion of women from the university and the workplace.⁶⁸ She frequently “addressed meetings, wrote pamphlets and letters to the press and never allowed a slight on women’s status to pass unchallenged.”⁶⁹ She proved an exceptional adversary to novelist Rider Haggard. After the publication of Haggard’s novel *Beatrice* Dixie wrote to him. In her letter she chastised “the servility of his heroine.”⁷⁰

With her concern for gender issues, it should be no surprise that Dixie turns a critical eye on some aspects of Argentine society. She not only analyzes Argentina from a feminist perspective but also as a Briton. Her comments reflect Britain’s economic concerns within the region but not anxiety over the genocide that was occurring. She is concerned with the workers whose efforts sustain Britain’s profit. For example, as the

Dixie party journeys toward Patagonia, they stop in Bahia de todos los Santos. Lady Dixie comments on the landscape and on the inhabitants. She observes the living conditions and the physical appearance of the lowliest members of society, the slaves.

Dixie finds:

There was a great deal of movement going on everywhere, and the streets swarmed with black slaves, male and female, carrying heavy loads of salt meat, sacks of rice, and other merchandise to and from the quays. They all seemed to be very happy, to judge by their incessant chatter and laughter, and not overworked either, I should think, for they were most of them plump enough, the women especially being many of them almost inconveniently fat.⁷¹

The slaves occupy an important role in the underpinnings of empire as the labor of slaves ensured that the nation could provide inexpensive raw materials to Britain. Dixie's comment on the slaves' condition forecasts a favorable return investment for Britons. If the slaves are happy then there seems little chance of revolt, which might disrupt trade.

Dixie's comments on South Americans read like those of many European anthropologists of her time. As Europeans might discuss the bloodlines of pedigreed dogs or racehorses, she describes native people in terms used to depict animals. For example, when describing the appearance of the native Tehuelches she notes,

These remarks do not apply to the Tehuelches in whose veins there is a mixture of Araucanian or Fuegian blood. The flat noses, oblique eyes, and badly proportioned figures of the latter make them most repulsive objects, and they are as different from a pure-bred Tehuelche in every respect as "Wheel-of-Fortune"

from an ordinary carthorse. Their hair is long and coarse, and is worn parted in the middle, being prevented from falling over their faces by means of a handkerchief, or fillet of some kind, tied round the forehead.⁷²

Yet, the Tehuelches demonstrate uncommon moral nobility. Lady Dixie observes that the Tehuelches practice devotion and solemnity in marriage. She states, “the women can by no means complain of want of devotion to them on the part of the men. Marriages are matters of great solemnity with them, and the ties are strictly kept. Husband and wife show great affection for one another, and both agree in extravagant love of their offspring, which they pet and spoil to their heart’s content.”⁷³ Likewise Beerbohm, in his earlier book, comments on the civilized qualities of the Tehuelches. He reflects,

I do not wish to incur the charge of attempting to revive the exploded legend of the ‘noble savage’ in favor of the Tehuelche race, but I must say that in general intelligence, gentleness of temper, chastity of conduct, and conscientious behavior in their social and domestic relations, they are immeasurably superior not only to the other South American indigenous tribes, but also, all their disadvantages taken into consideration, to the general run of civilized white men.⁷⁴

Dixie and Beerbohm apply Rousseau’s ideal of the noble savage to the Tehuelches. The children, however, are wild and mischievous but seem to miraculously outgrow these traits when they reach young adulthood. While this seems rather complimentary Beerbohm and Dixie’s gazes reflect Eurocentric readings of South American life. Both writers classify and generalize the entire Tehuelche culture on their limited observations. Perhaps Beerbohm and Dixie subtly hoped to illustrate the positive aspects of the Native

Americans in order to prevent further massacre—a massacre which was condoned by the Argentine administration so that land could be readied for investors and wealthy settlers.

European fears regarding the bloodthirsty savage did not escape Dixie. Like most Victorians raised with horror stories of fierce savages in the remote recesses of the world, Lady Dixie is both intrigued and frightened by cannibals. As she travels by Tierra del Fuego, the steamer passes canoes carrying native Fuegians. Sadly, she is too distant to study the natives closer. She laments: “I should have liked to have had a good look at them. They are reputed to be cannibals and no doubt justly so. I have even been told that in winter, when other food is scarce, they kill off their own old men and women, though of course they prefer a white man if obtainable.”⁷⁵ She attempts to understand the nuances of South America yet she cannot escape her preexisting Eurocentric notions of native cultures. If, as Stephen Greenblatt maintains, “[E]verything in the European dream of possession rests on witnessing, a witnessing understood as a form of significant and representative seeing. To see is to secure the truth of what might otherwise be deemed incredible,” then Lady Dixie, due to her inability to witness the supposed cannibals more closely, fails to possess, or secure, the *other* for herself and, subsequently, for her European reading audience.⁷⁶

South American Cities

If South American natives intrigue and elude Dixie, South American cities offer little reprieve from her disenchantment with urbanization. South American cities hold

little fascination for Dixie. The ugliness of cityscapes becomes a reflection of their inhabitants. Lady Dixie believes, “[T]he public buildings at Rio are all distinguished by their peculiar ugliness. They are mostly painted yellow, a hue which seems to prevail everywhere here, possibly in order to harmonise with the complexion of the inhabitants.”⁷⁷ Clearly, Rio leaves Lady Dixie with less than wonderful impressions, even the reckless speed of the mule drivers and the stench of cooking garlic do not amuse or excite her aristocratic tastes. She longs for open spaces, nature, and beauty—all markers of aristocratic privilege.

Only when she gets “safely clear of town” does she enjoy South America.⁷⁸ On a hilltop, away from the hustle and bustle of the city, Lady Dixie rests quietly under a banana tree and observes Rio from a distance. As with other nineteenth-century explorers, such as Sir Richard Burton’s Paradise and not unlike Isabella Bird’s view of Honolulu bay, Dixie describes a “sweeping visual mastery of a scene.”⁷⁹ She writes, “[W]e had gradually got to a good height above Rio, and through a frame of leaves and flowers I could see the town, the blue bay studded with tiny green islands, and beyond, the rugged mountains, with a light mist hanging like a silver veil over their purple slopes.”⁸⁰ At this point in the narrative Dixie adopts what scholar Mary Louise Pratt labels as the “monarch-of-all-I- survey” position.⁸¹ From Dixie’s privileged position on the lofty hilltop, she is safe from the ‘other’ as she commands the view. Nature offers protection, seclusion and beauty. Yet, Dixie’s commanding view reflects her authority over the scene and she decides this view begs for further European exploration. The “light mist hanging like a silver veil” has sexual connotations. Dixie, the European, is

aroused by the mystery surrounding the exotic distant lands. Soon, she hopes she will penetrate the mystery.

The Dixie party had the misfortune of experiencing three carriage accidents in twenty-four hours as they traveled from their hotel in the mountains back to the steamer. One accident overturned the carriage, pinning Lady Dixie and her companions under it and another forced them to jump out of the carriage rather than disappear “over the precipice.”⁸² Lady Dixie in particular does not appreciate “Brazilian coachmanship” as the English travelers arrived at the steamer with a “very strange appearance” since their clothes were torn and their persons dusty and bruised. Lady Dixie recovers quickly from her near death experience; a bath soon remedies the situation.⁸³ Wild carriage drivers are not the only danger Dixie faces in the cities in Brazil and Argentina.

The people living in the cities and their habits are, for her, filthy. According to Dixie, the threat of yellow fever haunts Rio because the inhabitants are not clean and do not have proper drainage. Lady Dixie surmises she could cure yellow fever outbreaks with “the scrubbing brush and Windsor soap.”⁸⁴ Danger is controlled through cleanliness. In *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*, Anne McClintock analyzes the relationship between empire building and soap. McClintock finds that “[I]n the last decades of the nineteenth century, the urban crowd became a recurring fetish for ruling-class fears of social unrest and underclass militancy. Lurking in the resplendent metropolis, the crowd embodied a ‘savage’ and dangerous underclass waiting to spring upon the propertied classes.”⁸⁵ The less than resplendent South American metropolis, teeming with diseased crowds no doubt appeared threatening

to Dixie's aristocratic upbringing. Dirt and disease contribute to social unrest which might destabilize Dixie and her peers in the ruling class. The dire need for a scrubbing brush and Windsor soap is significant since during the Victorian era "cleaning rituals were peddled globally as the God-given sign of Britain's evolutionary superiority, and soap was invested with magical, fetish powers."⁸⁶ Therefore, it was thought that if the British could clean the streets and the bodies of urban South America then, in turn, this would lead to a spiritual cleansing of their savage souls. Soap brought "moral and economic salvation" to the 'great unwashed' of the empire.⁸⁷ "Soap is Civilization."⁸⁸

Advice for Sporting Women

Dixie's privileged status as an aristocrat allowed her to transgress social boundaries that many middle class women would not dare challenge.⁸⁹ Dixie's participation in and love of strenuous physical exercise marked one such boundary she transgressed. Middle class women did not exercise or engage in sporting activities with men out of fear of appearing coarse or rough. It was thought "what was manly in a brother was wildly improper in his sister, which ruled out for her any really exhilarating physical exercise (except hunting, for the intrepid few)."⁹⁰

To some degree, Dixie's title insulated her from such accusations. Because of her wealth and title, she was simply thought of as "larky."⁹¹ Advice books and conduct manuals from the late nineteenth century indicates how women like Dixie contributed to the opening up of athletics for the next generation of women. Aristocratic women, including Dixie, who published accounts of their sporting adventures encouraged

younger women of the reading classes to, in a sense, try these activities at home. Later, excerpts from turn of the century advice manuals support Dixie's exercise regime. Lady Violet Greville, in *Ladies in the Field* (1894), maintains that a young woman "could do no better than to take a riding man for a husband and be out-of-doors as much as possible" as "[S]uch a life trimmed your figure, brightened your eyes and banished the glooms."⁹²

In fact, the nature of athletics shifted by the turn of the twentieth century for both men and women. Women and men began to participate in organized team sports. Yet, during the nineteenth century the most prestigious sports were equestrian. Sports popular for the well- to-do were centered on the horse: fox hunting, stag hunting, steeplechasing, and racing.⁹³ Dixie's activities in Patagonia supported traditional aristocratic leisure pursuits even as she challenged gender expectations by proving she was as competent on a horse as any man.

As women's participation in sports increased so too did the variety of advice books on the literary market. All had diverse opinions on a plethora of exercise related topics. However, for this chapter, advice to equestrians and hunters is my primary focus as these are the activities Dixie participated in during her visit to Patagonia. An experienced rider, Alice M. Hayes writes advice manuals in favor of side-saddle riding for ladies because of riding's benefits for women. As a professional rider, Hayes maintains, "[K]nowing how strong a lady's seat is, I may say that a woman of any age may learn to ride, supposing that she is 'hale and hearty.'"⁹⁴ *Across Patagonia*, as well as accounts of Dixie's later life, prove she was indeed 'hale and hearty' because of her

regular, rigorous outdoor exercise. Dixie's childhood habit of horseback riding did not hinder her growth, health, or femininity. In fact, as Alice Hayes asserts, "[I]t is almost needless to say that the younger a lady commences to ride, the finer horsewoman she ought to be."⁹⁵ An early rider, Dixie developed into a skilled and accomplished rider, one that few men could laugh at. Not only did riding contribute to Dixie's physical health, this form of exercise also contributed to her psychological development and well being. Hayes finds riding requires "nerve."⁹⁶ Developed by horseback riding, Dixie's 'nerve' helps her through many difficult situations in Patagonia as well as later in Africa and in Britain. Clearly, Dixie is a woman who is not afraid of danger or of social critics. Dixie matures into an articulate, independent woman largely due to her time spent involved in athletics, specifically, on horseback.

Hayes supports only side-saddle riding for ladies. However, Lady Dixie never mentions the type of saddle she uses. It might be assumed, since she was an Englishwoman, she would have used a traditional sidesaddle, quite appropriate for a lady. However, two illustrations in the text suggest an alternative. One illustration, at the Indian camp, features Lady Dixie from behind. The observer sees a lady with her hair pinned to the back of her head. Because of the angle of the illustration, only one lady's boot is visible on the horse's right side. The woman is seated quite straight and tall on her horse—a good indication of riding astride.⁹⁷ The illustration "The Last Double" which is of an ostrich hunt includes two male riders, two dogs and a female rider. In this illustration Lady Dixie's body is keenly aligned with that of the horse; there is little doubt that she is seated squarely on the saddle as the men are.⁹⁸ Indeed, throughout her

narrative, she speedily jumps off and on her horse without mentioning assistance from men. A sidesaddle, by its basic design, requires personal assistance with mounting and dismounting.

Dixie's social status did insulate her from some, but not all, criticism surrounding wild, sporting women however,

The sporting press generally reinforced traditional gender ideas and maintained prevailing ideologies. Sporting women were consistently denigrated. Cartoons reinforced male superiority by showing women playing a more passive role as spectators, looking admiringly at male athletes, or playing more gentle, 'respectable,' 'ladylike' games such as croquet.⁹⁹

As advice books worked diligently to instruct women on safe and proper ways in which to exercise, the popular press worked just as hard to deter women from participating in athletics. Much to her credit, Dixie did not shrink from attacks by the popular press. She supported women's equality and wrote many letters and pamphlets in support of women's activities.

In the Wilderness

Traveling through the wilderness offers Dixie a chance to escape from Victorian social conventions and the critical eye of the popular press. The wilderness is a place which not only tests her strength and her endurance but also offers her serenity. Nature provides an escape for Dixie. If, as Patrick Brantlinger maintains, "[T]hroughout the history of the imperializing West, domesticity seeks and finds its antithesis in adventure,

in charismatic quests and voyages that disrupt and rejuvenate,” then Dixie’s choice of Patagonia is sure to reinvigorate her.¹⁰⁰ Her uncommon encounters with nature act as the initial severing points from the Victorian domestic sphere.

After setting up camp and having dinner, Lady Dixie explores the area near their camp after night fall—alone. She walks near the lagoon at the foot of the hill. She describes the place:

Its waters glittered brightly in the moonlight, but the woods which surrounded it were somber and dark. Occasionally the sad plaintive cry of a grebe broke the silence, startling me not a little the first time I heard it, for it sounds exactly like the wail of a human being in pain. Going back to the camp I found my companions preparing to go to bed, an example I was not slow to follow, and soon, wrapt up in our guanaco-fur robes, with our saddles for pillows, we were all fast asleep.¹⁰¹

In the Patagonia night Dixie experiences haunting yet reflective moments. She returns to camp, the makeshift, temporary domestic space. Once at camp, she sleeps out of doors with the men. Thousands of miles away from home, she abandons the restraints of traditional English womanhood. In the wilderness she is not a woman as she was in London, set apart from masculine society. The wilderness disregards imagined gender constructs; men and women become, simply, human beings. The wilderness encourages transcendence.

The wilderness allows Dixie to prove to Victorian readers that women could effectively confront fear. Rather than conform to Victorian ideals of passive

womanhood, Dixie controls, and exercises, her own body and that of her horse. Her physical exertions often save her life or provide sustenance for her traveling party. For example, as the Dixie party rides through the hills, they come upon a prairie fire. Winds push dense clouds of smoke toward them so that they soon lose visibility. Their horses “were snorting with fear” as the riders deliberated on a course of action. Lady Dixie writes, “[T]o run away from the coming fire was useless; the alternative was to face it at a gallop, and get through it if possible.”¹⁰² Lady Dixie describes the ordeal:

then digging our spurs into our horses, we dashed forward, every one for himself. The moments that followed seemed an eternity. As I urged my unwilling horse forward, the sense of suffocation grew terrible, I could scarcely draw breath, and the panting animal seemed to stagger beneath me. The horrible crackling came nearer and nearer; I became conscious of the most intolerable heat, and my head began to swim round. My horse gave two or three furious plunges, and then burst madly forward. Almost choked, come what might, I could bear my mantle over my head no longer and tore it off me. The sudden sense of relief that came over me as I did so, I shall never forget. I looked up, the air was comparatively clear, and the fire *behind* me. By some miracle I had passed through it unhurt!¹⁰³

In a sublime moment, Dixie transcends her fear. Dixie’s literal, and metaphorical, trial by fire demonstrates the strength and determination a Victorian woman adopts if provided the opportunity. She symbolizes the New Woman. Not only has Dixie abandoned a female garment—her mantle— but she also commands the unwilling horse and the horse succumbs to her will. The animal is under her control. If the sublime is

defined as “an experience bordering on terror but productive of delight” then Dixie’s encounter with the prairie fire demonstrates the emotional impact of the sublime and the propensity for personal growth that the sublime encourages.¹⁰⁴

Hunting

Victorian social customs and policies came under attack during the 1870s, creating self doubt, defensiveness and worry regarding the strength of the British Empire.¹⁰⁵ British writers used travel to bolster the waning confidence of the British subjects. Patrick Brantlinger finds, “[I]nscribed in the adventure narratives of many late Victorian and Edwardian writers is the desire to revitalize not only heroism but aristocracy.”¹⁰⁶ Dixie’s travel narrative demonstrates individual feminine heroism and supports aristocratic traditions.

Hunting was the sport of the English aristocracy. Yet, hunting with rifles, as a means to provide food, remained largely a masculine pursuit until the latter part of the nineteenth century. Victorian women who hunted with rifles faced severe social criticism. Such criticism rarely focused on the ethics of killing animals, but instead centered on “the possible detrimental effects upon women’s ‘nature,’ and the effects women would have upon the sport.”¹⁰⁷ Periodicals and magazines attacked women who hunted. Specifically, *The Saturday Review* asserted that hunting threatened femininity:

Ladies are now engaging in shooting parties and not only do they spoil the spirit and proceedings of the party, but it is by no means a feminine occupation...it must be deteriorating to watch the sufferings of the unfortunate wounded, and is

sure to produce a callousness to suffering that is most contrary to the true womanly instinct of gentleness.¹⁰⁸

As such, the sport of hunting became a springboard for a much larger debate on womanhood even though “ladies had been hunting for centuries, and continued to do so throughout the nineteenth century.”¹⁰⁹ Dixie challenges images of silly, rifle toting women regularly found in the pages of the popular press. Dixie demonstrates the skill and tenacity required to hunt successfully. In *Across Patagonia* hunting provides a way in which to feed the entire party; they hunt for survival rather than for barbaric pleasure.

As the Dixie party crosses the Patagonian frontier meat supplies dwindle. Lady Dixie comments on their dogs’ hunger. Hunting was intended to augment their supplies. However, their hunting expeditions often yielded quite a bit less than hoped for. On one such expedition, Lady Dixie joins the men guanaco hunting only to be caught in a sudden, summer hailstorm. The summertime Patagonian landscape soon becomes like that of winter. After the storm Lady Dixie comes near a guanaco. She admits,

I was so startled and surprised that for the space of a minute I sat quietly returning his stare. A movement of my horse broke the spell. The guanaco darted up the side of the hill like lightning, and pausing a moment on the summit, disappeared.

I meanwhile had unslung my rifle, and was off in pursuit of him.¹¹⁰

Lady Dixie does not relinquish the chase easily for if she does then her party goes without meat. She dismounts, and walks nearer the guanaco. Once within shooting range, she murmurs, “Poor fellow,” takes one step closer and fires. As she does this, she falls into a hole. Unfortunately, the quarry gets away.

When she returns to her party, she sees that they are now in pursuit of another guanaco. Due to the determination of their hunting dogs, this guanaco is captured and quickly has his throat slit by one of the guides. Disappointedly, the animal was diseased and unfit for the adventurers to eat. Nevertheless, the dogs had “the first good meal” since they “left Sandy Point.”¹¹¹ Dixie is not callous to the sufferings of animals. As a gentlewoman should, Dixie remarks on her pity and regret at the death of beautiful animals. However, Dixie realizes if her party is to survive on the frontier, they must hunt for food.

Eventually the hunting party finds a herd of guanaco and successfully kills two healthy ones. Lady Dixie is content that they will now have meat to eat and yet remarks on the gruesome aspect of hunting. As they pass through a green valley, Lady Dixie notes “the picturesquely wild appearance of my companions, as, eschewing contemplation, and anticipating dinner, they rode quickly ahead towards the camp on their shaggy, sturdy horses, their bodies muffled in the graceful guanaco robe, and huge pieces of red raw meat dangling on either side of their saddles, followed by the blood-stained hounds, who seemed thoroughly tired after their hard day’s work.”¹¹² The green valley symbolizes hope and renewal, yet Dixie juxtaposes such serenity with descriptions of blood and flesh. The green peaceful valley soon resembles a battlefield between man and animal where man is the victor.

Images of blood and death do not stop Dixie from hunting. She soon attempts ostrich hunting. The ostrich certainly was not as prestigious a form of game as an Indian tiger or African lion. According to Beerbohm’s text, the animal is not dangerous or

aggressive.¹¹³ Dixie and her party were not hunting for trophies, markers of conquest over the environment. They hunted for food, for survival, rather than for bloodlust or power.

Ostrich hunting proves difficult as the birds are remarkably swift. In order to be successful when hunting ostrich, hunters require sound horses. According to Beerbohm, “[T]he horses of Patagonia are remarkable for their endurance; seventy or eighty miles a day over that most trying country, with its rapid succession of steep escarpments, seems nothing to them.”¹¹⁴ Likewise, when in the Cordilleras hunting ostrich, Lady Dixie finds horseback riding no easy endeavor. She and her companions chase an ostrich over “high thick bushes, sharp-pointed, half-hidden rocks, and broad, deep chasms.”¹¹⁵ Nevertheless, Lady Dixie philosophizes on the nature of the sportsman and likewise, on herself. She believes, “[B]ut when his blood is up, and the excitement of the chase at its highest pitch, what keen sportsman cares to crane or wonder what danger lies on the other side of the obstacle that confronts him? His only thought is to get forward and keep a front rank in the merry chase that goes gaily sweeping along.”¹¹⁶

Lady Dixie enjoys her adventure on horseback. As the dogs chase two ostriches, Lady Dixie joins Francois and her brother on the chase. She writes, “[A]nd now, for the first time, I began to experience all the glorious excitement of an ostrich hunt. My little horse, keen as his rider, took the bit between his teeth, and away we went up and down the hills at a terrific pace.”¹¹⁷ The dogs lose the ostriches, and Lady Dixie is disappointed they have no meat to take back to their camp.

A later ostrich expedition proves successful. The dogs pursue one ostrich over the hills with the riders and their guns behind. After a twenty-five minute chase, Plata, a dog, “seizes him by the tail, which comes away in his mouth. In another moment the dog has him by the throat, and for a few minutes nothing can be distinguished but a gray struggling heap. Then Gregorio dashed forward and throws himself off his horse, breaks the bird’s neck, and when I arrive upon the scene the struggle is over.”¹¹⁸ The prize however is not without cost. Dogs, horses and humans are beyond exhaustion. Lady Dixie writes,

Our dogs and horses were in a most pitiable state. Poor Plata lay stretched on the ground with his tongue, hot and fiery, lolling out of his mouth, and his sides going at a hundred miles an hour. The horses, with their heads drooped till they almost touched the ground, and their bodies streaming with perspiration, presented a most pitiable sight, and while Gregorio disemboweled and fastened the ostrich together, I loosened their girths, and led them to a pool hard by to drink.¹¹⁹

Lady Dixie does not shy away from blood; she assists Gregorio with lifting the disemboweled ostrich onto a horse.¹²⁰ The carnage is “pitiable” but necessary for human survival.

Lady Dixie also hunts deer in the Cordilleras. She stealthily crawls through bushes so as not to disturb her quarry and admires the beauty of the animal before she kills. She maintains: “[Y]es, there he was, a beautiful animal, still in the same attitude of inquiring curiosity in which I had left him. Anxious to avoid spoiling the head, I took aim behind the shoulder, and fired.”¹²¹ Her shot reaches its target yet does not kill the

deer immediately; the deer springs up and walks slowly away. She fires two barrels to no avail; Gregorio also shoots the animal again, only to break the deer's leg. The deer limps away, looking "more stupefied than in pain."¹²² Lady Dixie seems deeply affected by the prolonged death of the animal. She confides,

Disgusted at such butchery, I begged one of my companions, all of whom had come up, to despatch the unfortunate beast, and my husband, going close up to him, placed his revolver within a foot of the deer's forehead and fired. Slowly it sank forward, stunned and apparently lifeless, but when we came alongside it, it was still breathing, and there was no mark to show that the bullet had penetrated the skull. Here Francois came to our aid, and with the help of his hunting-knife, the poor creature was put out of his misery.¹²³

They encountered more deer in the Cordilleras yet chose not to hunt them because of their tameness and the "utter absence of sport."¹²⁴ Interestingly, later Dixie would become an outspoken critic of hunting tame, hand- raised deer and fowl.¹²⁵

But before her transformation into a radical animal welfare supporter, Dixie hunts alongside men. Only after the slow, drawn out death of the deer, of which she initiated, Lady Dixie's thoughts on hunting shift. She expresses her remorse at the deer's death:

If regret could atone for that death, of which I unfortunately was the cause, then it has long ago been forgiven; for, for many a day I was haunted by a sad remorse for the loss of that innocent and trusting life, which had hitherto remained in ignorance of the annihilating propensities of man—that man who, directly he sees something beautiful and rare, becomes filled with the desire to destroy.¹²⁶

The entire deer is used by the people and the dogs. Lady Dixie concludes this chapter commenting on how everyone enjoyed the day despite the delayed death of the animal. Romantic sympathy for the animal connects Dixie to the natural world as “[R]omantic depictions of animals force us to acknowledge that animals are a kind of life in nature that is at once much like our own and yet different from it, not capable of being reduced to merely human desires.”¹²⁷ Her aristocratic British femininity is not warped because of the hunt; rather hunting raises her level of concern for the welfare of others. She feels sympathy for the animal as animal life is seen as pure, noble. Furthermore, hunting symbolized a return to nature.¹²⁸ Sympathy and this return to nature mark Dixie as aristocratic and noble by both birth and personal, emotional traits.

Swimming

After all of the challenges faced on the trail and while hunting, exercise in water symbolizes renewal and cleansing for Dixie. Among the athletic activities Dixie participates in is swimming. Swimming allows Dixie to bathe and refresh herself. Swimming is, however, a pleasure enjoyed after the work of the camp is complete. Dixie explains,

In England, on your return every day from hunting, you come home tired and weary, no doubt, but it is to a cosy huntingbox, where a warm room, a blazing fire, an easy arm-chair await you, with servants in plenty to attend to your wants, a refreshing hot bath, and the luxury of a clean change of clothes. But all this is not forthcoming on the pampa, and before you can rest, the whole business I have

mentioned has to be gone through, everybody, no matter who it is, taking his or her share of work, while the thought of fatigue must be banished, and every one must put his shoulder to the wheel, and undertake and accomplish his separate task cheerfully and willingly. Only by so doing can things be kept going in the brisk orderly manner they should.¹²⁹

As Isabella Bird Bishop frolics in a secluded stream in the Sandwich Islands, Lady Dixie does so after pitching her tent near a mountain stream in Patagonia. Fresh water lures her; she writes: “The sound of its splashing waters filled me with an irresistible longing for a plunge.”¹³⁰ She takes only a rough towel with her and walks through thick foliage to discover a “silver stream descending like a white streak from an immense height.”¹³¹ She decides that the small pool, created by a cascade is the “most convenient and inviting appearance for a bath.”¹³² Not concerned about modesty in the wilds of Patagonia, although she and her party have encountered numerous Indians and hunters. She states, “I lost no time in undressing and indulging in the luxury of a plunge, which greatly refreshed and invigorated me after the long tiring day I had undergone.”¹³³ Swimming, an acceptable Victorian sport for clothed women, is valued here because of its restorative powers. She washes away her fatigue, her roughness. By washing away the dirt and dust of the trail—remnants of ‘the space off,’ the other world—Dixie reclaims her femininity since Victorian womanhood is associated with cleanliness and virtue. Anne McClintock maintains that dirt became a marker of social boundaries and the transgression of these boundaries.¹³⁴ Dirt residue from the wilderness marks Dixie as a transgressor of social boundaries—an unclean, unwomanly woman. To reclaim her aristocratic role, she must

wash away evidence of work and dirt. However, Lady Dixie also challenges Victorian ideologies of gentle women as she skinny dips— a decidedly improper pastime for a Victorian lady. She sheds civilized garments and plunges into wild, running water. Dixie abandons social restraints and, like the water, runs wild. There exists a delicate balance between civilized and savage. Dixie cleans her self with the water, an act of civilization, yet to do so she strips herself of civilization's accoutrements. She may be cleansed of the social transgression of sport and work but she continues to transgress the social boundaries of female nudity on display.

Leaving Patagonia

After leaving Patagonia, Lady Dixie reveals her joy in physical challenge and exertion. She writes,

I remember the days when, after a long and weary ride, I slept, pillowed on my saddle, the open sky above me, a sounder and sweeter sleep than I had ever slept before; I remember those grand mountain-scenes, where we traced the wild horse to his home, through beech-wood glens, by lonely lakes, by mountain torrents, where no mortal foot had ever trod before me. I remember many an exciting chase and many a pleasant evening around the cheery camp-fire. I remember, too, many a discomfort—the earthquake, the drenching rains, the scorching sun, the pitiless mosquitoes, and the terrible blasting winds. But from the pleasure with which I look back on my wild life in Patagonia, these unpleasant memories can

detract but little. Taking it all in all, it was a very happy time, and a time on whose like I would gladly look again.¹³⁵

Dixie adopts a frontiersman's persona. Rather than construct a narrative based on domesticity, Dixie asserts independence and strength. To build upon her image of a confident, strong world traveler and "to add to her notoriety she arrived in England with a pet jaguar which they had captured in Brazil on the way home."¹³⁶ She "caused much consternation in the neighbourhood of Bosworth Park by parading it about on a leash."¹³⁷ Her travel narrative contributes to the growing body of literature leading up to the New Woman movement. Most importantly, in the wilderness Dixie participates in activities alongside men. Moreover, the location of the frontier is paradisiacal rather than dangerous.¹³⁸

Dixie envisions paradise for men and women, a paradise free from rules and criticism regarding propriety. Yet, she overlooks the turmoil occurring in Patagonia. Indeed, "[T]he light ending is highly problematic considering the extent of the massacre which was going on at the time. Dixie's visit to Patagonia happened during General Julio Argentino Roca's Campaign to the Desert, and it was openly discussed and celebrated in the Argentine press and in the European geographical journals."¹³⁹ Perhaps Dixie did not wish to comment on politics, but this seems contrary to her later involvement with the Zulus and the Irish. Or, perhaps she did not wish to tarnish her very positive experiences in the wilderness with images of war as this might detract from her message on women and sport. *Across Patagonia* focuses not on Argentina's political strength but rather on Dixie's own personal strength and independence. The "space off" of the Patagonian

frontier needed to be free from political rhetoric in order to assure Dixie of a complete escape from civilization. Nevertheless, her radical, visceral text shaped emerging ideologies of women, opening not only the frontier but sports for women.

Conclusion: The Empire and the Hunt

The hunt contributed to the morale of the British Empire as “sport for the late Victorians was seen as a contest between a human’s canniness, intelligence, and prowess, on the one hand, and an animal’s instincts and strength, on the other.”¹⁴⁰ If Englishmen and women triumph over animals this, in turn, demonstrates English superiority over baser creatures. The act of hunting builds upon ideas of British identity and power. Hunting adventures, or battles with nature, were seen as markers of nobility as only the landed were permitted to hunt specific game. Linda Colley asserts that fox-hunting resembles training for war.¹⁴¹ In general, the act of hunting builds upon ideas that “a keen love of sport is inherent in the breast of all true Englishmen; and the desire of adventure, the disregard of comfort and danger, that it encourages, have gone far to make them the conquerors of the world.”¹⁴² Athleticism and physical prowess foster imperial might.

The relationship between sport and Empire is reciprocal. If athleticism led to beliefs about strength and power which contributed to the confidence of imperial administrators, then the Empire also became a place where women could develop and display their own strengths. Athleticism bolstered the waning self confidence of the British Empire. By the interwar years, clearly “it was the Empire that bred a race of

huntresses. The big-game shoot was the playtime of the empire builders: men and women sported together in a welter of congenial blood-letting”—men and women were demonstrating power.¹⁴³ As Florence Dixie and later Isabel Savory prove, the Empire allowed for increased access to hunting and to grander displays of hunting prowess. Killing large, exotic animals symbolized social prestige.¹⁴⁴ Even without a royal entourage, wealthy British hunters displayed their social and economic power by traveling with large caravans, hiring numerous native servants and guides and above all, by destroying the native wildlife they came in contact with. Royal hunts and the breeding of game sanctioned the sport of hunting. Both Queen Victoria and the Prince of Wales gave sanction.¹⁴⁵

For most of the nineteenth century hunting for sport was a foundational component of British national identity. However, by the last decades of the century, intellectuals and aristocrats began to speak out against inhumane hunting practices. Lady Dixie and Lady Warwick, the king’s ex-mistress, began to criticize the excessive carnage proliferated by Edward VII.¹⁴⁶ By the end of the century, Queen Victoria became a patron of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.¹⁴⁷ Controversy surrounding hunting reflected negatively on the monarchy.¹⁴⁸ In the midst of the debate, Dixie wrote of Victoria’s grandson, the duke of York, that “his keen interest in stag-hunting is incompatible with his chairmanship of the RSPCA.”¹⁴⁹

After Dixie’s return from Patagonia, she reevaluated her position on hunting for sport as

the contest between her love for the aristocratic sport of hunting and her conscience was eventually resolved in favor of the latter, for in the 1880s Dixie joined the Humanitarian League and published a pamphlet on *The Horrors of Sport* (1895), indicting hunters for inflicting physical and psychological pain on animals and asserting that hunting is ‘barbarous’ and pleasurable only to ‘a heart rendered callous by suffering often witnessed and little realized.’¹⁵⁰

Dixie writes in *The Horrors of Sport*, “[S]port’ is horrible. I say it advisedly. I speak with the matured knowledge of one who has seen and taken part in numberless forms of sport in many and varied parts of the world.”¹⁵¹ The looks of “terror stricken” wounded animals “haunts” her.¹⁵² She decides, “[B]ut men and women will not and cannot understand the cruelty and cowardice of sport, unless in youth their hearts are stirred to kindly pity, love, and forethought for animals. The young must be taught to be kind and merciful, and if they are so taught they cannot reconcile their consciences to sport.”¹⁵³

Dixie did not restrict her outspokenness to pamphlet writing. In her collection of poetry, *Songs of a Child* (1901-02), her work is concerned with “man’s oppression of his fellow creatures—both human and animal.”¹⁵⁴ Specifically, in “The Union of Mercy” and “Prayer for the Dogs” Dixie betrays deep sympathy for nonhuman life that eventually leads her to vegetarianism and to agitate for reforms on the practice of hunting for sport.¹⁵⁵ Dixie’s use of sympathy as a rhetorical technique marks her as a true gentlewoman since, in Britain beginning in the 1780s-1790s, sympathy marked one’s self-awareness, an awareness of community and personal refinement.¹⁵⁶

Sympathy coupled with strong emotions lends the Romantic flavor to Dixie's writings. Dixie's works, similar to the writings by other animal rights activists, "were not just a defence of the cause of animals, rather they dripped revulsion at the emptiness and soullessness of a life devoted solely to the satisfaction of the basest human instincts."¹⁵⁷ At the core of Dixie's writing is a tension often found in romanticism—the unease caused by "at once seeing what the world would become, and hoping without hope that it might be different."¹⁵⁸ This critical perspective encouraged Dixie to reevaluate herself in relation to society; this contributed to a higher awareness of her self and of other individuals in society.¹⁵⁹ Such an experience leads to the artist's sense of social responsibility.¹⁶⁰ Dixie's hope for progress centers on ending cruelty and senseless violence. She admonishes hunting and faces her past. She writes:

I acknowledge that I was one of those 'barbarians,' who—loving animals from my earliest years—drifted into the clutches of so-called sporting habits and took part in many a shoot, drive, stalk and hunt against which my conscience rebelled, and in which my sympathies were always with the animal I had gone forth to assist in destroying. The joys of riding, of fresh air, of an active-outdoor life, no doubt were the principal causes that made me indulge in them.¹⁶¹

Dixie led a passionate, active life. She often defended her radical positions in the press. By doing so she helped usher in the era of the New Woman. Her love for adventure and sport encouraged other young women to become physically active. Her involvement with animal welfare contributed to the reevaluation of British customs and attitudes surrounding both domestic and wild animals. Sadly though, by the time of her

death, *The Times* concluded in her obituary, “that Lady Florence Dixie would best be remembered as ‘a somewhat peculiar woman.’”¹⁶²

- ¹ Catherine Barnes Stevenson, "Florence Douglas Dixie (1857-1905)," *Dictionary of Literary Biography vol. 174, British Travel Writers, 1876-1909*, ed. Barbara Brothers and Julia Gergits (Detroit: Brucoli Clark Layman, 1997), 97.
- ² Catherine Barnes Stevenson, *Victorian Women Travel Writers in Africa*, Twayne's English Authors Series, ed. Herbert Sussman (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982), 41.
- ³ Barnes Stevenson, "Florence Douglas Dixie," 97.
- ⁴ Brian Roberts, *Ladies in the Veld* (London: John Murray, 1965), 81.
- ⁵ Stevenson, *Victorian Women Travel Writers in Africa*, 42.
- ⁶ Roberts, 81.
- ⁷ Stevenson, *Victorian Women Travel Writers*, 43.
- ⁸ Barnes Stevenson, "Florence Douglas Dixie," 98.
- ⁹ Barnes Stevenson, "Florence Douglas Dixie," 97-98.
- ¹⁰ For a discussion of the term "feminism" see Karen Offen, *European Feminisms: 1700-1950* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2000), 19 and Barbara Caine, *Victorian Feminists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 5.
- ¹¹ Barnes Stevenson, "Florence Douglas Dixie," 98.
- ¹² Barnes Stevenson, "Florence Douglas Dixie," 98.
- ¹³ Roberts, 82.
- ¹⁴ Stevenson, *Victorian Women Travel Writers in Africa*, 45.
- ¹⁵ Roberts, 83.
- ¹⁶ Barnes Stevenson, "Florence Douglas Dixie," 98-99.
- ¹⁷ Marion Tinling, *Women into the Unknown: A Sourcebook on Women Explorers and Travelers* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989), 106.
- ¹⁸ Stevenson, *Victorian Women Travel Writers in Africa*, 46.
- ¹⁹ Stevenson, *Victorian Women Travel Writers in Africa*, 46.
- ²⁰ Barnes Stevenson, "Florence Douglas Dixie," 99.
- ²¹ Tinling, 110.
- ²² *Ibid.*, 110.
- ²³ Barnes Stevenson, "Florence Douglas Dixie," 97.
- ²⁴ Jane Robinson, *Wayward Women: A Guide to Women Travellers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 65.
- ²⁵ Julius Beerbohm, *Wanderings in Patagonia or Life Among the Ostrich-Hunters* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1879), 49.
- ²⁶ Beerbohm, 291-92.
- ²⁷ Elizabeth A. Fay, *A Feminist Introduction to Romanticism* (Malden, MA.: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 3.
- ²⁸ Fay, 5.
- ²⁹ Barbara T. Gates, ed., *In Nature's Name: An Anthology of Women's Writing and Illustrations, 1780-1930* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), 383.
- ³⁰ Clarissa Pinkola Estés, *Women Who Run With the Wolves: Myths and Stories of the Wild Woman Archetype* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1992), 9.
- ³¹ Fay, 5.
- ³² Barbara T. Gates, ed., *In Nature's Name*, 383.
- ³³ Saree Makdisi, *Romantic Imperialism: Universal Empire and the Culture of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 185.
- ³⁴ Barbara Claire Freeman, *The Feminine Sublime: Gender and Excess in Women's Fiction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 2.
- ³⁵ Freeman, *The Feminine Sublime*, 27.
- ³⁶ Barbara T. Gates, *Kindred Nature: Victorian and Edwardian Women Embrace the Living World* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 170.

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- ³⁷Freeman, *The Feminine Sublime*, 3.
- ³⁸Freeman, *The Feminine Sublime*, 3.
- ³⁹Barbara T. Gates, *Kindred Nature*, 169.
- ⁴⁰Freeman, *The Feminine Sublime*, 2.
- ⁴¹Ibid., 5.
- ⁴²Ibid., 5.
- ⁴³Elizabeth A. Bohls, *Women Travel Writers and the Language of Aesthetics, 1716-1818* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 15.
- ⁴⁴Bohls, 17.
- ⁴⁵Lady Florence Dixie, *Across Patagonia* (New York: Worthington Co., 1881), 3; Tinling, 106.
- ⁴⁶Dixie, *Across Patagonia*, 1.
- ⁴⁷Nicolas Shumway, *The Invention of Argentina* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 98.
- ⁴⁸Ibid., 99.
- ⁴⁹Ibid., 280-81.
- ⁵⁰Ibid., 279.
- ⁵¹Lance E. Davis and Robert A. Huttenback, *Mammon and the Pursuit of Empire: The Economics of British Imperialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 41.
- ⁵²Ibid., 70.
- ⁵³Shumway, 279.
- ⁵⁴For a discussion of the term “space-off” see Stacy Alaimo, *Undomesticated Ground: Recasting Nature as Feminist Space* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 20.
- ⁵⁵Mónica Szurmuk, *Women in Argentina: Early Travel Narratives* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 67.
- ⁵⁶Ibid., 67.
- ⁵⁷Ibid., 69.
- ⁵⁸Tinling, 108.
- ⁵⁹Szurmuk, 73.
- ⁶⁰Ibid., 74.
- ⁶¹Ibid., 69.
- ⁶²Ibid., 69.
- ⁶³Ibid., 72.
- ⁶⁴Dixie, *Across Patagonia*, 2.
- ⁶⁵Ibid., 3.
- ⁶⁶Stevenson, “Florence Douglas Dixie,” 99.
- ⁶⁷Ibid., 99.
- ⁶⁸Tinling, 109-10.
- ⁶⁹Roberts, 178.
- ⁷⁰Ibid., 178.
- ⁷¹Dixie, *Across Patagonia*, 13.
- ⁷²Ibid., 66.
- ⁷³Ibid., 68-69.
- ⁷⁴Beerbohm, 93.
- ⁷⁵Dixie, *Across Patagonia*, 30-31.
- ⁷⁶Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 122.
- ⁷⁷Dixie, *Across Patagonia*, 17.
- ⁷⁸Ibid., 18.
- ⁷⁹David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2001), 17.
- ⁸⁰Dixie, *Across Patagonia*, 18-19.

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- ⁸¹ Spurr, 17; original term published in Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 201.
- ⁸² Dixie, *Across Patagonia*, 24-25.
- ⁸³ *Ibid.*, 25.
- ⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 28.
- ⁸⁵ Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 118-19.
- ⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 207.
- ⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 211. The phrase “the great unwashed” is originally from Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton, *England and the English* (1833).
- ⁸⁸ The slogan of the Unilever Company as found in McClintock, 207.
- ⁸⁹ Sally Mitchell, *The New Girl: Girls’ Culture in England, 1880-1915* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 106.
- ⁹⁰ Joanna Trollope, *Britannia’s Daughters: Women of the British Empire* (London: Pimlico, 1994), 204.
- ⁹¹ See Roberts, 82-83.
- ⁹² Trollope, 204.
- ⁹³ Carl B. Cone, ed., *Hounds in the Morning: Sundry Sports of Merry England, Selections from the Sporting Magazine, 1792-1836* (Lexington: U of Kentucky Press, 1981), 5.
- ⁹⁴ Alice M. Hayes, *The Horsewoman: A Practical Guide to Side-Saddle Riding*, ed. M. Horace Hayes (London: W. Thacker and Company, 1893), 122.
- ⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 122.
- ⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 122.
- ⁹⁷ Dixie, *Across Patagonia*, 65.
- ⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 113.
- ⁹⁹ Mike Huggins, *The Victorians and Sport* (London: Hambledon & London, 2004), 81.
- ¹⁰⁰ Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988), 36.
- ¹⁰¹ Dixie, *Across Patagonia*, 44.
- ¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 75.
- ¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 75-76.
- ¹⁰⁴ Freeman, *The Feminine Sublime*, 40. Originally found in Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, ed. Adam Phillips (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 36.
- ¹⁰⁵ Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness*, 33.
- ¹⁰⁶ Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness*, 35.
- ¹⁰⁷ June Arianna Kennard, *Woman, Sport and Society in Victorian England* (Greensboro: University of North Carolina at Greensboro, unpublished diss., 1974), 128. Quoted material originally found in “Manly Women,” *Saturday Review* 67 (22 June 1889): 757.
- ¹⁰⁸ Kennard, 128. Quoted material originally found in “Manly Women,” *Saturday Review* 67 (22 June 1889): 757.
- ¹⁰⁹ Kennard, 128.
- ¹¹⁰ Dixie, *Across Patagonia*, 91.
- ¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 96.
- ¹¹² *Ibid.*, 98.
- ¹¹³ Beerbohm, 55.
- ¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 127.
- ¹¹⁵ Dixie, *Across Patagonia*, 167.
- ¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 167.
- ¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 105-06.
- ¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 113.
- ¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 113-14.
- ¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 114.

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- ¹²¹ Ibid., 180-81.
¹²² Ibid., 181.
¹²³ Ibid., 181-82.
¹²⁴ Dixie, *Across Patagonia*, 182.
¹²⁵ Antony Taylor, “‘Pig-Sticking Princes’: Royal Hunting, Moral Outrage, and the Republican Opposition to Animal Abuse in Nineteenth-and Early Twentieth-Century Britain,” *History* 89 (January 2004): 38.
¹²⁶ Dixie, *Across Patagonia*, 182-83.
¹²⁷ Onno Oerlemans, *Romanticism and the Materiality of Nature* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 70.
¹²⁸ Oerlemans, 92.
¹²⁹ Dixie, *Across Patagonia*, 170-71.
¹³⁰ Ibid., 171.
¹³¹ Ibid., 172.
¹³² Ibid., 172.
¹³³ Ibid., 172.
¹³⁴ McClintock, 153.
¹³⁵ Dixie, *Across Patagonia*, 250-51.
¹³⁶ Roberts, 84.
¹³⁷ Ibid., 84.
¹³⁸ Szurmuk, 69.
¹³⁹ Ibid., 77.
¹⁴⁰ Barbara T. Gates, *Kindred Nature*, 200.
¹⁴¹ Taylor, 34. Also see Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1830* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 170-73.
¹⁴² Beatrice Violet Greville, *The Gentlewoman’s Book of Sports* (London: Henry Company, 1892), 5.
¹⁴³ Maria Aitken, *Women Adventurers: Travelers, Explorers, and Seekers* (New York: Dorset Press, 1987), 86.
¹⁴⁴ Taylor, 43.
¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 35.
¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 36.
¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 37.
¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 37.
¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 38.
¹⁵⁰ Stevenson, *Victorian Women Travel Writers in Africa*, 50.
¹⁵¹ Florence Douglas Dixie, *The Horrors of Sport* (London: A.C. Fifield, 1905), 5.
¹⁵² Dixie, *The Horrors of Sport*, 6.
¹⁵³ Dixie, *The Horrors of Sport*, 16.
¹⁵⁴ Stevenson, *Victorian Women Travel Writers in Africa*, 43.
¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 43.
¹⁵⁶ Fay, 6-7.
¹⁵⁷ Taylor, 37.
¹⁵⁸ Makdisi, *Romantic Imperialism*, 185.
¹⁵⁹ Fay, 11.
¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 11.
¹⁶¹ Dixie, *The Horrors of Sport*, 18.
¹⁶² Robinson, 66.

Chapter Four:

Mary Kingsley:

“Set yourself to gain personal power”¹

In an 1869 edition of the *Journal of the Anthropological Society*, J. McGrigor Allan explores differences between men and women. Allan asserts men and women differ from one another in physical as well as mental capacities not caused by unequal educations. The sexes have divergent and unique tastes in amusements—even at a young age.² He finds girls “love best playthings connected with personal appearance—looking-glasses, necklaces, earrings, ribbons, lace” and especially dolls.³ Young Mary Kingsley proves Allan’s gender theory unreliable. She lived a quiet, retired life with her mother; her father was rarely at home due to his studies. As a child, Mary Kingsley read about great African explorers in her father’s library and two of her uncles were prominent writers on social issues. Tales from Richard Burton, Mungo Park, John Speke, and James Grant sparked Kingsley’s imagination.⁴ She received little formal education and envied her brother’s expensive education. At a young age Kingsley “decided she was silly to go ‘whining about looking for somebody to teach me’” and became her own teacher.⁵ She read and studied any subject that interested her. As her own teacher, no subject was taboo. As a result, Kingsley “had far more intellectual freedom, and physical freedom within four walls, than her contemporaries” since her parents did not attempt to stifle her intellectual inclinations.⁶

She grew fascinated with physics and chemistry. While a teenager, out of her allowance money, she purchased a subscription to *The English Mechanic*. Kingsley recalls, “[W]hat *The English Mechanic* was to me I cannot explain.” She adds, “[W]hat I should have done without its companionship between sixteen and twenty I do not care to think...With the aid of *The English Mechanic*, I became a handyman.”⁷ Defying traditional female educational practices, Kingsley pursued her own intellectual interests. She became as competent in these areas as any man of the time.

She was almost thirty when her parents died in 1892. After her parents’ deaths, Kingsley claims she wanted “something to do that my father had cared for.”⁸ She used the guise of continuing her father’s study of early religion and law to travel to West Africa. Many of her friends and relatives questioned her decision to travel to West Africa. In fact, Kingsley begins her travel book by explaining why she chose West Africa. She admits that she wants to experience the tropics but Malaysia is too expensive. South America experiences Yellow Jack outbreaks and a well respected naturalist almost died from fevers while there. West Africa becomes her choice because she knows little about the region.⁹ Her friends, and even doctors, warn Kingsley about West Africa. They cite disease and danger. More specifically, they believe West Africa is the “[D]eadliest spot on earth” because of the color of the natives’ skin.¹⁰ Even a friend who lived on the Coast for several years advises Kingsley,

When you have made up your mind to go to West Africa the very best thing you can do is to get it unmade again, and go to Scotland instead; but if your intelligence is not strong enough to do so, abstain from exposing yourself to the direct rays of the sun, take 4 grains of quinine every day for a fortnight before you

reach the Rivers, and get some introductions to the Wesleyans; they are the only people on the Coast who have got a hearse with feathers.¹¹

However, Kingsley's choice of West Africa may not have been as whimsical as she leads readers to believe. Scholar Katherine Frank points out,

It is 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. West Africa, indeed, had seemed an ineluctable destination to her for years. Nothing could have been more premeditated, less like the whim she jauntily writes of here.¹²

Kingsley also claims she travels to West Africa to finish her father's work. But, all his work "lay uncodified and undigested in a mass of notes and files." Instead, she writes two books of her own.¹³ Kingsley proves Victorian writer Francis Galton's point true: "[P]owerful men do not necessarily make the most eminent travellers; it is rather those who take the most interest in their work that succeed the best."¹⁴ Kingsley's journeys center on her scientific work and, based on the number of specimens she sent to England for the British Museum, thus validates the success of her journeys. If "Africa was a setting where British boys could become men but also where British men could behave like boys with impunity"¹⁵ it certainly became a place for Mary Kingsley to step away from strict Victorian gender expectations.

Kingsley's journeys to West Africa are significant in the area of nineteenth-century gender studies because of the dangers she faced. When she traveled to Africa, she went alone and without any prior knowledge of African languages. She ventured into regions that were quite primitive and known for cannibals. Her travels resulted in

scientific discoveries. She identified one new species of fish, snake and lizard.¹⁶

Moreover, Kingsley's text differs from many Victorian travel accounts and novels in that Kingsley emphasizes female physicality and exertion. Except for the writings by Bird and Dixie, such portrayals of exertion were particularly novel for readers of this time as any focus on a woman's physical efforts was rarely presented. Heroines of novels usually stayed in the home. Female exertion signified roughness or disrespectability. For example,

Elizabeth Bennett's lone three-mile cross-country trot in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) with her dirty stockings, suggested poor country manners to Mrs. Hurst and Miss Bingley. Only characters with lower class positions such as Tess in Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891) would be shown regularly engaged in activities resulting in blisters on the feet. Yet Kingsley, whose primary means of transportation was walking, describes herself walking such long distances as to become quite unpresentable.¹⁷

Kingsley, a scientific adventurer, sets herself apart from conventional ideologies of the passive, non-athletic Victorian woman. She revisions Victorian femininity— a femininity that is practical yet daring, active not wilting.

Scholar Patrick Brantlinger notes, "Africa was a great testing— or teething— ground for moral growth and moral regression; the two processes were after all indistinguishable."¹⁸ As Africa functioned for British men and boys, so too did it for Kingsley. In Africa Kingsley faces danger and tests her physical limits. She observes and learns from African tribes as she explores her ideas of femininity. Kingsley's narrative of Africa differs from male travel writers' depictions in that Kingsley is curious

not fearful. Additionally, “[B]esides minimizing the danger or horror of West African life, Kingsley’s wit exercises a final, extremely political kind of control over her readers’ responses. Her continual self-deprecation, the slapstick portraits of herself on a river bank or in a game pit tend to diffuse any feminist implications that the reader might find in the text.”¹⁹ Her humor also diffuses patriarchal ‘master –of- all –I- survey’ posturing. For example, Kingsley’s advice regarding the African crocodiles proves that in Africa, as elsewhere, danger exists, but there is really nothing to fear if one retains a sense of humor and makes a point of learning about Africa. She explains:

you are certain to come across crocodiles. Now a crocodile drifting down in deep water, or lying asleep with its jaws open on a sand-bank in the sun, is a picturesque adornment to the landscape when you are on the deck of a steamer, and you can write home about it and frighten your relations on your behalf; but when you are away among the swamps in a small dug-out canoe, and that crocodile and his relations are awake—a thing he makes a point of being at flood tide because of fish coming along—and when he has got his foot upon his native heath—that is to say, his tail within holding reach of his native mud— he is highly interesting, and you may not be able to write home about him—and you get frightened on your own behalf.²⁰

Unlike many male adventurers and travel writers, Kingsley ventures to Africa in hopes of learning rather than conquering or possessing. She is curious about the animals, the climate and the people. She does not wish to transform West Africa into a replica of England.

Kingsley's destination choice, and mode of travel, shocked many, especially tradition-bound Victorian men. J. McGrigor Allan, among others, believed women need men's protection because women, afflicted with menstruation, are "more or less always unwell."²¹ When Kingsley travels, she proves herself remarkably fit. Physical difference from men, such as her size, functions as an asset rather than a weakness. Kingsley, a small woman, surprises the African traders as she proves "extraordinarily good at boats" and is "quite fearless in a country of terrifying terrain and climate and among tribes known for their penchant for human flesh."²² Her physical endurance confounds many men; this amuses Kingsley. Unlike characters from Joseph Conrad's *The Heart of Darkness*, climate, cannibals, and wild animals do not deter Kingsley from her expedition. Nor do these factors cause Kingsley to degenerate morally. She approaches trying situations with wit and leaves readers with practical advice. Mary Kingsley is however a paradox. She does not support votes for women and dresses "even in the jungle, like a proper Victorian lady," nevertheless, "Mary Kingsley repeatedly violated the norms of female conduct."²³

Sport in the Jungle

Sports such as canoeing and hiking challenge and invigorate Kingsley. Canoeing provides Kingsley with freedom to move where she wishes and also challenges her physically. Although she advises readers on the technicalities of maneuvering a canoe in West African waterways, she enjoys the physical exertion required of canoeing. For example, after she recalls deep, unstable mud in the mangrove swamps, Kingsley states,

But if you are a mere ordinary person of a retiring nature, like me, you stop in your lagoon until the tide rises again; most of your attention is directed to dealing with an 'at home' to crocodiles and mangrove flies, and with the fearful stench of the slime round you. What little time you have over you will employ in wondering why you came to West Africa, and why, after having reached this point of absurdity, you need have gone and painted the lily and adorned the rose, by being such a colossal ass as to come fooling about in mangrove swamps.²⁴

Rather than wait to be rescued by a man, Kingsley places all responsibility on herself; her condition and her decisions are entirely her own. Rather than return home to England and give up her journey, Kingsley continues her canoeing adventure.

Crocodiles twice attempt to overturn Kingsley's canoe. She describes one encounter; the crocodile

chose to get his front paws over the stern of my canoe, and endeavored to improve our acquaintance. I had to retire to the bows, to keep the balance right, and fetch him a clip on the snout with a paddle, when he withdrew, and I paddled into the very middle of the lagoon, hoping the water there was too deep for him or any of his friends to repeat the performance. Presumably it was, for no one did it again. I should think that crocodile was eight feet long; but don't go and say I measured him, or that this is my outside measurement for crocodiles. I have measured them when they have been killed by other people, fifteen, eighteen, and twenty-one feet odd. This was only a pushing young creature who had not learnt manners.²⁵

Kingsley's humor and rationality when confronted with a bold crocodile mark her as a woman ready to face any difficulty. Unlike traditional ideological constructions of the

Victorian “angel in the house,” Mary Kingsley uses physical violence to protect herself from predators. She claims personal responsibility for herself; she depends upon herself for her own survival. She does not require male protection to survive in the jungle.

Kingsley clearly realizes she differs from many Victorian women. She sees her love of adventure and canoeing as her own “particular tastes and avocation.”²⁶

Kingsley’s private, Victorian domestic space shifts when in Africa. Africa resembles the antithesis to the Victorian ideal. Rather than womanhood that is protected by four walls and a solid roof, Kingsley’s space in Africa is open, unpredictable, and in motion (often on water). In Africa, wildlife and the physical environment are intimate companions for Kingsley. Of the grunts and coughs of crocodiles, splashes of fish, and the creaking of trees, Kingsley writes,

I shall never forget one moonlight night I spent in a mangrove-swamp. I was not lost, but we had gone away into the swamp from the main river, so that the natives of a village with an evil reputation should not come across us when they were out fishing. We got well in, on to a long pool or lagoon; and dozed off and woke, and saw the same scene around us twenty times in the night, which thereby grew into an aeon, until I dreamily felt that I had somehow got into a world that was all like this, and always had been, and was always going to be so.²⁷

Although she travels in the unknown, she is never lost. She alludes to a feeling of timelessness in the mangroves. The primeval African night washes away Kingsley’s memories of modern England. The canoe she sleeps in carries her away from the forces of man. In the canoe, Kingsley and nature are all that exist. She transforms into an

element of nature, neither a man nor a woman, simply a small particle in the universe. Influenced by the night, in Africa she transcends gender boundaries.

Canoeing in West African swamps proves transcendental for Kingsley. She confesses, “[T]o 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 anyone to follow the practice.”²⁸ Her choice for solace, and adventure, is not for everyone. The swamp excites her. Kingsley describes the great swamp region in the Bight of Biafra. She admits, “that in its immensity and gloom it has a grandeur equal to that of the Himalayas.”²⁹ She decides the area does not have conventional beauty but rather peculiar charm. She describes the rain, the mud, the smells, and the fever that are characteristic of the region. However, she maintains, “[F]ive times have I been now in Bonny River and I like it. You always do get to like it if you live long enough to allow the strange fascination of the place to get a hold on you.”³⁰ Kingsley breaks from traditional English aesthetics of beauty; she finds value in the African landscape contrary to other adventurers’ accounts. For Kingsley, the mud, the smells, the very wildness of the place do not detract from its allure. At the very least, exotic West Africa entices her and arouses her curiosity as England does not.

Her day-to-day experiences in Africa are much more challenging and more stimulating than the cloistered existence she led in England before she began her travels. England represents rules and routine whereas Africa becomes her playground and her laboratory. At one point in the narrative she canoes with an agent of Hatton and Cookson. With Mr. Fildes she hunts crabs in the mud of an inlet. He urges her to jump in the thick mud. She recalls,

I had never suspected we should catch anything but our deaths of fever, and so had brought with me no collecting-box, and before I could remonstrate Mr. Fildes' handkerchief was full of crabs, and of course mine too. It was a fine sunny morning on the Equator, and therefore it was hot, and we had nothing to wipe our perspiring brows with.³¹

Canoeing and crabbing challenge Kingsley's ideas regarding appropriate forms of female entertainment. For not only does she exert herself physically, she dirties herself in the presence of a man who is neither her father nor her husband. Her honor is not called into question because, simply, she is in Africa. Nonetheless, Kingsley does not escape all social conventions because she is in Africa. While with missionaries, she discovers female gender roles are still observed as they are in Europe.

Kingsley meets missionaries at Kangwe. She writes:

I daily saw there what it is possible to do, even in the wildest and most remote regions of West Africa, and recognised that there is still one heroic form of human being whose praise has never adequately been sung, namely, the missionary's wife. With all the drawback and difficulties of the enervating climate, and the lack of trained domestic help, and with the addition of two small children of her own, and a tribe of school children of the Fan and Igalwa tribes, Mme. Jacot had that mission house as clean and tidy, and well ordered, as if it were in Paris.³²

Mme. Jacot may be in Africa but her life conforms to conventions established in Europe, despite all difficulties. Mme. Jacot fascinates Kingsley, and earns her respect. Kingsley

soon leaves the ordered, and stationary domestic sphere of the missionary woman and again ventures out via her canoe.

The canoe itself is significant because it is the vessel which allows Kingsley to journey out from herself and out from social conventions. The canoe, under her guidance, carries her to new adventures. In the canoe, she puts aside social taboos and simply moves where she wishes. Kingsley, with her paddle in her hands, steers her destiny. Her brother and her father are not guiding her. In the canoe, she escapes patriarchal control. For example, Kingsley describes her wish to travel deeper into the jungle to gather specimens. She writes,

All the balance of the time I was at Talagouga I spent in trying to find means to get up into the rapids above Njole, for my heart got more and more set on them now that I saw the strange forms of the Talagouga fishes, and the differences between them and the fishes at Lambarènè. For some time no one whom I could get hold of regarded it as a feasible scheme, but, at last, M. Gacon thought it might be managed; I said I would give a reward of 100 francs to any one who would lend me a canoe and a crew, and I would pay the working expenses, food, wages &c.³³

To reach the rapids above Njole, she negotiates like a man and succeeds. After negotiations are complete, Kingsley confides, “I now felt I was in for it, and screwed my courage to the sticking point—no easy matter after all the information I had got into my mind regarding the rapids of the River Ogowé.”³⁴ By confessing her insecurities to her readers, Kingsley reinforces her own notions of traditional femininity and subverts her own bravery—a trait thought of as masculine. The world of navigation and negotiation

are relatively unfamiliar to her yet she sets her fears aside in order to continue her work for the British Museum. She describes the journey by canoe:

I establish myself on my portmanteau comfortably in the canoe, my back is against the trade box, and behind that is the usual mound of pillows, sleeping mats, and mosquito-bars of the Igalwa crew; the whole surmounted by the French flag flying from an indifferent stick.³⁵

She also observes that “the blood of half my crew is half alcohol.”³⁶ Kingsley is the only sober and therefore, coherent human on board. She realizes her French hosts do not expect to see her return alive. When they reach the rapids, Kingsley describes the treacherous canoeing:

We kept along close to the right-hand bank, dodging out of the way of the swiftest current as much as possible. Ever and again we were unable to force our way round projecting parts of the bank, so we then got up just as far as we could to the point in question, yelling and shouting at the tops of our voices. M’bo said ‘Jump for bank, sar,’ and I ‘up and jumped’, followed by half the crew. Such banks! Sheets, and walls, and rubbish heaps of rocks, mixed up with trees fallen and standing. One appalling corner I shall not forget, for I had to jump at a rock wall, and hang on to it in a manner more befitting an insect than an insect-hunter, and then scramble up it into a close-set forest, heavily burdened with boulders of all sizes.³⁷

Nature and her vocation force her to transgress traditional feminine behaviors as she shouts, jumps and scrambles through the African jungle.

Additionally, Kingsley identifies her African activities of canoeing and hiking as athletics. She refers to her hiking as “our athletic sports.”³⁸ Sports such as rowing and walking were available to English ladies yet in England these two sports did not endanger the participants as in Africa. To stress the athleticism required of both sports in Africa, Kingsley expands on the dangers of canoeing. She recalls,

About 9.30[P.M.] we got into a savage rapid. We fought it inch by inch. The canoe jammed herself on some barely sunken rocks in it. We shoved her off over them. She tilted over and chucked us out. The rocks round being just awash, we survived and got her straight again, and got into her and drove her unmercifully.³⁹

And then, “[S]mash went a sorely tried pole and paddle. Round and round we spun in an exultant whirlpool, which, in a light-hearted, maliciously joking way, hurled us tail first out of it into the current...Of course we were defeated, we could not go up any further without the aid of our lost poles and paddles, so we had to go down for shelter somewhere, anywhere, and down at a terrific pace in the white water we went.”⁴⁰

This sport leads to loss of control. Kingsley and her crew physically battle with rocks and currents yet find themselves defeated. This point is significant. Critic Alison Blunt notes, “[T]he ambivalence of Kingsley’s position within imperial discourses of power and authority is clear, but this should also be extended to her gendered subjectivity.”⁴¹

Blunt expands on this point, maintaining that “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.”⁴² In the canoe Kingsley is beyond the control and protection of man, and Empire, as she is hurtled

downstream. Her personal safety, her future, is a mystery. She exists in a space beyond structured society. Here there are no rules.

In Africa, hiking is a dangerous athletic endeavor as well. Unlike her time in the canoe, Kingsley finds her hiking adventures provide opportunities in which to reinforce her beliefs on appropriate female conduct. For example, on a foot excursion, she decides to return to Kangwe on a different road, and soon discovers another village. Since she had “enough village work for one day,” she avoids this village and instead travels into a forest on a hillside. She writes, “[T]here was no sort of path up there, and going through a clump of *shenja*, I slipped, slid, and finally fell plump through the roof of an unprotected hut. What the unfortunate inhabitants were doing, I don’t know, but I am pretty sure they were not expecting me to drop in, and a scene of great confusion occurred.”⁴³ On another day, while walking on a path, Kingsley falls into a game pit. She writes,

It is at these times you realise the blessing of a good thick skirt. Had I paid heed to the advice of many people in England, who ought to have known better, and did not do it themselves, and adopted masculine garments, I should have been spiked to the bone, and done for. Whereas, save for a good many bruises, here I was with the fullness of my skirt tucked under me, sitting on nine ebony spikes some twelve inches long, in comparative comfort, howling lustily to be hauled out.⁴⁴

Although she hikes through jungles as male explorers do, Kingsley’s feminine accoutrements— notably the skirt— save her rather than limit her active participation.

Transgressing Victorian feminine propriety however, Kingsley compares herself and her

expedition to those of the renowned Stanley. She envisions herself as him in order to conquer difficulties. She confesses, “feeling it was a situation more suited to Mr. Stanley than myself, I attempted to emulate his methods and addressed my men.”⁴⁵ She addresses her men as “boys” and commands them to get started on their journey, in order to get through the mangrove swamp before the tide comes in. Though Kingsley collects wildlife in alcohol and glass jars for the British Museum as male scientists do, she believes hunting is not proper for women: “I am habitually kind to animals, and besides I do not think it is ladylike to go shooting things with a gun.”⁴⁶ Nonetheless, Kingsley is a leader. She does not rely on men to make decisions regarding her journey. Rather, she commands groups of men in order to achieve her scientific goals and by doing so, she transgresses Victorian gender roles.

At points in her narrative, Kingsley offers alternatives for Victorian women. However, Kingsley is careful to maintain the value found in retaining and adhering to social customs, such as wearing a skirt instead of trousers. At another time, Kingsley and a party of African women fish in a lake. Kingsley explains that women must be present when men are fishing because “lady representatives of each village being expected to attend and see the fish are properly divided.”⁴⁷ As fishers stake the water at right angles, women gather the fish in baskets as they fly out of the water. Kingsley notices that even in Africa women have social roles they are expected to fulfill, for the welfare of the community.

Perhaps Kingsley fears West Africans would meet the same fate as the New Women’s supporters—one of ridicule and scandal. She states,

Nothing strikes one so much, in studying the degeneration of these native tribes, as the direct effect that civilisation and reformation has in hastening it. The worst enemy to the existence of the African tribe, is the one who comes to it and says:— Now you must civilise, and come to school, and leave off all those awful goings-on of yours, and settle down quietly. The tribe does so; the African is teachable and tractable; and then the ladies and some of the young men are happy and content with the excitement of European clothes and frequent Church services; but the older men and some of the bolder young men soon get bored with these things and the, to them, irksome restraints, and they go in for too much rum, or mope themselves to death, or return to their native customs.⁴⁸

Kingsley's concern regarding imperial attempts to civilize Africans mirrors her anxiety with the New Woman movement. She fears Africans, like the women's rights advocates, would soon succumb to vice and lose their respectability; this is why Kingsley did not associate herself with the feminist movement. During this part of the nineteenth century, women's rights supporters met with severe scorn and derision in the popular press, especially in magazines such as *Punch*. Kingsley fears public ridicule and guards her respectability.

Intellectual Pursuits as Sport

Mary Kingsley, similar to other naturalists of her time, worked across disciplines. She collected specimens of fish and reptiles for the British Museum. In West Africa she discovered a new species of fish which were named after her.⁴⁹ She collected information on the religious practices of West African tribes. She earned the respect of

the general public and her colleagues. Anthropologist James Frazer, author of *The Golden Bough*, cited Mary Kingsley as source for that work.⁵⁰ Clearly, Mary Kingsley saw her intellectual pursuits as valuable contributions.

Kingsley views the acquisition of knowledge as a sporting pursuit. Her purpose for traveling to West Africa is to gain knowledge about people and wildlife. Field anthropology, for Kingsley, is both vocation and sport. She writes,

Stalking the wild West African idea is one of the most charming pursuits in the world. Quite apart from the intellectual, it has a high sporting interest; for its pursuit is as beset with difficulty and danger as grizzly bear hunting, yet the climate in which you carry on this pursuit—vile as it is—is warm, which to me is almost an essential of existence. Personally I prefer it to elephant hunting; and I shall never forget the pleasure with which, in the forest among the Fans, I netted one reason for the advantage of possessing a white man's eye-ball, and, as I wrote it down in my water-worn notebook, saw it joined up with the reason why it is advisable to cut off big men's heads in the Niger Delta. Above all, I beg you to understand that I make no pretension to a thorough knowledge of Fetish ideas; I am only on the threshold.⁵¹

She confides, "I have got a lot to learn."⁵²

There are many African languages and customs to learn. Kingsley believes Africans like to hide knowledge and customs from white explorers. Trade English is the common language between Europeans and Africans. She approaches trade English in a scholarly manner. She thinks the language is "exceedingly charming" and "really requires study." Difficulties arise since there exists no dictionary to consult for trade

English.⁵³ Nevertheless, teasing out ideas, acquiring insights and testing theories exercise Kingsley's intellect. Drawing room gossip pales in comparison to the excitement of her studies. Transgressing notions of Victorian respectability, Mary Kingsley seeks knowledge and fulfillment in the masculine realm of scholarship.

A large concern for Kingsley is that Africans, and women, retain respectability. To accomplish this, Kingsley offers advice to potential adventurers which she believes will help eliminate stereotypes of Africa and Africans. She advises,

A few hints as to your mental outfit when starting on this sport may be useful. Before starting for West Africa, burn all your notions about sun-myths and worship of the elemental forces. My own opinion is you had better also burn the notion, although it is fashionable, that human beings got their first notion of the origin of the soul from dreams.⁵⁴

She reads books on native custom and states these books are "a true key to a certain quantity of facts, but in West Africa only to a limited quantity."⁵⁵ West Africa remains a mystery to the British. Kingsley concludes Africans have

a remarkable mental acuteness and a large share of common sense; that there is nothing really 'child-like' in their form of mind at all. Observe them further and you will find they are not a flighty-minded, mystical set of people in the least. They are not dreamers or poets, and you will observe, and I hope observe closely—for to my mind this is the most important difference between their make of mind and our own—that they are notably deficient in all mechanical arts: they have never made, unless under white direction and instruction, a single fourteenth-rate piece of cloth, pottery, a tool or machine, house, road, bridge,

picture or statue; that a written language of their own construction they none of them possess.⁵⁶

Kingsley acknowledges West Africa as a place of beauty and fascination. Yet, perhaps as a product of her time, she adopts what Rudyard Kipling, and later post-colonial scholars, identify as “the white man’s burden.” For, without the guidance of white Europeans, Kingsley believes West Africans would not have foundations of civilization such as pottery or housing. Such exaggeration seems exasperating for modern-day readers, nonetheless, Kingsley’s thoughts on Africa were echoed by many other explorers, politicians, imperial administrators, and writers— H. Rider Haggard and Joseph Conrad among them.

On Women

Kingsley shared imperialist sentiments with other educated Britons and spoke out politically on her beliefs regarding administrative policies in Africa. As a middle-class Victorian woman, she feared ridicule from her peers. In *Travels in West Africa* Kingsley destabilizes her narrative position, her power acquired as an active woman, through humor.⁵⁷ Humor becomes her weapon against critics and misogynists. She secretly fears comments that question her femininity or respectability. For example, though not targeted at Kingsley specifically, statements made by critics such as J. McGrigor Allan challenged her sexuality. Allan proclaimed, “[A] woman with a masculine mind, is as anomalous a creature, as a woman with a man’s breasts, a man’s pelvis, a man’s muscular leg, or a man’s beard.”⁵⁸ Her choice of vocation, certainly not a traditional option for women, also met with criticism. Allan states, “[I]n the highest realms of literature and

science, man reigns supreme. The inventing, discovering, creating, cogitating mind is pre-eminently masculine; the history of humanity is conclusive as to the mental supremacy of the male sex.”⁵⁹ Kingsley’s use of humor conceals the very real progress she was making for her sex in the fields of science, athletics and scholarship.

I argue that this narrative technique is Kingsley’s attempt at self preservation. Upon her return to England, she wanted to cause little scandal. Rather she hoped to go about her studies. If she were to agitate for social reform for women, she would become an easy target for critics such as J. McGrigor Allan. This would undoubtedly shift the focus from her scientific accomplishments and instead classify her as an irrational, militant feminist. She wanted to avoid that political battle.

Kingsley was, however, not uninterested in the debate surrounding the roles of women and men. Kingsley does explore the separate spheres of African men and women. She notes that African men and women have secret societies which males and females enter into around eight or ten years old. She observes,

[B]oth societies are rigidly kept apart. A man who attempts to penetrate the female mysteries would be as surely killed as a woman who might attempt to investigate the male mysteries; still I came, in 1893, across an amusing case which demonstrates the inextinguishable thirst for knowledge, so long as that knowledge is forbidden, which characterises our sex.⁶⁰

She proceeds to describe an incident involving women who doubted a spirit, *Ikum*, had any real power. Some women concluded that this spirit was in fact a neighbor dressed up as a spirit. The men of the village were alarmed by the women’s skepticism. Kingsley hypothesizes,

the men were much alarmed; sceptism [sic] had spread by now to such extent that nothing short of burning or drowning all the women could stamp it out and reintroduce the proper sense of awe into the female side of society, and after a good deal of consideration the men saw, for men are undoubtedly more gifted in foresight than our sex, that it was no particular use reintroducing this awe if there was no female half of society to be impressed by it. It was a brainspraining problem for men all around, for it is clear society cannot be kept together without some superhuman aid to help to keep the feminine portion of it within bounds.⁶¹

Kingsley's use of sarcasm displaces the very real threat of gender based social revolution. Kingsley draws no comparison between her example and England. Nevertheless, her point is clear: men cannot prevent women from thinking critically and questioning tradition.

Nevertheless, she discovers remarkable freedom in West African society. She states,

[S]avage life shows a much nearer approach to sexual equality, physical, mental, and moral. In Europe and America, almost every woman is steered through life by the reflecting brain, the strong will, and protecting arm of a husband, a father, a brother, or a son. If a woman have no male relative, she has her spiritual director, whether Catholic or Protestant, her father confessor or her favorite preacher, who keeps her conscience and who she regards as a demi-god. If there be one woman without such a director, she is guided by man-made public opinion, supplemented by oracles uttered by men in past ages. Woman never

escapes from masculine control, direct or indirect, personal or impersonal; she is always ruled by some man or men, either living or governing from the grave.⁶² “Savage life” differs significantly from European life. West African women question their roles and make fundamental changes within their own villages. Yet, because European women allow, and expect, men to guide and protect them, European women will never escape masculine control. In short, Kingsley asks individual women to assert themselves and end their reliance on their husbands, fathers and brothers. Kingsley does not however, trumpet for parades and protests— both components of social unrest. She prefers slow, steady, quiet progress toward emancipation. Her approach, “[S]et yourself to gain personal power—don’t grab the reins of power— but while they are laying [sic] on the horses [sic] neck, quietly get them into your hands and drive.”⁶³

Mary Kingsley hoped to preserve a traditional feminine identity in order to avoid criticism and scorn while she worked in a predominately male profession. This proved difficult as wifhood and motherhood were women’s revered function in the nineteenth century. Women, such as Kingsley, who challenged or rejected this tradition often faced harsh censure. To reiterate the importance of tradition in Victorian England, J. McGrigor Allan’s words best synthesize the voices of the critics; he writes:

Compare the true woman, who recognises the value and importance of the natural functions in their influence on future generations, with the little creature who ‘shunts’ the conjugal and maternal duties; who rebels against the very instincts of Nature; who is, forsooth, ashamed of being a woman, and in aping man, becomes a nondescript— a monster more horrible than that created by Frankenstein. Is it possible to conceive a more contemptible and deplorable spectacle than that of the

female (I will not profane the beautiful name of *woman*) who, having undertaken, and having appointed to her, by nature, those functions, in the proper fulfillment of which consist the charm and glory of the sex, deliberately neglects and abdicates the sacred duties and privileges of wife and mother, to make herself ridiculous by meddling in and muddling men's work?⁶⁴

As an adventurer and scientist Kingsley worked in a male-dominated field. From Allan's perspective, no doubt, she appeared to be "aping males." Although she canoes and hikes, Kingsley's fear centered on the apprehension that she would seem like a Frankenstein to her English audience. To avoid this she subverts her accomplishments with humor and refers to her female gender by mentioning her attire.

Kingsley faced another social pressure in that she never married. Allan clearly admonishes women who shun matrimony and maternity. Women like Kingsley who were neither married nor mothers guarded their femininity by subscribing, at least in public, to Victorian middle-class ideologies. To emphasize the urgency of this point, Allan trumpets

[C]ommon sense disposes of intellectual equality of the sexes. We cannot accept the dicta of strong-minded women, who either mistake their own restless wishes and caprices for the deliberate views of women in general, or who are determined to achieve notoriety at any price! We dare not ignore all lessons of experience, because some unhappy wives, and discontented virgins tell us, that all past generations have utterly misconceived woman's nature and capacities!⁶⁵

Allan believes women want equality with men but are reluctant to give up female privileges; he calls women to relinquish the sofa and take active part in the world.

According to Allan, women must share in the rough aspects of life. He states that woman, after experiencing the hardships of the public arena, would gladly “return to her own costume.”⁶⁶

Kingsley poses a challenge to Allan’s views on women. Kingsley, literally, never abandons her own costume. She canoes, hikes, studies, doctors, and collects specimens in her skirt. She participates in a man’s life without surrendering her costume, and implicitly, her femininity. Upon her return to England, Kingsley participates in politics. She speaks on behalf of the West Africans. She sincerely hopes Britain and Africa might establish a trade agreement that will not destroy native cultures.⁶⁷ She insists British imperialism overlooks the intricacies of tribal customs such as polygamy and cannibalism. In her book, using observations from her travels, she explains that Africans are not “pathetic, undeveloped white men, deficient Europeans.”⁶⁸ In Kingsley’s view, African traditions ought to be respected and left untouched by the British. This would ensure the relative social stability of West Africa. To alter West African traditions would be to upset the social balance of the region and belittle the significance of West African culture. Such thoughts directly challenged dominant imperial views of Victorian anthropologists, specifically those who prescribed to the theory of a social continuum which distinguished the civilized races from the savage races.

Women, also looked upon as “deficient Europeans,” who desired male privilege appeared threatening to Victorian men.⁶⁹ As more women appeared active outside of the home, traditionalists, like J. McGrigor Allan, campaigned to keep Victorian women fertile and content within the home so as to not upset social balance.⁷⁰ As an unmarried woman, Kingsley appeared free from domestic responsibilities. From Allan’s perspective

then, what was to keep her content at home? Kingsley's anthropological pursuits and scientific passion, as well as her hiking and canoeing, no doubt inspired by the masculine adventure tales she read as a child, provided Kingsley with a strong sense of self-sufficiency and resilience. During her travels in Africa, Kingsley proves she is "able to cope with whatever man or nature might cast her way. She scorned prissy lady travellers like May French Sheldon who brought with them all the comforts of home."⁷¹ Kingsley embodies practicality and fortitude. She does not allow her gender or tradition to dissuade her ambition.

England proved a different scenario altogether. Kingsley, similar to Isabella Bird Bishop, distanced herself from the women's movement as a way in which to avoid criticism from intellectuals and the popular press.⁷² She returned from West Africa in 1895 to find she was "hailed as a 'new woman' because she was a daring traveller." However,

[A]s soon as she landed in Liverpool, all her West African robustness and hardy well-being deserted her. Once settled back on Addison Road she became liable to a variety of incapacitating ailments: influenza, neuralgia, migraines, heart palpitations, even rheumatism. In Africa she pursued her travels with the stamina and energy of her father, while at home in England she recurrently lapsed into her mother's passive invalidism.⁷³

By the latter part of the nineteenth century women's travel had taken on political connotations. Even the traveler's choice of clothing was interpreted as a statement on women's roles and positions in society. To wear trousers, even in the jungle of Africa, was to align oneself with the advocates of female emancipation.⁷⁴ To Kingsley's dismay,

a 3 December article in the *Daily Telegraph* hailed Kingsley as a superwoman, proclaiming “[I]t is a curious and a novel feature of the modern emancipation of woman— this passion on the part of the sex to emulate the most daring achievements of masculine explorers.”⁷⁵ Kingsley quickly penned a disclaimer. In this she pointed out her dependence on the male traders and she stated, “I do not relish being called a New Woman. I am not one in any sense of the term. Every child I come across tyrannises over me, and a great deal of time I ought to give science goes in cooking, etc. I do not think traveling now lays one open to this reproach.”⁷⁶

Conclusion

When *Travels in West Africa* appeared the magazine *Young Woman* reviewed the text and proclaimed the book was “a book of defiance...the liveliest, cheeriest, most resolute defiance all round— friends and relatives, laws of health, notions of what is proper and becoming, danger to life and limb, and the rest. Whether there are any notions left of what is proper and becoming for women may be doubted.”⁷⁷ The article concluded that “Miss Kingsley has proved her own right to freedom.”⁷⁸

Kingsley feared to identify herself with the New Women’s movement because she did not want to appear unwomanly. Single and without children, Kingsley did not want to “embrace the designation of New Woman” because it might reduce her, “in society’s view” to an “unattractive, strident freak.”⁷⁹ Victorian women who participated in men’s sports or work often were viewed as unnatural. Oftentimes they were accused of lesbianism. Although there are no records that state Kingsley was not heterosexual, her choice of study and her enjoyment of canoeing and hiking certainly distinguished her

from most Victorian women. To add to the building anxiety regarding Victorian homosexuality, in 1897 Havelock Ellis published *Sexual Inversion*. In this work, Ellis categorizes a lesbian as an energetic, brusque woman, marked by a “masculine straightforwardness and sense of humour.” Ellis finds lesbians like tobacco, athletics, and frequently demonstrate “a dislike and sometimes incapacity for needlework and other domestic occupations.”⁸⁰ Because of the caricatures of deluded women (and lesbians) in the popular press, women travelers worried over how to portray to the public their appearance.⁸¹ Kingsley, a woman, a scientist, an adventurer, “was positioned both inside and outside society and culture not only while she traveled in West Africa but also on her return to Britain.”⁸² Though solitary, she did not want to live as an outcast. Kingsley’s subversive humor functions as proof that Kingsley might “never be mistaken for a ‘new woman’ despite her actions.”⁸³ Kingsley’s primary goal was to reform public views on West Africa.

She did not think of herself as a New Woman nor as an “angel in the house.” She had distinctly masculine achievements and yet retained her femininity and thus her respectability because she guarded and upheld proper notions of female dress. Her skirt did not stop Rudyard Kipling from labeling her as “the bravest woman of all my knowledge.”⁸⁴ Kingsley, however, admitted that her humor concealed very private feelings of loneliness and inadequacy.⁸⁵ She said of her work, in 1899, it was a life of “one long grind of work, work worth doing, but never done well.”⁸⁶ Feminists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century would disagree as, upon her death, she was declared a martyr while serving as a nurse for Boer prisoners of war in 1900.⁸⁷

Scholar Robert D. Pearce asserts Kingsley “was the victim of what another poet, Thomas Hardy, called ‘the ache of modernism’— the feeling that it was a misfortune to be alive.”⁸⁸ I find evidence however that Kingsley enjoyed life and her studies, especially her African adventures. Nevertheless, she did indeed negotiate gender related tensions of her times. In Africa, Kingsley could participate in sports and studies; in England, due to social conventions, her physical activities appeared limited. Scholar Patrick Brantlinger suggests, “Britain turned youthful as it turned outward.”⁸⁹ In order for Kingsley to participate in challenging physical and mental activities, she needed to turn outward from England. She acts hardy and healthy in Africa because of the opportunities for athletics. Her health clearly benefited from such exercise. But, as a woman, she did not feel comfortable bringing her sporting tastes back to England. She realized she could pursue her interests so long as she did not transgress the bounds of Victorian respectability in England. Always wearing her skirt guaranteed she would be viewed as a woman rather than as a “strident freak.”

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- ¹ In a letter from Mary Kingsley to Alice Stopford, as found in Lila Marz Harper, *Solitary Travelers: Nineteenth-Century Women's Travel Narratives and the Scientific Vocation* (Cranbury, N.J.: Associated University Presses, 2001), 221; quote in Alison Blunt, *Travel, Gender and Imperialism: Mary Kingsley and West Africa* (New York: Guilford Press, 1994), 127.
- ² J. McGrigor Allan, "On the Real Differences in the Minds of Men and Women," *Journal of the Anthropological Society of London* 7 (1869): cxcviii.
- ³ Allan, cxcviii.
- ⁴ Katherine Frank, *A Voyage Out: The Life of Mary Kingsley* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1986), 29.
- ⁵ Valerie Grosvenor Myer, *A Victorian Lady in Africa: The Story of Mary Kingsley* (London: Ashford Press Publishing, 1989), 9.
- ⁶ Robert D. Pearce, *Mary Kingsley: Light at the Heart of Darkness* (Oxford: The Kensal Press, 1990), 26.
- ⁷ Myer, 9.
- ⁸ Mary H. Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa*, ed. Elspeth Huxley (London: The Folio Society, 1976), 9.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, 17.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 18.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, 19.
- ¹² Frank, 57.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, 58.
- ¹⁴ Francis Galton, *The Art of Travel; Or, Shifts and Contrivances Available in Wild Countries* (London: John Murray, 1883), 4.
- ¹⁵ Patrick Brantlinger, "Victorians and Africans: The Genealogy of the Myth of the Dark Continent," *Critical Inquiry* 12.1 (Autumn 1985): 190.
- ¹⁶ Kingsley, 9.
- ¹⁷ Harper, 194.
- ¹⁸ Brantlinger, 190.
- ¹⁹ Catherine Barnes Stevenson, "Mary Kingsley's Travel Writings: Humor and the Politics of Style," *Exploration* 8 (1980): 10.
- ²⁰ Kingsley, 30.
- ²¹ Allan, cxcix.
- ²² Joanna Trollope, *Britannia's Daughters: Women of the British Empire* (London: Pimlico, 1994), 151-52.
- ²³ Stevenson, "Mary Kingsley's Travel Writings," 11.
- ²⁴ Kingsley, 31.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, 31.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, 34.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, 39.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, 36.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, 37.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, 43.
- ³² *Ibid.*, 52-53.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, 61.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, 62.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, 62.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, 62.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, 63.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, 128-29.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, 65.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 65.

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- ⁴¹ Alison Blunt, *Travel, Gender, and Imperialism: Mary Kingsley and West Africa* (New York: Guilford Press, 1994), 99.
- ⁴² Blunt, 99.
- ⁴³ Kingsley, 53.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 119.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 133.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 234.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 162.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 164.
- ⁴⁹ Harper, *Solitary Travelers*, 175.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 176.
- ⁵¹ Kingsley, 166-67.
- ⁵² *Ibid.*, 167.
- ⁵³ *Ibid.*, 169.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 170.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 170.
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 171.
- ⁵⁷ Harper, 176.
- ⁵⁸ Allan, ccii.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, ccx.
- ⁶⁰ Kingsley, 226.
- ⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 226.
- ⁶² Allan, ccxi-ccxii.
- ⁶³ In a letter from Mary Kingsley to Alice Stopford, as found in Lila Marz Harper, *Solitary Travelers: Nineteenth-Century Women's Travel Narratives and the Scientific Vocation* (Cranbury, N.J.: Associated University Presses, 2001), 221; quoted from Alison Blunt, *Travel, Gender and Imperialism: Mary Kingsley and West Africa* (New York: Guilford Press, 1994), 127.
- ⁶⁴ Allan, ccxii.
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, ccxiii.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, ccxiv.
- ⁶⁷ Harper, 191.
- ⁶⁸ Frank, *A Voyage Out*, xiii-xiv.
- ⁶⁹ Sally Mitchell, *The New Girl: Girls' Culture in England, 1880-1915* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 138.
- ⁷⁰ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 240.
- ⁷¹ Catherine Barnes Stevenson, *Victorian Women Travel Writers in Africa*, Twayne's English Authors Series, ed. Herbert Sussman (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982), 95.
- ⁷² Harper, *Solitary Travelers*, 156.
- ⁷³ Frank, 59.
- ⁷⁴ Stevenson, *Victorian Women Travel Writers in Africa*, 3.
- ⁷⁵ Frank, 208.
- ⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 208.
- ⁷⁷ As found in Frank, 233.
- ⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 233.
- ⁷⁹ Frank, 209.
- ⁸⁰ Pearce, 14.
- ⁸¹ Harper, 158.
- ⁸² Blunt, 123.
- ⁸³ Stevenson, "Mary Kingsley's Travel Writings," 12.
- ⁸⁴ Myer, *A Victorian Lady in Africa*, 1.
- ⁸⁵ Myer, 3.
- ⁸⁶ Pearce, ix.
- ⁸⁷ Harper, 179.

⁸⁸ Pearce, ix.

⁸⁹ Brantlinger, 190.

Chapter Five:

The Land of Promise: Isabel Savory in India

Isabel Savory, author of *In the Tail of the Peacock* and *A Sportswoman in India: Personal Adventures and Experiences of Travel in Known and Unknown India*, is cited in several recent books and scholarly articles on imperialism and hunting. Aside from work done by Barbara T. Gates, little literary analysis has been published on Savory's travel book *A Sportswoman in India* (1900). This analysis, then, hopes to explore *A Sportswoman in India* and contextualize Savory's position on women's rights and British imperialism. This is an attempt to better understand how travel writers and female hunt aficionados laid the foundation for the New Woman's movement. After analyzing Isabella Bird Bishop, Lady Florence Douglas Dixie, and Mary Kingsley's texts in the previous chapters, Isabel Savory's writings on empire, sport and gender illustrate the metamorphosis that the feminist movement experienced by the turn of the century. Unlike Bird, Kingsley, and Dixie, Isabel Savory openly discusses politics, equal rights and the health of the British Empire. Similar to the other women travel writers in this study, Savory defends her position and her right to participate in sport and adventure.

Their writings differ significantly from those of male travel writers as male writers did not feel obligated to justify their choices of activity. Victorian women travel writers did explain why they broke from convention in order to travel and participate in sport. They often explained their actions in detail throughout their texts so as to retain the semblance of Victorian respectability. Deviations from the status quo were justified by voicing concerns for health and safety during the journey. For women in India, sport and

travel differed significantly from travel to other parts of the British Empire. The power associated with guns and big game hunting set the British apart from the native Indian population. The British utilized the hunt as a reminder to the natives of British dominance and superiority. Although Anglo-Indian women were not allowed to hold positions in the imperial administration, women who hunted “secured for themselves a role in the empire and reordered ideas about the relationship between gender and imperialism.”¹ Aside from hunting and shooting, British women in India were active in many outdoor sports which their contemporaries in Britain were not. While in India, British women played polo and cricket. They were also training polo ponies and wearing men’s clothing. Such practices did not signify “the revolt of the ‘New Woman.’” Sport functioned as an essential marker of imperial femininity. British women in India managed to balance traditional traits and physical activities without erasing their womanhood. Activities such as riding and hunting were encouraged by their husbands.² Sports for women flourished in India because British women did not typically participate in philanthropy and democratic political activism.³ Outdoor sports became the vehicle in which British women participated in empire shaping.

Isabel Savory’s narrative breaks from the earlier writers in this study in that she voices her concerns surrounding women’s education and health without the common rejoinder, ‘but I am only a woman.’ Significantly, Savory’s hunting narrative served “as a recruiting and advice manual for prospective female big-game hunters.”⁴ Isabel Savory does not attempt to “whitewash” or “prettify” the genre of the hunting narrative. She recounts her experiences “as examples to other venturesome women, the implication being that women can emerge as the heroines of their own adventure narratives.”⁵ By

crafting herself as a venturesome woman, which indeed she was, Savory reenvisioned the traditional British masculine adventure tales that were popular during the nineteenth century. Isabel Savory, as the bold big game hunter, appears as competent as the heroes from the stories of Rider Haggard, Robert Ballantyne, G.A. Henty and Rudyard Kipling. *A Sportswoman in India* asserts women's need for action and adventure. She hoped to prove that travel, sport, and comradeship was a "perfectly legitimate aspiration for the female," as it was for men.⁶

Perhaps Savory's self-confidence marks the difference between the four women travel writers analyzed in this project. Writing in 1900, Savory enjoyed the fruits of the earlier struggles for women's rights. The 1890s saw expanding employment opportunities for women and the increasing enrollment of women in the universities. During the 1890s, the New Woman became a prominent figure in fiction, drama, and the popular press. The role of women was changing dramatically.⁷ Women were riding bicycles, playing croquet, archery, and participating in gymnastics. Late Victorian feminists strove for "an end to the idea that womanliness or femininity necessarily involved physical and moral weakness, cowardice, and incompetence."⁸ Some Victorian feminists reformulated the domestic ideology and rejected the traditional idea that women were defined by marriage and motherhood.⁹ By the time the term *New Woman* appeared in 1894, it seemed as if young women were abandoning the values and responsibilities of their mothers and grandmothers.¹⁰ Clearly, the radical paradigm shift of the 1890s would not have been possible without the foundational work done by earlier venturesome travel writers such as Bird, Kingsley and Dixie. These popular women writers excited the British reading public with their daring and courage. Young women readers dreamed of adventure now

that female adventure tales were published. Women travel writers reenvisioned British femininity with such thrilling adventures.

Isabel Savory's travel narrative transcends the scope of traditional nineteenth-century accounts and instead offers innovative renderings of travel and life in India. Savory travels through India for one year. As did Florence Dixie and Isabella Bird, she finds travel beneficial to women. She writes, "[T]ravel has many advantages, of course; nothing appeals to mankind like 'change,' or better satisfies the restlessness felt at some time or another by every human being."¹¹ Traveling offered women an opportunity to escape what Florence Dixie labeled as the ennui felt at home. Travel provided benefits to women. The act of travel opened the traveler to new experiences and with this, came increased self knowledge and self confidence. Quite early in the text Savory expands on this theory: "[E]xperience means a variety of things: it includes the development of the perceptive powers, dependence upon self, and a wider knowledge of self; it inculcates generous views; it causes, in short, a great mental expansion."¹² Bird, Kingsley, Dixie, and Savory demonstrated for their contemporaries such personal development and awareness. The nineteenth century's enthusiasm for health and fitness contributed to the women's movement in that women left the domestic sphere in hopes of improving mental and physical health. The act of travel and the challenges that arose while in the Empire led to reevaluations of ideological constructions of womanhood. The writings of Bird, Kingsley, Dixie and Savory demonstrate that as women tested their physical limits in adventure travel and sports, they experienced increased self-confidence in their physical and mental capabilities. In turn, women readers began to question and reject the patriarchal ideal of the "angel in the house."

Dangerous, exotic destinations such as India provided opportunities for British women to question their positions in society and experience alternative lifestyles while abroad. For Savory India is “a country to visit, but not to live in.”¹³ Savory finds the heat detracts from the “fine scenery.” Yet, from a hunter’s perspective, India is paradise.¹⁴ The history of India is as important as the fine hunting. She visits the Taj Mahal, traces the Indian history of bloodshed and conquest and ultimately trumpets that the English “won India from the Hindus.”¹⁵ Because of superior military, political and economic factors, Englishmen and women were “wandering around” India’s sacred tombs and temples.¹⁶ Sightseeing and big game hunting was made possible in India because of British military superiority. Imperial expansion allows for pleasure travel.

The Indian Woman Question

In January Savory’s party travels to a station outside of Lahore. As was the custom with visiting foreign dignitaries, Maharajah Sir Jagatjit Sing Bahadur allows the British travelers to stay at his guest house. The guest house provides comfort and elegance even in the January heat. Savory writes that the guest house is

a luxurious bungalow built in charming gardens, next to the Palace. It was very French in its decorations, and a trifle over-gilded perhaps; but after the somewhat rough-and-ready Punjab arrangements, that was a pardonable sin. The shady portico over the hall door was full of ferns and flowers, and the gardens afforded officious *malis* (gardeners) ample opportunities of pressing gorgeous buttonholes on us whenever we came out. A French chef fed us, and our own personal servants waited on us.¹⁷

The Indian guest home is civilized, refined, European, safe— note the French chef. It is a haven tucked away in the savage jungle.

If the guest house is a shelter from India and Indian customs, then the Maharajah's household provides Savory with paradoxical glimpses into Indian womanhood and marriage. As was the custom, the Maharajah pays a state call to the British travelers. Savory does not expound on the details of the conversation between the Maharajah and her party. Rather she focuses on Muslim marriage customs that she learns of during her stay with the Maharajah. She notes, "[T]he Rānee (Princess) Canari was our hostess; formerly a hill girl, she is the Maharajah's 'newest' wife, and in coming out of Purdah has of course lost all caste and all respect in the eyes of the unenlightened native. She had had a little education, spoke French, and wore Parisian gowns."¹⁸ The Rānee is an example of what postcolonial scholars recognize as *civilizing the savage*. *Civilizing the savage*, or, as Kipling labels the "white man's burden," became the colonizers prime responsibility. This young woman, in *A Sportswoman in India*, has adopted European language and fashion. Paradoxically, as the Rānee's European habits mark her as civilized in Savory's judgment, for the "unenlightened native," the Rānee's rejection of Purdah and her European dress marks her as immoral, unchaste, and savage. The other wives of the Maharajah lived in Purdah. The Maharanee had married the Maharajah when she was eleven years old. Savory explains, "Mohammedans are, of course, polygamists, and they look upon marriages as so many contracts." She finds, "[T]hat Kapurthalah should treat the Rānee Canari as his *companion* is a welcome fact; and he told us that he should not allow his eldest son and heir, Ticker, to marry till he was twenty years old, and then to have but one wife." Gender relations in India occupy "the

thin edge of civilisation.”¹⁹ Based on prevalent marriage customs, assimilation with European customs is not complete in British India. In the eyes of the British, Indians occupy the border, the “thin edge of civilization.” The twenty-five year old Maharajah, with his Western ideas on marriage is a beacon of hope and enlightenment for Savory. If he reinvents Muslim marriage tradition to resemble Christian tradition, then India would be one step closer to Westernization, and in Savory’s eyes, civilization.

Savory is privileged to meet the Maharanee, who appears to her as a “gipsy, childlike individual” who is dressed head to foot in jewelry.²⁰ Despite the fact that the Maharanee is well provided for and honored, Savory laments women’s cloistered lives,

[i]n the white-walled homes of kings, or in the reed-roofed hut, lives of woman after woman, thousands upon thousands of them, surrounded by fields they may not roam in, above the tumult of the packed bazaar, through nameless horrors of the stifling night, old in grief, and wise in tears.²¹

Savory thinks Indian women are captive. The practice of Purdah is unimaginable and shocking to her. Oddly, she does not find a similarity between Indian women and the caged middle-class ‘angels in the house’ of Britain. Savory believes Muslim and Hindu religion are the causes of such oppression. She claims, “[a] narrow, intolerant religion is at the root of this crying evil, and the only weapon to be employed against it is knowledge.”²² Savory asserts that Britain’s task is to educate Indians and reform Indian customs in order to assist India toward civilization. By 1900, civilization includes the liberation of women. Beginning in the 1860s, missionaries, secular social reformers and

aristocratic women utilized “The Indian Woman” as a way in which to demonstrate Britain’s moral authority.²³

Britain and Politics

India is not the only country to meet with Savory’s criticism. She intersperses her travel narrative with British imperial history and comments on international politics such as British India’s border disputes with Russia and Afghanistan.²⁴ During the nineteenth century Russia initiated imperial campaigns into Central Asia. By mid-century, Britain invaded Afghanistan in order to stave off Russian advancement in India. The First Anglo-Afghan War saw the humiliating defeat of the British. Then, in 1860, defeated again, Britain left Afghanistan and retreated into India. Because of Britain’s lackluster military record in the region, Savory adopts a particularly staunch stance in regards to the 1879 massacre of Sir Louis Cavagnari at the Kabul station. She chastises British colonial procedures that contribute to military defeats; she laments,

O you members of Parliament who live quietly at home! you wire-pullers of the greatest nation in the world! Does it ever repent you of the lives you have sacrificed in remote regions at the altar of your god, Party Power? You cut down expenses, you tie the hands of able men on the spot, and then you regret that England’s prestige is trailed in the dust, and the blood of her gallant men wantonly shed.²⁵

Inept policy makers endanger the strength of the British Empire as the empire is not solid, and monolithic, but rather a conglomeration of administrators scrambling to maintain order. To foster the appearance of order, the pomp and ceremony of the imperial hunt are

used to perpetuate visible symbols of British superiority, especially as massacres of British soldiers and civilians caused the British to appear weak. Aside from the regal ceremony of the hunt, Savory offers an economic solution for war— trade. Savory maintains that the Empire is strengthened by free trade. Roads and rails in India would bring Afghans into close contact with the British. This contact would eventually eradicate the suspicion and mistrust that exists; “our bitter conflicts, would become things of the past” if people became knowledgeable about one another.²⁶ Money and a free exchange of goods unites rather than divides diverse populations and, in time, will bring peace. Savory asserts that knowledge is the most important benefit gained from imperial travel. Savory views knowledge of the *other* as the first step in resolving political conflicts.

Savory advocates for free trade and peace and supports colonialism. Although she criticizes British colonial policy regarding Kashmir, she prefaces her political position with a “deep regret that Kashmir should ever have been allowed to pass out of British hands.”²⁷ To clarify her position, she describes Hindu, Afghani, Sikh and British battles in the region. She informs readers the Governor-General turned Kashmir over to the Jamu chief in hopes of obtaining his friendship. She then explains:

Such is its history. This may have been a diplomatic move, an expedient one, in those turbulent days; and yet it would have been worth a great effort to have kept Kashmir in our hands. As a sanatorium for our troops it would have been invaluable, its climate surpassing any of our hill stations, and besides which there is *room*. Added to this the country, properly cultivated, would be a great source of revenue, instead of its

fertile valleys being wasted on a degraded, lazy, good-for-nothing people.²⁸

Kashmir's mountains, rivers, valleys, picturesque views, and bear hunting are unappreciated by the locals Savory meets. These features would have provided British soldiers with a wholesome respite from overcrowded and diseased Indian cities. In a somewhat romantic vein, Savory states that nature and "room" have restorative qualities. Compared to Bird's position on the native population, Savory's thoughts are markedly elitist and racist. Likewise, revenue gained from Kashmir would have proved rewarding for Britain. A true imperialist and patriot, Savory looks for the benefit to the British crown.

In Kashmir she delights in the inexpensive provisions her team purchases. Yet, mice-infested huts and a lack of clean hospitals leave much to be desired. She assumes British investment and political control could civilize Kashmir. Savory again adopts *the white man's burden*:

The ancient literature of India is a tissue of exaggerated tradition, glowing and poetical, but purely imaginative as opposed to reasonable. The mythology of India is based upon terror; rank superstition stands in the path of civilisation and progress; the rights and dignity of woman are utterly ignored; life is of little value; bloody human sacrifice has been rife; there is no comprehension of such a virtue as truth.²⁹

According to Savory, the climate and the soil cause laziness. The only hope for India's salvation and progress lies in the acquisition and adoption of Western knowledge. Specifically, Savory asserts, "[s]alvation for Asia lies in the increase of knowledge" as

Western knowledge will strike at the root of superstition.³⁰ Savory stresses, “Until knowledge is widespread, there will still ring in our ears the cry of the Purdah women, there will still rise before our eyes revolting sights, and two hundred and eighty millions of degraded humanity will still walk God’s earth.”³¹ She does not address social injustices occurring in Britain. The imperial mission, however, is implicitly connected to liberating and educating native populations according to Western tradition.

Liberation Through Sport

Sports, specifically hunting, liberated British women from middle-class domesticity. Not only did women’s participation in the hunt renegotiate gender roles but hunting reinforced alliances between the British and the Indian aristocracy.³² Big game hunting was justified by the British imperialists as they thought, “Indians would have been at the mercy of rampaging elephants and voracious tigers without the beneficent protection of well-armed male and female imperialists.”³³ The hunt, then, functioned as yet another example of the British assuming *the white man’s burden*. Moreover, the gun functions as “the actual instrument of British conquest and dominance in India and the symbol of Western mastery over the colonized Other.”³⁴

A page after Savory’s diatribe on polygamy and Purdah, she expands on the joys of hunting— in this case fox and boar. Jane Robinson, in *Wayward Women: A Guide to Women Travellers*, argues Savory “revels in a polite orgy of fox-hunting, pig-sticking, and tiger shooting, with a touch of Himalayan couloir-climbing and conventional sightseeing thrown in.”³⁵ To read Savory’s text as merely a blood orgy detracts from its more subtle social message. Savory, herself rejecting British domestic confinement after

marriage, views hunting as an act of liberation for women. Women hunters, by 1900. were “not quite beyond the pale” of respectability since “most of them were rich.”³⁶ Therefore Savory’s wealth, to some degree, insulated her from social criticism thus safeguarding her respectability. Nevertheless, she challenges conventional patriarchal ideologies surrounding women’s health. Ladies such as Florence Dixie and Isabel Savory demonstrated to readers that women could enjoy and excel at sports. Furthermore, “[I]t was obvious from their books, however, with their startling illustrations, carefully researched maps, and exhaustive notes and appendices, that these faddish and moneyed eccentrics took their sport seriously.”³⁷ Sport and adventure proved a fascinating lifestyle which many young female readers hoped to emulate.

One of Isabel Savory’s favorite sports in India is pig-sticking. According to Savory, “[p]ig sticking is *always* wildly exciting: no one realises who is near, or what may be in front; it is a case of riding as never before one has ridden; and the excitement of a breakneck gallop only gives place at the finish to a battle royal, fraught with danger.”³⁸ Contrary to images of fretful, weak women in the popular press, Savory finds the bloodshed, the breakneck gallop and the thrill of the unknown invigorating. Her courageous participation in the hunt does not detract from her femininity as she rides side-saddle to pig-stick. She states “there is no reason why a woman on side-saddle should not quite easily carry a spear.”³⁹ Although she appears confident and courageous as a male adventurer would, she reminds her readers of her femininity with a reference to the side-saddle. Yet, the side-saddle, a feminine piece of equestrian equipment, does not restrict her participation in sport.

Savory relishes the pig-hunt; she recalls, “[e]verything was forgotten but the maddening, all-engrossing present: the wind in the horses’ faces; the rattle of their hoofs; and eyes only for one grey object fast disappearing. It was indeed *Ride*.”⁴⁰ Savory’s mental and physical awareness centers on the ride. The boar chase proves dangerous; riders fell off their horses when jumping over walls and water. One female rider, M., has the opportunity to spear the pig. However, she misses her mark and is thrown from her horse as the horse attempts to dodge the charging boar. Dazed and on the ground, M. becomes the boar’s target. Savory explains this trying situation:

M.’s spear lay several feet off her, and she did the only thing there was time to do—*threw herself flat on her face and lay still*. In another second the pig was cutting what remained of her habit into ribbons, and she could feel sharp gash after gash in the small of her back as he tore at the body of his prostrate foe. Then G.’s voice rang out, and never was woman more glad. He speared the boar and drew him off M., who sat up once more, considerably bruised and battered, but still with plenty of life. The last scenes in such a contest would be sad and horrible, if they were not so full of danger and excitement.⁴¹

Her love of excitement trumps regret or fear. Significantly, Savory writes of a masculine pig. This passage reads as a near rape scene. M. finds herself on the ground, attacked by a native male, albeit a pig. A British male, G., rescues the British damsel from the savage, native male. Savory’s personification of the male pig reveals very real anxieties exhibited by the British when British women came in close contact with natives. A great fear of British patriarchy was that chaste, delicate British women would be emotionally

or physically harmed by the native “savage.” In Savory’s account the threat is found not in the native male person but rather in the wildlife. Hunting parties prove an effective method of colonial regulation and control. By exterminating the native beasts, the British Indian Empire would be safe for all its subjects.

Savageness captures the romantic imagination. After a particularly harrowing pig-chase through mango groves, a village and finally a sugar crop, a fierce, wounded boar earns Savory’s admiration. On the animal she muses: “I have never seen such magnificent pluck or such implacable defiance in any animal; he never lost either his head or his heart, and his grim, devilish temper was a study. Speared twice again, at last he fell and died, ‘the bravest of the brave’: humans would do well if they could play the game of life as nobly, and meet death as callously.”⁴² A peculiar romantic tension exists in the figure of the boar. The boar is savage and noble, beautiful and awe-inspiring — an incarnation of the noble savage. The heroic Indian boar, at least based on Savory’s rhetoric, embodies the very characteristics of the Indians themselves.

John M. MacKenzie, in *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation and British Imperialism* (1988), interprets the hunt as “a pseudo-sexual act” since

hunting works are full of descriptions of the physical agonies of the Hunt, of ‘the exaltation no civilised world can supply,’ the tensions induced by great risk, and the ecstasy of release when the hunter prevails and stands over his kill. Some of this can readily be interpreted as sexual sublimation, while the sexual analogue of the gradual building up of the chase and the orgasmic character of the kill had long been recognised in writings about and pictorial representations of the Hunt.⁴³

To build courage, vigor and sexual potency in the next generation, “[b]oys should be given ‘manly’ rather than ‘refined’ books, which should help to create ‘manly boys, uttering manly thoughts, and performing manly actions.’”⁴⁴ This practice contributed to the development, and proliferation of, ideologies of Victorian masculinity. Killing wildlife became an integral component of moral instruction.⁴⁵ However, “killing was far from being the whole of it” as “[f]ield sports prepared the boy for his life’s journey which would require stoicism, perseverance and robustness.”⁴⁶

Well into the 1890s shooting in Britain remained primarily a masculine pursuit. This was largely due to the “few practical, technical or inspirational books for girls.”⁴⁷ Because of this, “women shooters were disadvantaged from childhood by custom, literature, training and opportunity.”⁴⁸ Savory challenged the masculine hegemony surrounding the hunt. She wrote “in an effort to encourage lady shots.” Significantly, “[h]er sporting accounts represented a departure from the male-dominated hunting literature.” From Savory’s perspective, male hunting narratives were “excessive and repetitive.” She, on the other hand, “killed sparingly but effectively— a ‘selective’ rather than ‘non-selective’ killer!”⁴⁹

Savory loves the thrill of the chase, yet she supports wildlife conservation. A *Sportswoman in India* is significant because this narrative provides a brief history of big game hunting which played an important role in imperial expansion. After describing many near-death experiences while hunting boar, her narrative digresses into the history of the swine. She explains to her readers:

William the Conqueror, a true sportsman, made any man killing a pig liable to have his eyes put out. Nowadays, in Europe and in Asia,

wherever deep recesses of forest and marshy ground are to be found, wild boar abound...But India, and India alone, is the land of pig-sticking. In the matter of sport “the shiny East” has stood the test of time better than any of her rivals. Once upon a time America was equally attractive to the lover of *shikar*, but the fine old grizzlies, deer, and bison, have come to be gradually wiped out, most effectively, alas! by the native “trappers” and others, for the sake of their skins. South Africa was a serious rival, but her day, although it has been a brilliant one, must be confessed to have passed its best. Elephant, rhino, and lion fall before the improved breechloaders; and the survivors, slow-breeding animals, fail to restock the country in anything like adequate proportion to the numbers slain. India is to the *shikari* still The Land of Promise.⁵⁰

Despite Savory’s support of wildlife management and conservation, her position on wildlife management echoes arguments generated by imperial elitists in that Savory, similar to the British aristocracy, hopes to prevent natives from hunting boar. Savory strives to protect the boar population for the sporting pleasure of wealthy British hunters. This position was similar to the poaching laws in England— laws established to safeguard the interests of the aristocrats. As John MacKenzie points out, “throughout the west coast of India, where the forests played a critical part in the early formulation of the scientific conservation ideology of the East India Company, programmes for resource control and conservation were increasingly frequently used to justify political controls for which no other easy rationale could easily be found.”⁵¹ By regulating wildlife, British

administrators could better control the native Indian population, their movements, and their access to, and use of, weaponry.

John M. MacKenzie argues that the British fascination with pig-sticking is due to the “link with the medieval boar hunt” of English tradition.⁵² Although the pig-sticking fad faded by the end of World War I, it “represented the anachronistic survival of the cavalry mentality” in that “pervasive imperial icon of St. George as the patron saint of both the cavalry and the pig-sticker.”⁵³ MacKenzie points out that “St. George could, after all, have killed the dragon with a piece of poisoned pork, but instead he chose a hand-to-hand weapon in face-to-face combat and had to cope with a frightened horse into the bargain.”⁵⁴ Furthermore, “in drawing this connection with St. George [R.S.S.] Baden-Powell implied that pig-sticking was not merely a training in horsemanship, courage and attack but also an emblem of the moral force of imperialism, vanquishing the darker forces of an outer world, as well as representing an act of protection by the rulers on behalf of the ruled.”⁵⁵ Pig-sticking in India provided the opportunity for the British to demonstrate their culture of courage. Such a demonstration of bravery illustrated to the Indians that British power would protect them from both human and animal predators.

Similar to a character one might find in Haggard or Kipling, Savory readily assumes the imperial *white man's burden* by ridding India of ferocious beasts. She transforms herself into the archetypal imperial adventurer straight out of fiction when she describes her journey through Lahore on the back of an elephant— under the Eastern glaring sun— and then later she dines near water, under Indian moonlight.⁵⁶ Her experience in Lahore is colored by an imagination influenced by Rudyard Kipling. A clear admirer of Kipling, Savory muses,

Lahore is interesting as having been for so long the home of Rudyard Kipling. One can picture his going over to the cantonments at Mian Mir and learning the ways of Private Thomas Atkins as no other man on the face of this earth knows them.⁵⁷

Lahore embodies colonial romance for Savory. Links to Kipling establish an image of imperial Britain at its height of power. By 1900 British power is not stable; Savory realizes this. The hunting narrative serves to reinforce notions of British determination, courage and dominance, but paradoxically,

while the height of the hunting craze coincided with exploration, expansion and exploitation in Africa, the cult was in some ways emblematic of the developing weakness of the Indian empire. Like most of the invented traditions of the later nineteenth century, hunting represented an increasing concern with the external appearance of authority, the fascination with the outward symbols serving to conceal inner weakness.⁵⁸

Modernist writers such as Joseph Conrad and E.M. Forster would demonstrate the weaknesses of imperial Britain and question British attempts to assimilate native populations into the empire. These writers ask: who is civilized and who is savage?

During Savory's time in India, she abandons civilized British conventions regarding gender in that she spends a considerable amount of time out of doors—for refined British women this could appear rough or coarse. Yet for Savory, an active, outdoor lifestyle ensured good health and contentment. She comments that life in England differed significantly from her life in India:

At home we do not take enough advantage of fine weather: away in the Himalayas we lived out of doors. Riding out the first thing in the morning two or three miles, to breakfast on some wild hill shaded with great deodars and carpeted with fern, we would find a quiet corner in the winding path, moss to lie upon, steep rock rising sharply behind us, and in front of us vistas of tree-tops and undergrowth half hidden down the precipitous hillside. Across the valley below we looked on to the mountains topped with snow, dazzling in the early sunlight.⁵⁹

As it did for Bird, Kingsley and Dixie, nature offered time away from rigid social expectations. Nature did not destroy their femininity rather contact with nature invigorated and refreshed their spirits thereby transforming them into resilient and capable women—New Women.

Feelings of well-being were one of the most important benefits gained from sport and travel. Specifically, Savory finds that fresh air contributes to health. After observing red bears and killing three in the Himalayan mountains, Savory states, “[w]hat a good feeling it is to be fit and well: to have your nerves steady and your head cool; to awake every morning reveling in the almost fizzing air! Such was life up on those mountains in our little khaki tents.”⁶⁰ Savory demonstrates that nature and exercise benefit the female mind and body. With the realization that many women were reluctant to participate in outdoor sports, she asserts, “[w]omen do not shoot with their husbands and brothers nearly as much as they might do, provided they are the right sort of women. Of course, there are *women* and *women*: but in the present day, when so many of them care for a free life, I wonder that the majority of those should still live a conventional one.”⁶¹ Savory

perceives a very real disconnect between the rhetoric and the practices of turn-of-the-century women. Contrary to the ideal of the angel in the house, the ‘right sort of woman’ in the Empire is active and strong (and white and middle or upper class). The women’s movement had gained momentum yet many women remained at home, content to tend to husband and children. Because of the joy she experiences in the hunt, Savory cannot fathom why women would hesitate to participate in sports, why they would choose to remain in the home.

The dangerous life of a sportswoman seems the only life suitable for Savory. Personal pleasure and a sense of accomplishment are her rewards. Nothing makes her happier than the thrill of the chase. Her narrative demonstrates that women could enjoy and be successful in the hunt. On one occasion Savory scrambles up and down mountains with her friend, M., in pursuit of a goat. As they track the animal, the ladies discuss tea and mutton sandwiches. M. successfully kills one goat, leaving the ladies “thoroughly pleased” with themselves.⁶² The adventure created by hiking, tracking, and killing rescue the two women from the traditional domestic sphere. Rather than order cooks around the kitchen, Savory and M. exercise their bodies, their personal agency. They successfully capture supper; this must have been a powerful feeling indeed. Moreover, guns allowed women to be “the true partners” of men since skill with firearms was more important than one’s sex or brute strength.⁶³

According to Savory, to be a true sportswoman requires six basic principles. She defines a real sportswoman as someone who has an appreciation of the “free camp life,” is “a fair shot,” never participates in unsportsmanlike action, and prefers “quality to quantity in a bag,” and is “a keen observer of all animals, and a real lover of nature.”⁶⁴

Such a characterization of the true sportswoman encourages readers and hunters to see themselves are heroes. The cult of the heroic sportsman (and sportswoman) was an avatar of the cult of British military hero worship. Linda Colley, in *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*, asserts that British hero worship generated from Britain's history of political crisis. After the French Revolution the British elite "took more than usual care to appear scrupulously religious and morally impeccable."⁶⁵ Britons identified "themselves with military achievement on the battlefield and with a cult of civilian heroism at home."⁶⁶ The cult of heroism was also carried to the sporting field as British men worked together to battle nature. The definition of a sportswoman, which Savory establishes, incorporates the nineteenth century's fascination with heroes. Savory's definition of a sportswoman, as well as her narrative chocked full of substantial examples, asserts that women, like men, are capable of carrying on the British tradition of heroism. The result is that heroism and outdoor sports metastasized into a core component of Britishness. This ideological construction of the sportswoman (and man) would proliferate throughout England and come to distinguish the Edwardian period.

Perhaps to add proof of her competency and heroism in the field, Isabel Savory abandons traditional feminine sporting equipment. She abandons the feminine side-saddle and adopts a masculine saddle. This strategy places her on equal footing with male hunters. As did Isabella Bird, Savory claims she retired the side-saddle in favor of a more stable ride. During the journey to Mahmool, across rocks and scrub, Savory states, "[w]e rode—at a walk—hour after hour, climbing steadily. The last thing a woman ought to have ridden on was a side-saddle, which is invariably uncomfortable for herself and her horse uphill. Mine slipped on the Arab pony continually, until at last, from sheer

discomfort, I rode it crossways.”⁶⁷ Her decision to break from convention and adopt a man’s saddle should not be understood as an irrational example of the revolt of the New Woman. Instead, Savory rationally acknowledges her need for comfort during the difficult journey. As Isabella Bird found, practicality trumps appearances of respectability on the trail.

Comfort, one rationale used to justify Savory’s shocking break from convention, is later bolstered with an argument on personal safety. As she crosses mountains and ravines, Savory continues to ride a man’s saddle. Because of the saddle and the terrain she is forced to adjust her skirts because the skirts catch under the saddle. A deadly accident proves Savory transgresses conventional feminine roles not for scandal but for personal safety. Specifically, tragedy strikes Savory and her horse, Sphai, while on a narrow mountain path:

Making an effort up the last steep bit, Sphai dug his willing toes into the rock and broke into a jog; at the same time he turned a little across the path, inwards, which, of course, threw his quarters outwards. With one of his hind-feet he loosened a rock at the edge, and his foot went over with it. It is almost impossible to describe such scenes, even though this one will remain in my memory as long as I live. *Instantly*—there was no time to think—I felt him turn outwards still more, and *both* his hind legs were over. In the selfsame moment I threw myself off the saddle on to the path. I do not know—I never shall know—how I did it. I kept hold of the reins, and for a second of time, kneeling on the path, clung to them, Sphai’s head on a level with me, his two poor great fore-legs clattering hopelessly on

the path, while with his strong hindquarters he fought for a minute for life, trying to dig his toes into some crevice in the precipice. *It was only for a second.* I was powerless to hold him up. There was not even time to call to S. Right over, backwards, he slowly went, with a long heave. I saw the expression in his poor, imploring eyes...

Picture what it was like to stand there, powerless to help in any way! I rather wished I had gone over too. A hideously long silence—such a *dead* silence—and then two sickening crashes, as he hit rock after rock. A pause...and a long resounding roar from all the rocks and pebbles at the bottom of the gorge.

The shock of what had happened stunned me beyond expression. The whole scene has been a nightmare many a time since. Sphai lay, literally, smashed to pieces, down below; and but for the facts that I had just happened to pull out my skirt, and, being on a man's saddle, slipped off at once, the rocky gorge would have held us side by side.⁶⁸

Savory's harrowing experience proves that safety, for women and animals, must come before superficial displays of respectability.

Bird and Savory were not alone when they wrote of the side-saddle's impractical design. Victorian equestrian and advice manual writer Alice M. Hayes, in *The Horsewoman: A Practical Guide to Side-Saddle Riding* (1893), advises: “[T]he fact of a lady having to ride side saddle, subjects her to three disadvantages: she is unable, without assistance, to mount as readily as a man; she cannot apply the pressure of the leg to the right side of the horse; and she cannot ‘drop her hands’ in order to pull her horse

together to the same extent as he can.”⁶⁹ To ride side-saddle on rugged trails could prove deadly since the rider is not able to mount and dismount at will. Additionally, if the rider is not able to apply pressure or grip in order to control the horse, navigating steep trails would also be risky. Savory is not off the mark when she states her good fortune using a man’s saddle. Alice Hayes notes that a rearing horse creates a problem: “rearing is one of the most dangerous vices a lady’s horse can possess; because, when he is in the act of ‘coming over,’ it is almost impossible for her to jump off and get clear of danger.”⁷⁰ Because of its design, which allows the rider to grip the horse with both legs, the man’s saddle is the most secure for rough trail and hunts. If Savory had been using a side-saddle she would have perished over the cliff with her horse as she would not have been able to dismount without assistance.

Despite the risks involved by riding side saddle, Hayes does not believe women should adopt a man’s saddle. She maintains: “Journalists short of ‘copy’ and women anxious for notoriety, periodically start the notion that ladies should adopt a man’s saddle in preference to their own.”⁷¹ Furthermore, “Anyone who takes up this idea seriously, must be either mad or wholly ignorant,” as she claims, “[A] woman’s appearance in a ‘cross saddle’ would be most ungraceful.”⁷² Appearance becomes the primary concern for female equestrians; safety and comfort are secondary since notoriety needs to be avoided.

Hayes was not the only equestrian writer who did not recommend men’s saddles for women. Nannie Power O’Donoghue advises against men’s saddles in *Ladies on Horseback: Learning, Park-riding, and hunting, with hints upon costume, and numerous anecdotes* (1881). O’Donoghue asserts, “there is no analogy between a gentleman’s

position upon horseback and that of a lady. What would be a necessity, or at least a luxury, for the one would be eminently unsuited for the other.”⁷³ According to well respected equestrians, gender divisions needed to be maintained. Women were expected to utilize the side-saddle because the side-saddle better suited female physiognomy. Women’s posture on the side-saddle retained respectability since they need not spread their legs and raise their skirts as they would have to if they used a man’s saddle. The point many conservatives of the time overlooked was that by adopting a man’s saddle and retailoring their riding habits, women were reevaluating, not rejecting, ideas about womanhood.⁷⁴

As Procida, MacKenzie and Burton point out, British India, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, witnessed “a partnership between men and women as imperialists in the masculine mold, rather than an antagonistic polarity between adventuresome men and ultra domestic women.”⁷⁵ Ultra feminine women proved not suitable to harsh living conditions in India. To survive in India women redefined their ideas of femininity. Central to the concept of British femininity in India is the image of the mem-sahib— a beautiful, wealthy British woman usually found lounging on a sofa in the stifling Indian heat. Savory corrects myths surrounding the mem-sahib. Savory, states, contrary to popular beliefs of the beautiful, weary mem-sahib, such creatures do not exist nor does the “Jos Sedley” type of “dyspepsia-and-liver individual.” She describes the mem-sahib as “an energetic, tennis, Badminton, calling and riding—sometimes sporting—creation.”⁷⁶ Alterations in fashion along with modifications to the saddle led the way for this type of social reform for women.⁷⁷ British women in India were perhaps the most liberated in the Empire because they were

allowed, and even expected, to participate in sport. Indian servants tended to household matters while the mem-sahibs sported. British angels were out of the house.

Conclusion

By the late nineteenth century privileged British women traveled to the far reaches of the empire to escape ennui experienced at home. Women traveled across the world “with the object of seeing other sides of that interesting individual, man, other corners of the world, other occupations, and other sports.”⁷⁸ Women proved they could manage “a little discomfort for the sake of experience.”⁷⁹ Experience and knowledge gleaned from adventure travel, Savory finds, “is a complete change for an ordinary English girl; and it is very easy to find every scope for developing self-control and energy in many a ‘tight corner’ if such occasions are sought for.”⁸⁰ Challenges found in travel allowed British women to demonstrate that they were resilient, strong, and resourceful. Such sentiments fueled the women’s movement. Travel and sport benefited women since, according to Savory, “a healthily minded woman has invariably a craving to *do* something. She is fortunate if she satisfies it.”⁸¹ The women’s movement sought the inclusion, and active participation, of women in the public sphere. By the turn of the century women were clearly “craving to do something.”

Travel and sport provide immeasurable benefits for women. Savory realizes this, and her purpose in *A Sportswoman in India* is to demonstrate the benefits of both travel and sport. The central tenet of her book is this:

[t]o see more is to feel more; and to feel more is to think more. Travel teaches us to see over our boundary fences, to think less intolerantly, less

contemptuously of each other. It teaches us to overlook the limitations of religions and morality, and to recognize that they are relative terms, fluctuating quantities, husks round the kernel of truth. Travel dismisses the notion that we are each of us the biggest dog in the kennel.⁸²

She emphasizes that people should travel more so they would not feel alienated. Most importantly, knowledge of other cultures breeds tolerance.⁸³ Unfortunately, a small percentage of the English population had the economic means to travel overseas.⁸⁴ The privileged few who experienced foreign travel oftentimes followed in Savory's footsteps; they traveled and recorded their experiences in travel books and magazines. Women situated within the British elite were not only traveling overseas but they were also "hunting with dogs, shooting elephants and rhino and displaying 'true nerve.'"⁸⁵

However, by World War II, "hunting and shooting declined as imperial power waned."⁸⁶ Many writers during this time noted that recruits to India were no longer participating in traditional shooting parties. John M. MacKenzie argues that "the technical precision and killing potential of modern firearms led not only to the hunting heyday of the Edwardian period but also to new sensibilities about the human 'clean kill' and the recognition that some species were at risk."⁸⁷ Administrative confusion and civil unrest of the interwar years made it difficult for British officers to find time for large scale hunting expeditions.⁸⁸ Despite the decline of hunting in India some women received professional firearm training. Women trained with firearms so that they might better defend themselves during times of civil unrest.⁸⁹ Specifically, in India train travel was perceived as an increasingly dangerous activity; women who would not have carried firearms before found it "prudent" to carry guns on train journeys.⁹⁰ It seems, after

World War I, the “ferocious beasts of the Indian jungle” were no longer the greatest threat to imperial rule. The British became increasingly threatened by Indian opposition to British imperialism.⁹¹ Civil uprisings, rather than tigers and elephants, needed to be controlled with British firepower.⁹² In order to combat threats “to themselves, their husbands, and their empire,” British women in India needed to be “well trained and well armed.”⁹³

British women’s ready use of guns after World War I indicates they were ready to defend the empire against perceived threats, even if this entailed sacrificing traditional notions of femininity.⁹⁴ Women who were ready to defend themselves and their Empire were admired. An early twentieth-century observer of British India remarked that the “right sort” of woman for India was the “Good-All-Around-Woman.” This woman would “exhibit a courage and spirit, a presence of mind, a calmness in danger or difficulty, *which any man might be proud of.*”⁹⁵ India was not the place for “the poor creature...who faints at the sight of a cut finger, shrieks if a mouse runs by; who becomes ‘muddled’ at a crisis, who whines and whimpers when anything dreadful happens.”⁹⁶ British India became the arena in which Britons reevaluated traditional expectations of women. Savory’s travel narrative contributed to this reevaluation of womanhood. By the interwar years, “the empire was thus a place for good sports, chums, and comrades-in-arms of either sex but not for the delicate angel in the house of Victorian domestic mythology.”⁹⁷ Sport played a large role in transforming the patriarchal social order of the British Empire. Sportswomen, such as Isabel Savory, increased women’s access to, and participation in, the public sphere.

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- ¹ Mary A. Procida, "Good Sports and Right Sorts: Guns, Gender, and Imperialism in British India," *The Journal of British Studies* 40.4 (October 2001): 488.
- ² Procida, 455.
- ³ Procida, 459-60.
- ⁴ Barbara T. Gates, *Kindred Nature: Victorian and Edwardian Women Embrace the Living World* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 202.
- ⁵ Barbara T. Gates, ed., *In Nature's Name: An Anthology of Women's Writing and Illustrations, 1780-1930* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), 308-09.
- ⁶ Callum McKenzie, "'Sadly Neglected'- Hunting and Gendered Identities: A Study in Gender Construction," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 22.4 (July 2005): 549.
- ⁷ Barbara Caine, *Victorian Feminists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 239.
- ⁸ Caine, 251.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, 43.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 252.
- ¹¹ Isabel Savory, *A Sportswoman in India; Personal Adventures and Experiences of Travel in Known and Unknown India* (London: Hutchinson, 1900), 403.
- ¹² Savory, 404.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, 3.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 11.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 12.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 12-13.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, 13.
- ²² *Ibid.*, 14.
- ²³ Antoinette Burton, *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 127.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, 65-66.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, 67.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, 68.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, 249.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, 250.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, 351.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, 352.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, 352.
- ³² Procida, 476.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, 477.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, 456.
- ³⁵ Jane Robinson, *Wayward Women: A Guide to Women Travellers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 74.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, 62.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, 63.
- ³⁸ Savory, 15.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 18.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 24.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*, 28.
- ⁴³ John M. MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation and British Imperialism* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1988), 42-43.
- ⁴⁴ MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature*, 46.
- ⁴⁵ Callum McKenzie, 548.

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- ⁴⁶ Ibid., 547.
⁴⁷ Ibid., 551.
⁴⁸ Callum McKenzie, 551.
⁴⁹ Ibid., 549.
⁵⁰ Savory, 32-33.
⁵¹ John M. MacKenzie, ed., *Imperialism and the Natural World* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1990), 31.
⁵² John M. MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature*, 186.
⁵³ Ibid., 189.
⁵⁴ Ibid., 189.
⁵⁵ Ibid., 189.
⁵⁶ Savory, 34.
⁵⁷ Ibid., 36.
⁵⁸ John M. MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature*, 171.
⁵⁹ Savory, 82-3.
⁶⁰ Ibid., 130.
⁶¹ Ibid., 130-31.
⁶² Ibid., 134-36.
⁶³ Procida, 470.
⁶⁴ Savory, 140.
⁶⁵ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 192.
⁶⁶ Ibid., 192.
⁶⁷ Savory, 80.
⁶⁸ Ibid., 141-42.
⁶⁹ Alice M. Hayes, *The Horsewoman: A Practical Guide to Side-Saddle Riding*, ed. M. Horace Hayes (London: W. Thacker and Company, 1893), 2.
⁷⁰ Ibid., 6.
⁷¹ Ibid., 179.
⁷² Ibid., 179.
⁷³ Nannie Power O'Donoghue, *Ladies on Horseback: Learning, Park-riding, and hunting, with hints upon costume, and numerous anecdotes* (London: W.H. Allen, 1881), 200. Harvard College Library Preservation Microfilm (2003), Series no. 09351, reel no. 33637.
⁷⁴ Procida, 469.
⁷⁵ Ibid., 462.
⁷⁶ Savory, 338.
⁷⁷ Procida, 462.
⁷⁸ Savory, 201-02.
⁷⁹ Ibid., 201-02.
⁸⁰ Ibid., 201-02.
⁸¹ Ibid., 201-02.
⁸² Ibid., 404.
⁸³ Ibid., 405.
⁸⁴ Ibid., 408.
⁸⁵ Callum McKenzie, 550.
⁸⁶ John M. MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature*, 195.
⁸⁷ Ibid., 195-96.
⁸⁸ Ibid., 196.
⁸⁹ Procida, 486.
⁹⁰ Ibid., 485.
⁹¹ Ibid., 480.
⁹² Ibid., 480.
⁹³ Ibid., 487.
⁹⁴ Ibid., 487.

⁹⁵ Reference to comment from H.J.A. Hervey, *The European in India* (London, 1913), 201, as found in Procida, 464.

⁹⁶ Reference to comment from H.J.A. Hervey, *The European in India* (London, 1913), 201 as found in Procida, 464.

⁹⁷ Procida, 464.

Chapter Six:

Conclusion: Sport, Society and the New Woman

The act of travel enables the traveler to escape from the familiar. As British women left the domestic sphere and traveled abroad, they had opportunities to collect information and “witness marvels.”¹ Foreign travel allowed Victorian women to witness differing ideologies of womanhood. Such exposure encouraged British women to rethink their positions at home and in the Empire, and in turn, impacted the British feminist movement. However, nineteenth-century British women travel writers were not only concerned with gender relations; they commented on colonial and race relations as well. As a genre, travel writing is not only concerned with the individual traveler; travel writing reflects the individual and her relationship to society at a specific point in history. Scholar Sara Mills asserts that British women travel writers’ texts are about colonial situations, “just as men’s texts are.”² Women’s texts differ from men’s as women’s “relation to the dominant discourses differs.”³ According to Mills, a competent analysis of women’s travel writing takes into consideration socio-political and textual elements.⁴ Using Mills’ theory as the framework, this project has attempted to contextualize the writings of Bird, Dixie, Kingsley and Savory in an effort to gain a stronger understanding of the mid-to-late nineteenth century as experienced by British women.

Women travel writers “fled decades of domestic submissiveness.”⁵ Their reasons for travel varied; “[S]ome were also looking, explicitly or not, for passion, sometimes simply the wild exhilaration of freedom and sometimes as sexual gratification quite unthinkable at home.”⁶ Bird traveled to improve her health, Kingsley to finish her

father's work and begin her own, Dixie to escape ennui she felt at home and Savory in an attempt to learn and write more about India than previous travel writers. Their travel books "are as much about themselves" as the places they visited.⁷ Travel books offered Victorian readers "hard facts about geography, history, botany, zoology, medicine, and ethnology" situated within compelling adventure tales.⁸

Although the four writers in this study hoped to escape rigid Victorian social conventions, traveling did not guarantee an escape from gendered and colonial ideologies at work both at home and abroad. The female travel writer may find power and authority away from home "which allows her the illusory possibility of seeing others as they 'really are;'" however, the female narrator continually renegotiates her own identity.⁹ More specifically, women travelers reshape their identities both within and outside of the dominant ideologies about women's proper sphere.¹⁰ This point becomes most clear in the earlier discussion of Mary Kingsley. As an unmarried woman of limited economic means, Kingsley carefully worked to preserve appearances of respectable femininity by referring to her skirt throughout her text. Yet, her actions and research defied social conventions for women and thus, placed her in a man's world. The act of traveling away from home caused paradigmatic shifts regarding conceptions of identity. The female traveler continually asks herself who she is in relation to her native culture and that of the *other*. The female traveler, although she thinks she is capable of seeing others as "they really are" is herself an anomaly since her identity is rarely fixed.

1870-1930 witnessed many social and political changes for women. The women's movement was gaining momentum and British women travel writers were increasing in popularity. The act of reevaluating and reshaping one's identity, as

encouraged by women travel writers, contributed to the momentum of the feminist movement.¹¹ As British women travel writers reenvisioned womanhood through their adventuresome discourse, the transformation proved rife with conflict as

the writers were at one and the same time part of the colonial enterprise, and yet marginalized within it. Their role as women writers and as travellers was circumscribed by conflicting discursive pressures—those of colonial discourses, and those of femininity. As anomalous travellers in the public sphere, their writing can be seen as the traces of discursive struggles over the ‘proper’ place of women.¹²

There exists an element of subversion in the texts produced by women travel writers. At times the narratives appear stable and unified—women adventurers, as they “really are,” reveling in danger. Yet, at other points within the narratives, individual statements betray the instability of each woman’s socio-political position.¹³ Mary Kingsley’s text proves especially unstable for readers. Lila Marz Harper offers this explanation:

Having performed so many unladylike actions, Kingsley attempted to defuse a possible backlash against her explorer role and accusations of unfemininity by carefully emphasizing her maintenance of feminine clothing during her travel. This anticipation of the charges of wearing pants was so worrisome, carrying with it all the emotive connotations of degradation and the New Woman movement, that Kingsley clung almost irrationally to the claim that she wore a skirt during her treks and that she would never consider any other traveling costume.¹⁴

Likewise, Isabella Bird used fashion in order to retain an aura of traditional feminine respectability. As scholar Pat Barr notes, Isabella Bird “wore variations of the ‘Hawaiian

riding-dress' theme for years, but the trousers were always utterly concealed beneath the skirts, and when she came to a town of any size she always rode a ladylike side-saddle through its streets."¹⁵ Although Kingsley and Bird preferred that the British public believe they wore traditional dress does not detract from the contribution both women made to their fields and to the advancement of women in scientific vocations.

When Bird's book on the Sandwich Islands was published in 1875, "men of science, as well as the reading public, thanked her for the valuable addition made by her to the sum of knowledge."¹⁶ She also earned favorable reviews in prominent journals.¹⁷ Bird was one of the first women admitted to the Royal Geographical Society as a full fellow. Social and political controversy surrounding the New Woman, caused the RGS to rescind their decision to allow women as full fellows. Bird, and the twenty-one other women previously admitted, remained in the RGS; however, no additional women were admitted until November 1912.¹⁸ Bird and Kingsley chose to remain in skirts as a way to avoid social censure so that their work would not lose prominence. During this time there was also an increasing anti-suffragette movement. By the 1890s the New Woman's movement proved a serious threat to traditional Victorian values.¹⁹

If nineteenth-century travel narratives by women appear unstable it is not due to ignorance or lack of concern for socio-political issues on the writers' part. Most Victorians "would have been mightily shocked by any suggestion that they took no interest in that glorious manifestation of 'the genius of the race,' the British Empire."²⁰ Rather, the instability of the texts reflects the delicate, ever-shifting nature of British power. Women travel writers were especially aware of the large scale social divisions and power struggles occurring throughout the Empire. Many Victorian women travel

writers took special care to observe the dress, education and gender relationships of the cultures they visited. Their observations on foreign societies allowed them to reevaluate notions of British femininity. Since imperialism required travel, the process of imperialism, in actuality, encouraged continual reevaluations of the self and of the *other*. British imperialism was not a stable “set of attitudes and beliefs toward the rest of the world.”²¹ Rather, imperialistic ideologies shifted as citizens reacted to policy, war, technology—progress. Women’s travel texts appear unstable because the texts are situated immediately within the dynamic expansion and contraction of the Empire.

Women’s travel writing functioned similarly to popular masculine adventure tales; such stories were “the energizing myth of English imperialism. They were, collectively, the story England told itself as it went to sleep at night; and, in the form of its dreams, they charged England’s will with the energy to go out into the world and explore, conquer, and rule.”²² British imperialism, according to male writers Haggard, Henty, and Ballantyne, was imagined as “swashbuckling politics and a world in which neither epic heroism nor chivalry is dead. Both are to be rediscovered in crusading and conquering abroad.”²³ Women travel writers, operating both within and without the dominant discourse, reveal the instability of their positions as white British women far away from home during the Age of Empire; Linda Colley stresses that the beginning of the nineteenth century “was the period in which women first had to come to terms with the demands and meanings of Britishness.”²⁴ Initially, modern British identity grew into a cult of chivalry and heroism—leaders of the world—for men. Women, largely inspired by popular female travel writers, began to rethink their positions in the Empire. Instead of remaining passive and weak, women began to see themselves as capable of heroism.

The nineteenth century was indeed a century of change. John Stuart Mill remarked in 1869, “that the most important distinguishing feature of ‘modern life’ was the fact ‘that human beings are no longer born to their place in life...but are free to employ their faculties...to achieve the lot which may appear to them most desirable.’”²⁵ This is important to keep in mind while reading women’s travel writing—the travelers were women who broke away from conventional domestic confinement and acted like male adventurers. Women travel writers carried a hope for improvement in the lives of the native population and for themselves. Isabel Savory stressed education for the natives and Bird mentioned the progress the Hawaiians made because of the Christian missionaries. Savory and Bird demonstrated the possibility of bettering civilization through education. Bird, Kingsley, Dixie and Savory transcended gender based stereotypes of the weak, wilting woman and, by doing so, reshaped conceptions of British womanhood:

Emphasizing attributes of courage, strength, and persistence directly challenged ideologies of self-sacrificing, duty-bound Victorian mothers and wives. In that sense they helped rewrite the terms of the Victorian adventure tale itself, and often without relinquishing their femininity to do so.²⁶

Despite the fact that “[E]very advice book and domestic manual since Hannah More” preached gentleness and submission, women travel writers provided counter narratives for British females.²⁷ And, as Joanna Trollope points out, “[T]he suggestion that the physical delicacy so many of these travellers mention was really the effects of the nervous strain of being a woman in stifling Victorian England gains credence when one observes how astoundingly enduring all these invalids became when let loose in the

world's wild places.”²⁸ Travel texts demonstrated that women could be self-reliant, strong and, most importantly, healthy. Thus, British women travel writers generated radical redefinitions of womanhood.

Diverse backgrounds, generations and locales create a particular challenge when analyzing women's travel writing. Julia Keay concludes that the ladies in her study “were par excellence, individuals” who “deserve not to be lumped together like a flock of chickens” but should be displayed “as separate items in a gallery.”²⁹ In this project, *Venturesome Women*, each travel writer is analyzed in a historiographical context, situated within the decade they traveled and also by the places they traveled. Certainly, Victorian women travel writers, similar to Victorian feminists, “were in no way a homogeneous group.”³⁰ Susan Hamilton emphasizes in *Criminals, Idiots, Women, and Minors: Victorian Writing by Women on Women*, “[T]here is no one Victorian feminist line on any issue,” likewise, women travel writers rarely thought the same on any issue except one—that travel benefited the female mind and body.³¹ For the four women in this study, sport and adventure proved invigorating and liberating. The women in this study did not stand united on women's issues. However, Savory, Dixie, Kingsley, and Bird worked to construct images of themselves as competent, strong, and knowledgeable. They refuted the image of the middle class Victorian woman, with “[H]er dreamy torpor” ruffled “by hysterical ailments, swooning spells and a plague of obstructive servants.”³² Rejecting invalidism, these four women demonstrated the benefits gained through physical activity. Women reenvisioned their roles and reshaped Victorian society and, with this type of reevaluation, marked the beginning of the modern feminist movement.

Physical achievements were associated with manliness.³³ Victorian men had a mania for every type of athletic contest.³⁴ Women travel writers, at least those who demonstrated physical prowess, threatened Victorian notions of masculinity. The popular press proved particularly harsh to athletic women; caricatures of Amazon women were regular features of magazines and newspapers. Victorian men commonly associated masculinity with sport since “[T]he physical aspects of sport encouraged strength, speed and endurance, while the psychological aspects called for self reliance, courage and loyalty.”³⁵ Women’s participation in sports became problematic as such actions “counteracted the feminine ideal, and thus was compatible with the goals of feminism which sought to diminish the importance of sex difference.”³⁶ For some feminists “the sportswoman typified the change from the frailty of the feminine ideal of earlier times to an image of vitality in the late Victorian period.”³⁷ To the more tradition bound, Victorian sportswomen appeared as freaks or oddities. The critics of the New Woman labeled sportswomen as Amazons.³⁸ For many it seemed as if sportswomen rejected biological responsibilities to the British Empire which would eventually lead to the degradation of their race. From the critics’ point of view, “not only does a woman’s assumption of masculine independence make her manly and therefore unfit for childbearing; it makes men redundant by rendering unnecessary their manly qualities.”³⁹

Travel writers were not the only women challenging traditional ideas surrounding gender and athletics. In Scotland, Queen Victoria was frequently “seen riding and driving, and she was very fond of walking over the hills surrounding the castle.”⁴⁰ Additionally, “[T]he Queen and the Prince Consort often fished, and she frequently accompanied him on hunting expeditions.”⁴¹ In the 1880s, the Royal Family endorsed

tricycling; according to nineteenth-century writer Ada S. Ballin, in *The Science of Dress in Theory and Practice* (1885):

The ladies of the Royal family have set good example to the women of England...The Princess Mary, Duchess of Teck, took the initiative; then the Queen presented two machines to her young grand-daughters, the Princesses of Hesse; the Princess of Wales next gave her eldest daughter one for a birthday present; and the Princess Louise rides one herself.⁴²

Clearly, the Royal Family's female members helped advance sport for women. The younger members especially enjoyed athletics; notably, "The Princess of Wales and Princess Louise were active supporters of women's sport. The Princess of Wales and her daughters set the example in angling as enthusiastic fisherwomen of Scotland's salmon rivers."⁴³

Despite the Royal Family's endorsement of athletics for women, the mainstream public remained divided on the subject. Only after women gained access to education did any physical education for girls come about.⁴⁴ Girls' schools offered physical education classes and this eventually led to better organization of women's sports.⁴⁵ Golf clubs, such as St. Andrew's—with restrictions—became available to women beginning in 1867.⁴⁶ There were an estimated 2,000 women golfing in Great Britain by 1890. During the late 1880s, women played on field hockey teams.⁴⁷ Field hockey was not as popular as "croquet in the 1860's, lawn tennis in the 1880's, and bicycling in the 1890's."⁴⁸ All three of these sports were seen "as social revolutions which provided women and men with opportunities to meet on informal grounds."⁴⁹ Popular women travel writers such as Bird, Kingsley, Dixie, and Savory encouraged women to horseback ride, canoe, hunt,

hike and swim, thus adding these sports to the growing list of sports being attempted, and enjoyed, by British women.

The *fin de siècle* witnessed “women’s issues come to the forefront of the national consciousness.”⁵⁰ Magazines grappled with the “‘proper’ position of women.”⁵¹ By the end of the nineteenth century the New Woman emerged as one who participated in sports and education. British men soon realized that women might prove to be their physical and intellectual equals.⁵² Throughout the last half of the nineteenth century, venturesome women travel writers had provided British women confined to the domestic sphere with new possibilities—new ways of being women. While their writings empowered some, others were threatened by the New Woman’s self confidence and determination. There existed very real fears that the New Woman was a “threat to all the British held dear: home, family, nation, empire.”⁵³ As late as 1895, writer Eliza Lynn Linton claimed women travel writers were “a symbol of this disturbing trend” of degeneracy.⁵⁴ To support her argument against the New Woman, Linton remarked, “[T]he prettiest woman in the world loses her beauty when at these violent exercises. Hot and damp, mopping her flushed and streaming face with her handkerchief, she has lost that sense of repose, that delicate self-restraint, which belongs to the ideal woman.”⁵⁵ Despite critics, such as Linton, the demand for travel literature remained strong. Popular magazines and literary reviews regularly featured hunting and sports related articles.⁵⁶ The bold, adventuresome writings by Bird, Kingsley, Dixie and Savory encouraged feminist transformation and thereby contributed to the modern feminist movement. Critical dialogue on education and athletics, inspired by these four travel writers, defined the

women's movement of the following century. By the twentieth century participation in sports became a marker of female emancipation.⁵⁷

- ¹ Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 123.
- ² Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 1991), 39.
- ³ *Ibid.*, 39.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, 40.
- ⁵ Joanna Trollope, *Britannia's Daughters: Women of the British Empire* (London: Pimlico, 1994), 147.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, 147.
- ⁷ Catherine Barnes Stevenson, *Victorian Women Travel Writers in Africa* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982), 5.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.
- ⁹ Janice Schroeder, "Strangers in Every Port: Stereotypes of Victorian Women Travellers," *Victorian Review* 24.2 (1998): 118.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 118.
- ¹¹ Mills, 104.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, 106-07.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, 197.
- ¹⁴ Lila Marz Harper, *Solitary Travelers: Nineteenth-Century Women's Travel Narratives and the Scientific Vocation* (Cranbury, N.J.: Associated University Presses, 2001), 195.
- ¹⁵ Pat Barr, *A Curious Life For a Lady: The Story of Isabella Bird* (London: Macmillan, John Murray, 1970), 29.
- ¹⁶ Anna M. Stoddart, *The Life of Isabella Bird (Mrs. Bishop) hon. Member of the Oriental Society of Peking* (London: John Murray, 1908; Research Publications, Inc.: History of Women (1977): fiche reel 769, no. 6164), 84-85.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 84-85.
- ¹⁸ Harper, 183.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 183.
- ²⁰ Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988), 7.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, 8.
- ²² Martin Green, *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire* (New York: Basic Books, 1979), 3.
- ²³ Brantlinger, 36.
- ²⁴ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 281.
- ²⁵ Asa Briggs, *The Making of Modern England, 1783-1867: The Age of Improvement* (New York: Harper and Row, 1959), 405. Mill quote from *The Subjection of Women* (1869), chapter 1.
- ²⁶ Karen M. Morin, "Narrating Imperial Adventure: Isabella Bird's Travels in the Nineteenth-Century American West" in *Western Places, American Myths: How We Think About the West*, ed. Gary J. Hausladen (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2003), 212.
- ²⁷ Valerie Sanders, *The Private Lives of Victorian Women: Autobiography in Nineteenth-Century England* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), 7.
- ²⁸ Trollope, 147.
- ²⁹ Julia Keay, *With Passport and Parasol* (London: BBC Books, 1989), 7.
- ³⁰ Vron Ware, *Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism and History* (London: Verso, 1992), 120.
- ³¹ Susan Hamilton, ed., *Criminals, Idiots, Women, and Minors: Victorian Writing by Women on Women* (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2004), xv.
- ³² Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 160.
- ³³ Bruce Haley, *The Healthy Body and Victorian Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), 130.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, 136.
- ³⁵ June Arianna Kennard, *Woman, Sport and Society in Victorian England* (Greensboro: University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1974, unpublished dissertation), 168.

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- ³⁶ Ibid., 168.
- ³⁷ Ibid., 168.
- ³⁸ Ibid., 33-34.
- ³⁹ LeeAnne Marie Richardson, *Engendering Empire: The New Woman and The New Imperialism in Fin de Siècle Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 2000, unpublished dissertation), 101.
- ⁴⁰ Kennard, 105.
- ⁴¹ Ibid., 105-06.
- ⁴² Kennard, 138; quote orig. found in Ada S. Ballin, *The Science of Dress in Theory and Practice* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1885), 218.
- ⁴³ Kennard, 137-38.
- ⁴⁴ Dennis Brailsford, *Sport and Society: Elizabeth to Anne* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), 239.
- ⁴⁵ Kennard, 109.
- ⁴⁶ Mike Huggins, *The Victorians and Sport* (London: Hambledon & London, 2004), 80.
- ⁴⁷ Kennard, 121.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid., 123.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid., 123.
- ⁵⁰ Richardson, 40-41.
- ⁵¹ Ibid., 40-41.
- ⁵² Huggins, 83.
- ⁵³ Richardson, 102.
- ⁵⁴ Harper 183; Nancy Fix Anderson, *Woman Against Women in Victorian England: A Life of Eliza Lynn Linton* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 196.
- ⁵⁵ Fix Anderson, 205. Linton's quote from Eliza Lynn Linton, "The Wild Women as Social Insurgents," *Nineteenth Century* (October 1891): 598-99.
- ⁵⁶ Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), 255-56.
- ⁵⁷ P.C. McIntosh, *Sport in Society* (London: C.A. Watts and Company, 1971), 104.

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